

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020FL004
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	St Brigid's Montessori School
-------------------------	-------------------------------

Address of Service:	5 Swords Manor Grove Swords, Dublin.
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	K67 X4YO
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Andrea Behan
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	06/10/2023
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	S. Cully
----------------------------------	----------

Title:	Early Years Inspector
---------------	-----------------------

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

St Brigid's Montessori School is a sessional service owned and operated by the registered provider and located in a residential setting in Swords. The service consists of one care room, two sanitary facilities for children and an outdoor area to the rear of the premises. The service is registered to provide early childhood care and education for a maximum of 15 children aged from 3 to 6 years. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) from 9.00am to 12.00 midday from Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

The registered provider and one other adult work directly with the children attending the sessional service. An additional staff member was present on the day who carried out housekeeping duties and is currently studying to obtain a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 24, 25, 26 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from reoccurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

art III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise when required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service when the inspector arrived and for the duration of the inspection.

On the day of inspection, a total of 3 staff files including the registered provider's file were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b)

- Two written and validated references were available for 2 staff members and the registered provider.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and the 2 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(d) On review of 2 staff files and the registered providers file, no international police vetting was required for any adult whose file was reviewed.

(4) The staff member and the registered provider whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult-to-child ratios were correct at 9.45am when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult-to-child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the preschool session there were 9 children aged from 3 years 7 months to 4 years 8 months being cared for by 2 adults.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) The records in relation to all registered children were reviewed, with a total of 16 records reviewed. An additional record was available for one child present on the day who was attending as part of the services settling-in procedure. Of the 16 records reviewed, all were found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic needs:

- Children attending the sessional service brought their snacks from home. Snack time was observed to be a social, relaxed, and casual occasion where children were encouraged to utilise their independence skills by opening their snacks or taking their own water bottles from the side table. Support from an adult was available when needed.
- The children were observed to freely move about their play space, make decisions about what materials they wanted to work and play with, and were given ample time to continue their play together. The children provided suggestions about activities they would like to do the following week, and staff responded to these ideas enthusiastically. The staff also provided resources to extend children's play and joined in on their play with interest. This practice supports children to feel valued and respected, positively impacting on their well-being.
- Staff were attentive to children's personal care needs. Toilet-trained children used toilets independently while those who required support were provided discreet supervision. Children were reminded to wash their hands or offered tissues to clean their noses etc. The care room had a Montessori-inspired handwashing station in the room where children could practice handwashing skills. Children who required more assistance with their personal care needs were well supported.
- There were displays at the children's eye level of their family photos and 'all about me' information. Having images of themselves and their family on display reinforces a positive representation of the children's identity and creates a feeling of belonging within their community.
- There was an opportunity for outdoor play, and the children were in the garden choosing songs for dancing on the inspectors arrival.

Supporting relationships:

- It was observed that the staff and children had already established secure relationships together as the children looked to them for guidance and comfort, and the staff demonstrated understanding and familiarity of children's needs providing resources and practices they knew children enjoyed or required. They celebrated a child's birthday together on the day, valuing children as individuals and as a group.
- The staff communicated with the children using gentle tones of voice and nurturing interactions. They provided commentary on their play or previous activities and gave praise and encouraging feedback often to all children. This creates an atmosphere where children feel safe and secure to explore and be in relationships with others.
- The service values partnership with parents. On the day of inspection, the service was holding a 'Grandparents Day' event where grandparents were invited in to see the children's work and where they play. Some parents also attended, and all were welcomed and given time to look around and admire the children's environment.

Physical and material environment:

- A variety of play materials and resources were available to the children. Montessori equipment and materials were available that were organised and categorised by themes and functionality. There was material provided that children had shown interest in previously, such as small world toys, transport toys and dinosaurs. The service also had a lot of natural materials on display for children to engage with, such as chestnuts, pinecones, and seashells.
- Materials and equipment were stored on sturdy, low-level shelving facilitating children's easy access to resources of choice.
- The outdoor space was partially covered in artificial grass and was well-resourced with outdoor equipment such as a climbing frame, slide, benches, gravel pit, sand pit, water station, and a rockery. There was also a shed that stored extra materials for children to use in the garden such as cars, dolls, prams etc.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The side entrance of the premises which led to the garden used by the children in the service was not secured, posing a risk of entry by an unauthorised person and increasing the possibility of a child exiting the premises unsupervised. On arrival, the inspector could enter the side entrance as the gate was open, and upon reaching the 2nd gate which was the entrance to the garden, the gate was found to be closed but not locked. It is acknowledged that although children were playing in the garden at the time, they were being adequately supervised by 2 adults. On further inspection at 11 a.m. when children and staff were inside, the gate to the garden was closed but remained unlocked and the gate to the side entrance remained open.

Infection Control:

2. One singular hand towel was in use in each sanitary accommodation in the absence of paper towels or other more hygienic systems for hand drying. The use of a singular hand towel reduces the effectiveness of good handwashing practices therefore increasing the risk of cross-contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider stated that a member of staff now has the duty of checking that the first gate is closed and the second gate is appropriately secured following the advice of the fire officer. A lock will be slotted into the gate handle but not locked to allow for adequate means of exiting the premises in an emergency.

Preventative actions:

A member of staff will carry out the duty of checking gates as per the morning checklist.

Infection Control:

3. The registered provider has stated that each child has their own hand towel for hand drying which are hanging from each child's chair. The children place their hand towels in the laundry basket at the end of each session. Clean hand towels are provided each day.

Preventative actions:

Enough towels have been purchased and can be replaced during the day if necessary. The towels are washed daily so there is always a surplus amount of hand towels. Paper hand towels are available in the bathroom for use also.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the above actions and measures were submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Compliance Information

There were records available to show that children were checked in and out of the service by an employee on a daily basis.

Non-Compliance Information

On the day of the inspection, there was one child not checked in on the daily attendance register. This child was present on the day as part of the services' settling-in process. Records of each child's daily attendance are required to be maintained in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has created a new roll call sheet to record the attendance of child visitors and other visitors to the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the visitor roll call paperwork was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 24(1) has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-
- (a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and
 - (b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

- (1) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a)&(b) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Records were available to show that previous fire drills that took place on the premises were recorded. The new preschool group have been learning about fire drills procedures with monthly unannounced fire drills to commence in October.
- (b) There was a record available that detailed the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises last recorded in February 2022.

(2) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person, the early years inspector.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) Firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were last recorded as serviced in February 2022. These are required to be serviced on an annual basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the Fire Officer had visited the school, and the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system had been checked and serviced on 10/11/2023.

Preventative actions:

This service will be scheduled before the 2024 new school term.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence that the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm had been serviced following the inspection was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1)(b) has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Evidence was available to demonstrate the preschool service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate 22 sessional preschool children, with an expiry date 27/11/2023.