

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021DY003
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Name of Service:	Belgrave Montessori School
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Address of Service:	67 - 69 Upper Rathmines Rd, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D06 K763
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Name of Registered Provider:	Pamela Carter
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	09/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
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Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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.
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Description of service

Belgrave Montessori School is a full day care service located in Rathmines, on the south side of Dublin city and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 44 sessional children or 22 children on a full day care basis aged from 2 to 6 years old. The service, which also operates a part-time service from 8.15am to 1.30pm and provides for school age care in the afternoons, opens for 38 weeks of the year in line with school term time. Belgrave Montessori School is one of two services operated locally by the registered provider. Belgrave Montessori School operates from Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society Hall and has two care rooms. There are sanitary facilities and a kitchen also on the premises and a fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the building.

Staffing

There are currently seven staff employed by the service including the registered provider, the person in charge and five childcare staff who work directly with the children. The registered provider manages the oversight of the two services and provides cover where needed. Present on the day of the inspection was the registered provider, the person in charge and five childcare staff.

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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2), Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1) Records in relation to the Preschool Service
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials
- Regulation 22 Food and Drink
- Regulation 25 First Aid

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16(1) Records in relation to the Preschool Service

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 re occurring. 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, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.

- (2) The files of the seven staff were reviewed and the registered provider had completed the following checks:
- (a)(b) Thirteen validated written references were available from recent past employers or a source other than a past employer for the seven files reviewed.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven disclosures reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Documentary evidence showed that five adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.
- (3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.
- (4) Six staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure the following:

- (2)(a)(b) One staff member required a second validated reference from either a recent employer or a reputable source.
- (4) There was no documentary evidence available that one staff member who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a relevant qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- (2)(a)(b) The staff member in question is no longer employed at Belgrave Montessori School.
- (4) The staff member in question is no longer employed at Belgrave Montessori School.

Preventive Action

- (2)(a)(b) The manager in charge of employing new staff has been informed by word and by email that all new staff must have two validated references.

(4) The manager in charge of employing new staff has been informed by word and by email that all new staff working directly with children must hold a relevant qualification of at least NQF Level 5 or relevant qualification deemed equivalent by the DCEDIY.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) Copy of email to manager

(4) Copy of email to manager

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were seven staff available to the 36 children.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Six staff were allocated to work directly with the 36 children who were present on the morning of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Room 1 - 3 adults to 19 children aged between 2 years 8 months -5 years old.
- Room 2 - 3 adults to 17 children aged between 2 years 8 months -5 years old.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee were maintained within the staff files.
- (b) The policy handbook detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (c) (d) (e) (f) The statement of purpose and function within the policy handbook outlined the adult: child ratios, the type of care or programme provided, the facilities available and the opening hours and fees of the service.
- (g) The registered provider maintained all of the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.
- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.

(i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.

(j) Following a review of a sample of 12 records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.

(k) Following a review of a sample of 12 records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture and equipment in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in the rooms, and was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving, visible to the children, and were grouped in themed areas of interest such as home, mark making, construction, sensory, and library areas. Themed areas of interest facilitate children to have a more focused engagement in their play experiences.
- There was a variety of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development, which facilitated a range of play experiences including creative, imaginative and language and numeracy play.
- The outdoor environment had defined areas set out including areas for construction, seating area for table top activities, playhouse, and open-ended resources such as piping which can facilitate scientific enquiry.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate and suitable food and drinks available. For example:

- Discussion with staff and the documentary evidence available such as the four-week menu plan, the parents tip sheet on healthy lunch options and the service policy on health and nutrition showed there was a varied selection of food available, with alternative options for children with additional or alternative diets.
- The following food was on offer on the day of the inspection:
 - Breakfast on arrival at 8.30am provided by the service.
 - A snack of fruit comprising of apple, banana, orange, grapes and berries at 10.30am provided by the service.
 - A packed lunch provided by parents at 12.00pm.
 - A hot meal of Irish stew with mashed potato at 2.00pm which is provided by an external catering company and heated in the onsite kitchen.
 - A tea at 4.00pm of sandwiches or wraps, which is provided by the service.
- Drinking water was freely available in the care rooms throughout the day.
- Mealtimes was observed to be a sociable experience for the children, where staff were seated with the children and engaged in conversation and offered support where required during the mealtime.
- Staff were aware of the different dietary requirements of the children in their care room and suitable meals and snacks were provided to support this.
- The children’s lunches from home were stored in the service fridge, and fruit was observed to be cut into appropriate bite size pieces.

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) The service provided evidence that a staff member trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) A Suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises. A second first aid box was available while the children attended the outdoor play area.