

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022KY004				
Name of Service:	Oak Park Montessori School				
Address of Service:	2 Oak Park Demesne, Oakpark, Tralee, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 FW2F				
Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Quirke Crowley				
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	05/09/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>12</td> <td>PM</td> <td>None</td> </tr> </table>	AM	12	PM	None
AM	12	PM	None		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.				
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy				
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	N/A
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Description of service

Oak Park Montessori school is a private early years service that is registered to cater for children aged between 2 years and 6 years on a part-time full day care basis. The service currently caters for children aged between 2 years 7 months and 5 years. The service is open between the hours of 08:30 and 1:30pm Monday to Friday inclusive offering part-time full day care and facilitating a planned ECCE sessional service between the hours of 09:00-12:00 midday.

Staffing

Currently, there are 6 adults employed by the service including the registered provider, 2 of whom currently work directly with the children each day.

Each of 6 adults have attained a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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*

(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 named designated person in charge and there was a deputy in charge.
- (b) The deputy manager was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived and the registered provider arrived soon after and was present was part of the day to facilitate the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to 6 adults who were employed in the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the 12 required references, 8 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 12 required references, 4 references were from another source other than a previous employer with records of validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 6 adults.
- (d) Not applicable as the 6 adults had not resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) The staff members had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), with copies of the relevant qualifications maintained on file.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did ensure that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) There were 2 adults caring for 12 children aged between the age of 2 and 4 years, 6 children were attending on a part-time basis and 6 children on a sessional basis.

The adult child ratio was correct.

(8) (a) The registered provider did ensure that a minimum of 2 adults are on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.

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:

- (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 did ensure that a record in writing was kept of the following: -
- (j) Details of medication administered to a child whilst attending the service.
 - (k) A designated book was in place in the service to record any accident, injury or incident occurring to a child attending the service. There were no entries recorded.

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

- The children attending enjoyed free movement within the playroom on the day.
- The wide variety of toys were accessible and available to all the children on the open shelving, thus facilitating the children to help themselves as they wanted to.
- Rest areas within the playroom consisted of colourful cushions, matting, couches and armchairs. Low level beds with appropriate linen were provided on the premise should they be required.
- Hand washing by the children was encouraged prior to mealtime and after using the toilet. Prior to the first mealtime conversations ensued between the staff member and the children on the importance of why they wash hands.
- The staff members present were observed to be kind and caring towards the children and they spoke to the children in low soft tones of voice.
- They demonstrated an understating of individual needs, for example children requiring additional support as they settled into the setting.

- The staff were observed meeting and greeting parents/guardians at the main door at departure time. A synopsis of the time children spent in the service that day was given in an unhurried, professional friendly manner.
- The meals served on inspection were no more than 3 hours apart.
- The children were afforded enough time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking cups provided by the service were suitable for the age and development stages of the children attending on the day.
- The staff encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently, assisting the children with opening yogurts and peeling bananas for example.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets located in the playroom.
- The registered provider had installed a second nappy changing unit in the adult toilet located in the office building.
- Individual toileting needs of the children were addressed as needed.
- Nappy changing was carried out as required during the session by a designated staff member. The staff member had a clear understanding of the role and responsibility around nappy changing and preventing cross infection. Nappy changing was explained to the children and the staff member communicated freely to them whilst changing the nappies.
- The staff encouraged and supported the children in becoming independent with using the toilet and were allowed take their time.
- The staff asked the children prior to going to play outside after the first mealtime if they wanted to use the toilet.
- The children wore outdoor protective clothing, the staff enabled and assisted the children putting on the clothing in an unhurried, enabling manner and praised the children for their efforts.
- The secured designated outdoor play area located at the rear of the building is available and accessible to the children each day accessed via the double doors from the playroom. The spacious area had limestone paving and artificial grass underfoot. A large pergola was provided with child sized tables covered with colourful vinyl cloths and child sized chairs.
- Children had access to a range of activities that included for example ride on toys, slides, a rocking horse, a caterpillar tunnel, a mud kitchen and a sand table.

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

- Healthy eating is promoted in the service and the staff members demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy.
- The parents and guardians of the children attending provide the food served at the mealtimes.
- On the day of the inspection 2 mealtimes were provided.
- The food observed at the mealtimes consisted of crackers, yogurts, cheese and a variety of fruit and raw vegetables.
- The children had water to drink and the water was available to them throughout the session including during outdoor play time. The inspector observed the staff reminding the children to drink the water outside of the mealtimes.
- The children’s perishable food items were refrigerated.

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.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The fruit and vegetables served on inspection were halved and sliced for example grapes and carrots.
- Cleaning products observed were stored out of the reach of the children.
- The entrance door to the premise was secured to prevent unauthorized persons into the service and from children gaining unsupervised access out.

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 registered provider ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certifications on file indicated that 6 staff members held current up to date training.

(2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available to the children attending. The box was stored on a high-level shelving unit in the playroom.

(b) The first aid equipment was available to the children at all times.

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.

(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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -

(a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 03/09/'24.

(b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm and for the firefighting equipment was 20/10/'23.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certification for the service was on file.

The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- the contact details for the insurance provider
- the name and address of the service insured
- the categories of insurance cover for the service that is part time day care.
- the number of children covered by the insurance was for 22 children.

The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27/03/'25