

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2022LK003 |
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| Name of Service: | St Anne's Montessori |
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| Address of Service: | St Anne's Primary School, Thomas Street, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick |
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| Eircode: | V94 YY15 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Nichola Meade |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 14/11/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 10 | PM | N/A |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Offices, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M Riordan |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

St. Anne's Preschool is a sessional service based in a classroom at St. Anne's Primary School in Rathkeale, Co. Limerick. It runs from 9:15 am to 12:15 pm, Monday to Friday, and currently has 15 children registered, with 10 attending on the day of the inspection. The preschool operates in a large, well-equipped playroom with nearby sanitary facilities. Children have daily access to a spacious outdoor playground on the school grounds for outdoor play.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner of the service and the designated person in charge of operating the facility. An additional two staff are employed to work each day at the service. All staff members have the required qualifications 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 inspection 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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued as one staff member present did not have the required Garda Vetting. See Regulation 9 Management and recruitment.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(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 operating the service and was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for both staff members working at the facility.

(b) All references were from past employers and references from other reputable sources were not required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for 2 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were not available for 1 staff working at the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider. In a reply to the notice on the 15th of November 2024, the registered provider stated that this person would not attend the service until the vetting disclosure was returned. As there are 2 staff already working at the service, the correct adult child ratio was maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member without Garda vetting did not work at the facility until a disclosure was received on the 22nd of November 2024. The staff member resumed work once the disclosure was received.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the relevant Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau was forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified 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) The registered provider ensured that there was at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 10 of the 15 registered pre-school children in attendance along with 3 staff members available. The adult child ratio was correct.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 12 children's registration forms were viewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of these children.

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) Provision was made to record 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 of the child could 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, received by the child.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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 maintained a record in writing of the following information in relation to the service:
- (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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A record in writing of the following information in relation to the service was not available:

- (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.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A record in writing of all the required information in relation to the service was documented in writing and displayed at the entrance to the classroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the information displayed in the service was forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

The service had a healthy eating policy, encouraging parents to provide nutritious snacks, such as sandwiches, fruit, crackers, and cheese, for break time. Healthy drinks were available throughout the morning on an accessible low-level shelf.

Children had easy access to toilets with hot water, soap, and paper towels for handwashing, as well as spare clothes and protective clothing for messy play. Tissues and wipes were always within reach, and waste was disposed of in foot pedal operated lidded bins. Outdoors each morning on arrival, children had access to a large playground for outdoor play time.

Individual care plans for children with additional needs were documented, outlining support strategies, progress reports, goals, and planned interventions.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operates from a large classroom within a primary school, featuring developmentally appropriate interest areas such as a construction zone, home corner, and reading corner. The room layout and equipment are adjusted based on the children's interests and developmental stages. Play materials are organised on accessible, low-level shelving. Child-sized furniture is used for activities and meals. A picture timetable helps children transition smoothly between activities. Language, literacy, and vocabulary development are supported through stories, songs, and conversations. The outdoor play area provides space for more active play opportunities. The school yard is accessible to the children each day and a covered area in the school yard provides a sheltered space in wet weather.

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 ensures that there is at all times a person in attendance who is qualified to administer first aid and has completed their First Aid Responder training.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box for children is safely stored within the classroom in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the room.

(b) The first aid box is available to the staff and children at all times throughout the day

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-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment in the premises was maintained. All fire extinguishers were last serviced in February 2024.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was no record maintained of monthly fire drills. Regular fire drills are required to ensure that all children are familiar with the procedure to follow to ensure the safe evacuation of the premises if needed.

(b) The maintenance record of the smoke alarms systems was not available for inspection. There was no record available to indicate when these alarms were last checked.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) A records of monthly fire drills have been forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

(b) Maintenance records of smoke alarm systems in the building have also been forwarded.

Supporting documentation submitted

In the reply to the report the registered provider state that reminder alerts have been set up to ensure that fire drills are carried out on a monthly basis.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had an up-to-date insurance certificate available for inspection. The policy covered 22 preschool children to attend the service. The commencement date of the insurance policy was the 28th of March 2024 and the expiry date for cover was the 27th of March 2025.