

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH013
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Name of Service:	Kinnegad Montessori School and Crèche
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Address of Service:	24 Riverside, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 FK82
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nora Dardis
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	15/08/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes
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
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Description of service

This service operates as a full day care service and provides an Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The age range of children cared for in the service is 1 to 6 years of age to the maximum of twenty-five children. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. A school age childcare facility is available.

The Early Years' Service is located on the ground floor of an adapted domestic dwelling. Three pre-school rooms and a kitchenette are provided on the ground floor. The toddler and pre-Montessori room was in operation on the day of the inspection. The Montessori room was closed for the summer holidays. An office is provided on the first floor. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. The service is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Kinnegad, County Westmeath.

Staffing

Four adults including the registered provider were working directly with children on the 15 August 2023.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 co-operation of the registered provider, designated 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.*

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(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available from past employers and a reputable source in respect of all adults.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of all adults.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of adults.

(4)

Adults held a major award at Level 5 to 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were seven pre-school children and four school age children attending the service supervised directly by four adults including the registered provider.

(8)(a)

Documentation indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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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 sampling process has been used and six child records were inspected. Information relating to (a)(b)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

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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;*
- (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 service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Parental information was available in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g) and shared with parents via email at the start of the pre-school term.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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 toddler room and pre-Montessori room were in operation and the following was observed.

(1)(a)

Toddler Room

Children were happy and content with their carer while engaged in play activities including sensory and free play. The staff member was positive towards children and was familiar with each child and their personalities. Children washed their hands before snack and mealtimes. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. Two children attending on a full day care basis slept in a cot and on a low-level bed respectively in a restful atmosphere in the toddler room and were physically checked by the staff member every 10 minutes.

The toddler room was bright and colourful with children's family photographs displayed in the room. Age and stage toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. A play kitchen and construction unit were noted in the toddler room.

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Pre-Montessori room

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before snack and mealtime. Snacks consisted of fruit, yoghurt, sandwiches with water to drink. Children enjoyed talking to each other whilst eating. Staff assisted children as necessary. Lively discussions were held about the recent local Fleadh and summer holidays abroad. Staff were positive towards children as they used individual names, eye contact and gave positive praise to children during activities. Children enjoyed play experiences indoors including table-top activities and art activities. Children were observed to play freely and enjoyed physical games in the outdoor play area. The service worked in partnership with parents and guardians in the following ways; a verbal handover was given on collection to parents, via a parent notice board displayed at the entrance to the service, individual emails are sent to parents at the start of the pre-school term with service information and updates. The staff member stated the child's scrapbook depicting the play and activities is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, sensory, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners. Extra toys and equipment were available in storage on the first floor. The registered provider stated toys and equipment are rotated to meet the children's individual learning and developmental needs.

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(b)

Two-fold up cots and low-level beds were available for children attending the toddler room to sleep on as required. Rest areas were available to the children for rest and relaxation.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by a high wall and fencing. There is both a grassed and tarmac area with various play experiences for children. Toys and equipment include sand play, water funnels, a playhouse, a wooden wigwam, wooden balancing blocks and a large slide on the grassed area.

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

Parents provide meals, snacks and drinks for the children attending on a full day care and sessional basis.

A healthy eating policy was available in the service.

Meals and snacks are stored in the fridge. The temperature of the fridge is recorded on daily basis.

Water is available to drink in the service.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Safety checklists were available for review.

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Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature at the wash hand basins was recorded at 34 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

No medicine was given at the time of the inspection. A temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature.

Safe Sleep:

Physical checks were carried out on sleeping children in the toddler room. A sleep log was recorded noting the colour, position and breathing of the sleeping child. The temperature of the room was recorded via a wall mounted thermometer at 20 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were free from obstruction. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated the service does not undertake outings from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep

1. A safety mattress was not in place for one cot used in the toddler room.
2. A waterproof cover was not available for the two cot mattresses.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1&2. New mattresses and two waterproof mattresses' protectors purchased.

Two mattresses disposed of.

Supporting documentation submitted

Receipts submitted.

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Summary Comment

Evidence submitted met the regulatory requirement.

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)
Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the premises.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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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 firefighting 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)(a)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 25 July 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in August 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2024.

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Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

Compliance Information

The registered provider submitted notifications of incidents to the Agency within 3 working days of an infectious disease that occurred in respect of children and staff since the last inspection on the 25 February 2022.