

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016WW007
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Name of Service:	Discoveries Montessori and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	St James Church, Crinken, Bray, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A98 VX58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Liz Mahon
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke
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

Discoveries Montessori and Afterschool first opened in September 2016. The service is located in the top floor of St. James Church Hall outside the town of Bray Co. Wicklow. It consists of two rooms, a kitchen area, and a sanitary area. It has access to an outdoor play area, which the children use on a daily basis. It is a sessional childcare service and is registered to provide care and education for children aged between 2 years and 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 9.15am and 12.45pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operate a sessional service for 38 weeks of the year. This service also operates a school aged childcare facility.

Staffing

There are four staff members who are employed in the service and three staff were present on the day of inspection. The registered provider and regional director arrived a short time after the inspection started but do not work directly with the children. A childcare student is on placement in the service two days per week.

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 inspection 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.

Additional Information

The inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

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

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

(1)

The registered provider has submitted a Change in Circumstances form to amend the name of the service manager and the contact telephone number for the manager on 19th of April 2024.

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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

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(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that there were four full-time staff members working in the service and a childcare student. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

There was a person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in place.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of the five staff members.

(c)

The required three year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of five staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

(4)

The four members of staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(A)

One staff member was employed pursuant to the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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(7)(a)(b)(c)

The service used up to date documentation to support learning and on-going professional development for all of the adults working in the service. Through this documentation, adults working in the service were also updated on all policies and procedures of the service and signed that they had read and understood the policies. Additional information and training sessions had been provided to all adults working in the service

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

International police vetting was not available for two staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

International police vetting has been acquired for one staff member and the second staff member has applied for international vetting but was not domiciled outside the State for six consecutive months and as such does not require same. The staff member has amended her Curriculum Vitae to reflect this. Managers have reviewed our "Recruitment & Garda Vetting" policy has this been updated.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d)

Photographic evidence of international police vetting and a copy of the amended Curriculum Vitae were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on inspection in relation to Regulation 9 (2)(d) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that all written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were in place in the service. The following policies were reviewed.

- Policy on Outings
- Policy on Critical Incident
- Policy on Accident and Incident
- Policy on Outdoor Play
- Policy on Recruitment
- Policy on Risk Management
- Policy on Staff Training
- Policy on Supervision
- Policy on a Missing Child

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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times.
There were four adults employed and present with thirteen children on the day of inspection.

(8)(c)
There were two adults on the premises at all times. The registered provider does not operate the service singlehandedly.

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;*
- (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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

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(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(g)(h)(i) and (k)

There was a record in writing of the above list of documents required in relation to the service.

(3)

The above records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection to an authorised person.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

BASIC NEED:

Children were given opportunities to make choices as to which activities they wished to pursue and were supported in their choice by the staff members. A child who did not wish to engage in "story time" was facilitated in an alternative activity with a staff member.

Children were given plenty of time to eat their food in a relaxed and unhurried environment. Fresh water was available to the children throughout their morning.

Children were supported and encouraged to be independent with using the toilet and were supervised appropriately. Children had access to an outdoor area for play, located to the rear of the service.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The pre-school room was maintained at a comfortable temperature of 22°C throughout the inspection. Several suitable rest areas were available to the children within the adjacent room off the main care area. The pre-school room had a low-level tables and chairs suitable for the age range of the children attending the service.

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There were specific areas of interest within the pre-school room and these areas were clearly labelled and equipment was visible and spaciouly laid out. All areas of interest were accessible to the children. The rest areas consisted of cushions and a sofa and soft floor matting, all of which were washable.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

The adults demonstrated warmth towards the children through language and interaction and children's choices were respected. Adults spoke to the children directly, addressing them using their names. Adults knelt to the level of the children when speaking to them individually. A strong teamwork ethos was evident by the interactions between the staff members and how they interacted with the children. Children's behaviour was managed in a competent and positive way with minor problems handled promptly.

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 appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- All cleaning products were stored, in the kitchen area, out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in the pre-school room was clearly marked and free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- The pre-school had 1 sanitary area, with 2 toilets and 2 sinks. The sanitary area had warm running water at 43°C, liquid soap and an air hand dryer.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service, for the safe disposal of used paper towels.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- Hand washing by adults and children was observed before snacks and after using the toilet.
- Hand sanitiser gel was available in the pre-school room and in prominent locations, inside and outside the service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, there were thirteen pre-school children present with four staff members. The service has now incorporated additional head counts, to their current practice, to be carried out when children are going outside to play and returning into the pre-school after play. A staff meeting between all their services was held on the 22nd of April to roll this new practice out.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated that there was adequate insurance in place for the service for 22 children attending on a sessional basis that expires on the 27th of March 2025.

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:

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider notified the Agency in writing within three working days of becoming aware of the following incident.

(e)

An incident in respect of which a child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.