

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS013							
Name of Service:	Little Stars Montessori School at KSH							
Address of Service:	Castle Avenue Kilminchy Village Portlaoise Co. Laois							
Email Address:	kilminchyschoolhouse@gmail.com							
Name of Registered Service Provider:	Sonya Duggan							
Type of service registered:	Full Day Care		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Date(s) of Inspection:	2	2	0	4	2	0	2	1
No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	AM		52		PM			
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly							
Inspection undertaken by :	D. Molloy							
Title:	Early Years Inspector							
Areas which were the subject of this Inspection								
Governance			Health, Welfare and Development			Safety		
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.					

Description of Service	<p>Little Stars Montessori School is a full day care service operated under this ownership since 2019. The age range of the children is from 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The service operates from 9am to 3.30pm. Two sessional services are offered from 9am to 12noon and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday. Sixty-eight children are enrolled. A full day service was not operational on the day of inspection.</p> <p>Little Stars Montessori School is located in a housing estate, Kilminchy Village in the town of Portlaoise. The premises is purpose built and used for the sole purpose of operating an early years service. A car parking facility is available to the side of the premises and a large playground is available to the rear of the service. The service is a single storey building and consists of entrance hall, office, staff room, kitchen, 5 play rooms, 9 w.c. and wash hand basins including a staff sanitary accommodation and wheelchair accessible sanitary accommodation. A long hallway stretches the length of the building and access is gained to the playground from a door located at the end of this hallway. The large play area is securely fenced with different surfaces and has been divided into 2 separate areas for the use of children in different play rooms. The play rooms are used by different children's groups depending on their ages and are divided into ECCE year 1 and ECCE year 2.</p>
Staffing	<p>The registered provider facilitated the inspection. All adults working directly with the children have qualifications ranging from level 6 to level 9 QQI the National Qualifications Framework for Early Years.</p>
Methodology	<p>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 are upheld.</p> <p>The findings on inspection are based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff <p>This inspection was unannounced and focused on areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required.</p> <p>The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 health welfare and development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection focused on room 1 year 1 ECCE room were 16 children were accommodated aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff members.</p>

	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.
Acknowledgements	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider who facilitated the inspection and engaged in the pre-inspection process and staff in the service. The inspector wished to acknowledge the children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (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.
- (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;

Compliance Information:	<p>Following review of the service files and further to discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that no new staff had been employed in the service since the last inspection in 2019.</p> <p>(3) The registered provider ensured that all vetting procedures had been completed prior to any staff being appointed, assigned to work in the service and allowed access and contact with the pre-school children attending the service.</p> <p>(7) The manager ensured that employees were provided with necessary training, in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The policies, procedures and statements of the service. <p>It was confirmed that all staff had received training in and held a copy of revised policies, procedures and statements in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff were familiar with their own responsibilities and requirements under COVID-19 protocols.</p>
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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:

Required written policies and statements of the service were in place including:

- Early Years Services Self-Assessment Checklist, staff COVID-19 declaration statement, protocol for visitors and return to work safety protocol.
- The inspector was required to fill out a COVID-19 declaration prior to commencement of the inspection.
- Revised Infection Control Policy in line with HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) Guidance for Setting Providing Childcare during the COVID-19 Pandemic were in place.
- Cleaning schedules and staff cleaning rotas were maintained and had been updated. A new system of cleaning and risk assessment in relation to toys and equipment had been devised in response to the COVID-19 requirements. The cleaning and scheduling of cleaning was supervised by the person in charge.
- The hand washing policy and practices observed during the inspection reflected the COVID-19 requirements.
- Parents and guardians were not permitted to enter the service in line with COVID-19 requirements. A system of controlled entry and exit was in place and adults waited while maintaining social distance at the drop off and collection times. A new wooden divide had been erected outside the main entrance to assist with social distancing and entry and exit routes.
- Notices were on display outside of the service to remind parents to maintain social distancing and marking out where to stand.

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.*
- (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.*

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels

Compliance Information:	<p>(1) The registered provider ensured that at all times there were an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service. On the day of inspection there were 52 pre-school children being cared for by 9 staff. In addition, the registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.</p> <p>(2) The inspection commenced at 9.45am at which time the following pods were operational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pod 1, room 1 year 1 ECCE room, where 16 children aged 3 years to 5 years were being cared for by 3 staff. Pod 2, room 2 year 2 ECCE room, where 12 children aged 2½ years to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff. Pod 3, room 3 year 1 ECCE room, where 11 children aged 2½ years to 3 years were being cared for by 2 staff members. Pod 4, year 4 ECCE room, 13 children aged 2½ years to 3 years were being cared for by 2 staff.
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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:	<p>(1)(a)</p> <p>SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parents/guardians no longer entered the service due to the COVID-19 restrictions however their connection and communication with the service was valued. Communication with parents included email and phone conversations. The service utilised an educational application for the purpose of sharing online activities and distributing information to parents. Should a parent wish to have a personal update on their child's progress it was possible to make an appointment for a one-to-one meeting with the person in charge. Parents could if they wished arrange a face to face appointment to discuss their own children's progress. The service recognised the intercultural nature of the children attending and promoted individual cultural aspects, had an intercultural week where different cultures were represented through images and discussion. <p>PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:</p>
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

- The premises had been completely updated, repainted, redecorated and up-styled since the previous inspection in 2019 resulting in a warm and child focused ambiance.
- Construction work on the second part of the outdoor play facilities had been completed since the last inspection, with the addition of a natural grass area in which was place a large story throne for adult use and 6 matching stools which were hand carved and hand made from timber.
- Children were included in the decoration of the indoors environment with their art work on display including their own personal self portraits for the family wall in addition to family photographs.
- An inclusive ethos was reflected in a birthday wall where staff's dates of birth were included in the wall display.
- An environmentally friendly ethos was reflected in the focus of "insect week" where the theme of insect was explored through pictures, nature tables, art work and fake insects/creepy crawlies.

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:

The following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children were in place in the service.

GENERAL SAFETY:

- A daily record was maintained of all children attending the service, the rooms they were in and staff in the pod so as in the event of contract tracing requirements each unit could be clearly identified. Staff and children remained in their own pod throughout the session.
- Staff were up to date in first aid training.
- The secure entry and exit system was in place which prevented unauthorized access and the unsupervised exit of a child. This entry system was controlled by the staff from within the service.

INFECTION CONTROL:

- A COVID-19 response officer had been appointed and took responsibility for implementation and review of COVID-19 requirements.
- A designated room was provided should a child need to isolate in the event of exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- The premises was well ventilated with openable windows throughout the service.
- A regulated supply of thermostatically controlled hot water heated to a maximum of 43°C was available for hand washing throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Liquid soap and disposable hand towels were available. Pedal bins were provided for the hygienic disposal of used hand towels and tissues.

- Wall mounted and mobile hand sanitizers were available indoors and outdoor for staff and children's use.