

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DR008
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Name of Service:	Rowan House Montessori
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Address of Service:	Stradbroke Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 E621
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Cleary
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	28
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate - Tusla Child and Family Agency Brunel Building, Floor 7 Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	M Bermingham
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Rowan House Montessori is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care for up to 38 children aged 2 – 6 years; operating hours are 08:00 - 18:00. The service operates from a purpose-built premises which is adjacent to a domestic dwelling and consists of two rooms, a sheltered outdoor space accessible from one room, and an outdoor space to the front.

Staffing

The service employs eight adults in total. On the day of inspection there were six adults working directly with children including the registered provider; the person in charge provided cover and support when required.

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, and 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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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*
- (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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 service had a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were rostered to be present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place as evidenced by observing the operation of the service and through discussion with staff.

(2)

Eight adults were employed in the service of whom four commenced since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 1 May 2024. This was determined through a review of previous inspection records and discussion with the person in charge. Recruitment vetting documentation was reviewed for these four newly commenced adults and renewals of Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for existing adults; the following vetting considerations were found:

- (a) Six written and verified references from past employers were available.
- (b) Two written and verified references from sources other than past employers were available.
- (c) Four Garda vetting disclosures were available, and renewals of Garda vetting disclosures were available in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate's regulatory notice requiring renewal every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was not required as determined through a review of the available documentation.

(3)

The procedure specified in Regulation 9(2) were completed prior to four adults commencing in the service as required; this was determined through a review of available documentation.

(4)

Four adults whose qualifications were reviewed, and who were working directly with children, were found to hold the required qualification or recognised equivalent.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)*
- An adequate number of adults were working directly with children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)*
- The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 6 adults working directly with 28 children in the morning and in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)*
- There were at least two adults on the premises at all times as evidenced by the current roster.

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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The following observations demonstrated how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service and how appropriate and suitable care practices were in place;

A balanced menu of meals and snacks was provided in line with the service's healthy eating policy. Children ate snack at 10:35 consisting of banana and apple, and lunch at 12:00 consisting of pasta, tomato sauce and garlic bread, served with a drink of milk. Additional helpings were immediately provided on request from children. The registered provider confirmed that breakfast was served from 8:00 to include cereal, and that tea consisting of sandwiches, yoghurt and fruit would be provided in the afternoon. Drinking water was provided to children at mealtimes and continually throughout the day. The atmosphere was relaxed and social at mealtimes as adults and children sat together chatting. Children's personal care needs were attended to promptly and toileting was supported when required. Children were cared for appropriately for warm weather to include appropriate clothing, suncream, water play, and shade.

The service supported relationships around children and adults supported children emotionally and socially. Adults engaged well with each other which supports smooth transitions in which adults provided clear instructions while praising and encouraging children through care routines and activities. Children's efforts and achievements were recognised and acknowledged with support offered where required. Children appeared familiar and content in the daily routine and showed independence such as taking off shoes and socks for water play, for example. Adults' interactions with children were respectful, kind and playful and adults sat with children during activities extending learning. Children's sense of identity and belonging was promoted through displays of family and children's photographs and children's names, artwork and birthdays. Adults supported children in resolving upsets under the services guidance on supporting children's behaviour that was displayed.

The environment supported children's learning and development; it was bright, spacious, set out in learning areas, and resourced with a wide range of materials which were organised, easily accessible, and inviting for children. Indoor and outdoor learning areas included a creation station, rest areas, construction and manipulation areas, an imaginary home setting, and Montessori materials. Children were independently choosing their own play and activities and were engaged in each learning area to include, for example, painting, writing, drawing, working with shapes, puzzles, dressing frames, peg boards, and playing pretend games. Children also access a sheltered outdoor space seamlessly and were observed playing pretend games there with imaginary settings and props.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 were taken to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of children, and provide a safe environment. This was evidenced by observation of practice, a review of the environment and documentation, and discussion with staff;

General Safety:

- The entrance to the service was appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or children exiting the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was enclosed and secure.
- The TV was securely mounted.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- The kitchen and storage areas were secured and inaccessible to children.
- Materials, resources and toys were maintained in good condition.

Infection Control:

- The premises, environment, equipment and materials appeared clean and were maintained in a hygienic condition.
- Hand washing was facilitated appropriately through the provision of running water, liquid soap, paper towels, and hand driers.
- The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after toileting and outdoor play, and before meals.
- Waste was inaccessible to children and managed appropriately through the use of lidded bins.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated that they were knowledgeable about the procedures and practices in place for administering and recording medication in line with the service's administration of medication policy.
- Prior parental consent was granted to administer medication if required with procedures in place to safely administer, including in the case of emergency.
- Medication was clearly labelled, within its expiry date, stored in the original container, and was stored out of reach of children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Fire Safety:

- Emergency escape routes and exits were clearly signposted.
- Staff outlined the procedures to evacuate children in the event of a fire and knew the location of the assembly point, in line with the services procedures that were displayed.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. In the Older room, children's attendance was not accurately recorded in real time. On review of records at 10:25, 19 children were marked as attending against a physical headcount of 20 children. Inaccurate records of attendance may hinder the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire or an emergency.
2. In the younger room a fire door was obstructed by a heavy sandbox which may hinder the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire or an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that

1. Children's attendance records were corrected during the inspection, when noted, and all staff were reminded about the importance of live recording of children's arrival times. A staff meeting was held to brush up on policies and staff induction now reiterates the importance of real time recording of attendance, and management check records daily.
2. The sandpit was pushed down to allow the door to be unobstructed and moved to the other end of the garden. The fire door is now fully accessible on both sides.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliances identified on inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service held a certificate of insurance for 43 children attending full daycare; expiry 27 March 2027.