

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC012
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Name of Service:	Ahiohill Beg Montessori
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Address of Service:	Ahiohill National School, Ennniskeane, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P47 VY31
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre Deasy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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	N/A
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Description of service

Ahiohill Beg Montessori is a sessional service in a prefabricated premises on the grounds of Ahiohill National School. The service offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme for children aged between two and six years. The service operates from 9am to 12pm, Monday to Friday, thirty-eight weeks of the year. An enclosed outdoor area is located at the rear of premises. The service also offers a school age service. The service uses a Montessori and play based approach to learning and development.

Staffing

The registered provider is serviced based. Two staff members and the registered provider were working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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.

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 and a named deputy was available to deputise in their absence from the service.
- (b) The registered provider and named deputy were in the service during the inspection.
- (c) All staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities and a clear management structure was in place.
- (2)
- Three staff members were employed in the service including the registered provider and all three files were reviewed.
- (a) (b) All six references were from a past employer and were validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) A Police vetting disclosure was available for one staff member who had lived outside of a state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) All three staff held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) There were adequate staff available to care for the preschool children in attendance in the service on the day of inspection.
- (3) On arrival to the service, there were nine preschool children aged between three and five years being cared for by three members of staff.

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) Eleven children’s records were assessed and all forms were completed and contained the required information outlined from (a) to (i).

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:

- (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.*

Compliance Information

The following records were assessed on inspection:

- (i) A staff roster was available and reviewed.
- (k) A sample of three accident and incident records from September 2024 to January 2025 was available and contained all relevant information in relation to any accident and incident that had occurred in the service.

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

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting and outdoor play and before snack time.
- Snacks were provided by the parents and guardians of the children. Individual water beakers were freely available to the children throughout the day.
- Nappy changing was not observed on the day of inspection. A nappy changing area was available if required.
- Children were observed freely moving around the care room and outdoor area.
- The staff were aware of the individual care needs of the children and ensured that each child's needs were met through adapting activities and additional toys and equipment available to the children. For example, a sensory area with a tent was available to the children for emotional development.

Supporting Relationships

- During snack time, the staff members were observed sitting with the children and engaging in conversation, promoting social and communication skills. Children were given the time to enjoy their food.
- Staff were observed speaking to the children in a kind and respectful manner and ensured they were at the child's level when communicating with them.
- A sense of identity and belonging was observed between the children and staff as a child's birthday was celebrated on the day of inspection. A family wall was also displayed within the care room.

Physical and Material Environment

- The care room had a range of play based and Montessori equipment freely accessible to children on child height shelving.
- Montessori equipment was available to the children such as dressing frames and cylinder blocks to support gross motor skills.
- A range of books and soft seating was available in the reading corner which supported childrens language skills.
- Art and craft materials were freely open to the children along with an art easel, paper, paint and crayons.
- The outdoor gave an alternative change of environment for the children through an outdoor classroom structure. Children were observed colouring and playing with plastic blocks in the outdoor classroom.
- A climbing structure with a slide, a chalk board and a natural material area with a mud kitchen and tyres was observed to be enjoyed by the children.

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 door into the care room was secured and prevented a child exiting unsupervised and any unauthorised access.

- The outdoor area was observed to be a safe and secure area for the children and documented evidence of a daily risk assessment for the area was available and reviewed.
- All toys and equipment assessed were observed to be in good condition.
- All blind cords observed were secure and out of reach to children.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to children and staff. Water temperatures were recorded between 29.6°C and 32.6°C in the handbasins in the sanitary area.
- The care room was naturally ventilated through open windows.
- Perishable food items from the children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator and prevented food spoilage.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were not observed administering medication on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, fire doors and exits were clear and unobstructed.

Outing:

- The registered provider was aware of the services outings policy and stated this was followed during outings with the children to the local community hall adjacent to the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) An attendance book was available for the children in attendance in the service and indicated each preschool child was checked in and out on a daily basis.

(3) (a) (b)

The inspector was asked to check in and out of the service on a visitor book which was approved by the registered provider. A written record was available for the checking in and out of staff on a daily basis.

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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that fire drills took place on a monthly basis. Records assessed showed the last fire drill took place on 29 January 2025 and detailed the number of children and staff that were in attendance.

(b) A maintenance record was available for the firefighting equipment within the service and an annual service had taken place in January 2025. A maintenance record was available for the smoke alarms in the premises and an annual service had taken place on 11 March 2024.

(4) The fire evacuation procedure for the service was clearly displayed in the care room.