

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC140
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Name of Service:	Easy Learning Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Sliabh Dotia, Whitechurch, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T34 TK75
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elizabeth Cahill
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	3	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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

Easy Learning Montessori School is a privately owned, registered sessional service. Children aged 2 to 6 years are accommodated and can avail of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme from 9.30am to 12.30pm, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year. A combination of play based and Montessori pedagogy is implemented.

The early years service is situated in a rural area and operates from within the registered provider's private residence. It consists of one care room, with an adjoining children's sanitary facility. An outdoor play space is available at the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service is operated single handedly by the registered provider, who holds a major award in early childhood care and education.

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.

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 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*

(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 person in charge of operating the early years service was the registered provider.
 - (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider was working at the setting and remained available to facilitate the inspection process. Written records indicated that the registered provider was present at the setting throughout the hours of operation.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the two adults attached to the service were assessed and the following information was noted:
- (a) Of the four required written and validated references, one was on file from a past employer.
 - (b) Three of the references had been provided by sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for both staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Not applicable. Review of the relevant employment and education records demonstrated that police vetting from other jurisdictions was not required.
- (4) Written evidence regarding the attainment of a recognised award in early childhood care and education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, was on file for the registered provider and the emergency contact person.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (b) A record of validation was unavailable for one of the references, which had been obtained from a source other than a past employer.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(b)

The written reply outlined that this has been obtained and that references will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, to ensure continued compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the written reference and validation record.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been resolved.

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.

(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) The registered provider was available to the children throughout the period of inspection.

(3) The required adult to child ratio was adhered to; there was one adult responsible for the direct care and education of three children, who were aged 3 to 4 ½ years.

(8)

(c) As the service was operated single handedly, an emergency contact person, who was familiar with the operation of the service, had been appointed to assist the registered provider, in the event of an emergency.

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) All eight of the registration forms were reviewed and met the requirements listed from (a) to (i).

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

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- The children were accommodated to have a snack break at 11.45am. As the children and adult sat together to eat and drink, a relaxed social environment was apparent, with lots of chatting encouraged.
- The children were observed to independently access the toilet facility and appropriate support was promptly provided by the adult, as the need arose.
- A calm and pleasant atmosphere was evident in the care room. The children appeared at ease in their environment and the registered provider ensured frequent communication in relation to upcoming transitions.
- Drinking water was accessible in the care room throughout the morning.
- Tissues were available within the children's reach, which supported them to attend to their own personal hygiene.
- There was sufficient space for children to initiate activities and to engage in various types of play within the indoor environment.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- An adequate amount of waist height tables and child size chairs were available for the children’s use at mealtimes and for the purpose of engaging in tabletop activities.
- The display furniture used to store the majority of play materials was set low, which allowed the children to independently access their chosen interest items.
- Examples of the various play resources in the care room included jigsaws, Montessori materials, a well-equipped play kitchen, dolls and accessories, books, plastic bricks, a train set, animal figures, musical instruments and drawing boards.
- Equipment on offer in the outdoor area included a swing set, ride on toys and a digging area, with a selection of handheld vehicles and digging toys. Outdoor seating was also provided.

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

- Food for the children’s mid-morning snack was provided by their parents or guardians and included sandwiches, rice cakes, yogurt and a selection of fruit, with water to drink.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children who attended the service had specific dietary requirements or food allergies.
- Should a child become hungry outside of the designated mealtime, the registered provider confirmed that they could choose a snack from their lunch box.

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 main entrance door was found to be secured when the inspector arrived to carry out the inspection. This practice minimised the risk of unauthorised access.
- There was safe storage of cleaning agents, which were maintained out of the children's reach.
- Cables from electrical equipment were inaccessible to the children.
- There were no blind cords in the care room.

Infection control:

- There was designated wall hook storage for the children's coats and separate storage was provided for their wellies.
- To support effective handwashing, the children's wash hand basin was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and a paper towel dispenser. A foot pedal operated bin was available for the disposal of used paper towels. The children were noted to wash their hands after using the toilet and before the mid-morning snack.
- Perishable snacks were stored in the fridge, which minimised the risk of food spoilage.

Fire safety:

- The fire exit door was maintained free from obstruction.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated and clearly visible.
- Firefighting equipment was securely wall mounted.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

The Garda vetting disclosure available for one of the adults who worked at the service, was not dated within the previous three years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The response from the registered provider outlined that the process for obtaining an updated Garda vetting disclosure has been initiated. As a preventive measure, the registered provider will review garda vetting on an intermittent basis to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence in relation to the Garda vetting application process was submitted.

Summary Comment

Evidence that an application for Garda vetting was in process, was reviewed in respect of the staff member. However, a copy of the completed Garda vetting has not been submitted to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 23 remains out outstanding.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) While it was acknowledged that the registered provider had paediatric first aid, an up-to-date certificate in First Aid Response (FAR) training was unavailable.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has completed the FAR course and going forward, will ensure that FAR training is updated within the required time frame.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written confirmation from the accredited FAR course facilitator, outlining that the registered provider has completed the course and is awaiting the certificate.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25.

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

It was noted that throughout the morning, the children in the care of the registered provider were well supervised. This included during indoor free play, at snack time and when accessing and utilising the sanitary facility.