

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC215
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Name of Service:	Lilliput Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Ardfallen, Douglas, Cork, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 YX84
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Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Burke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	13
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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 & D Cotter
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Lilliput Montessori School is a sessional service, which is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 8.30am to 11.30am and from 11.45am to 2.45pm, over a 38-week annual period.

The premises is located in a residential area of Douglas in Cork and is provided from a single storey building. It consists of two care rooms and the children have the use of an outdoor play area, at the side and rear of the building.

Staffing

There are eight adults employed at the early years service, all of whom work directly with the children. This includes the registered provider and five adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. Each of the eight adults 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy, 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*

(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 in charge of operating the service and a named deputy was also in place.
- (b) Both the registered provider and the deputy were working at the setting when the inspection commenced and the registered provider remained available throughout.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the eight adults attached to the service were reviewed and the following was noted:
- (a) There were 13 written and validated references on file from past employers.
- (b) Three references had been provided by sources other than previous employers and had been validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) A recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education was held by each of the eight adults who were employed to work directly with the children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) The required police vetting was unavailable for 1 of the adults who had resided in another jurisdiction for a period that exceeded 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply from the registered provider outlined that the staff member had applied for the relevant police vetting. Confirmation that the vetting has been processed was received on 7 November 2025 and receipt of the certificate once received was sent in. The registered provider will not employ an adult who does not have the appropriate police vetting in place going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required police vetting was forwarded.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9.

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) At the time of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.
- (3) The adult to child ratios exceeded the requirements of the regulation.
- During the morning, there were 6 adults responsible for the direct care of 27 children, who were aged 2 ½ to 4 ½ years.
 - In the afternoon, 5 adults were available to the 13 children present, who were aged 3 to 4 ½ years.

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) A sample of 10 enrolment forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The records contained all of the required information, as listed from (a) to (i) of this regulation.

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:

- During the sessional service, a mid-morning snack was facilitated shortly after 10.00am, in the small classroom and was observed at 10.30am in the big classroom.
- Reusable water bottles, which belonged to the children, were maintained where they could be easily seen and retrieved as needed, throughout the day.
- Toilet trained children were supported to access and utilise the sanitary facility in an independent manner, with supervision provided. A separate nappy changing area was available for children who required nappy changing.
- Rest areas were accessible to the children within the care rooms, should they wish to opt out of scheduled activities at any stage.

- The children enjoyed freedom of movement as they played and explored, within the indoor environments and also had the opportunity to engage in outdoor play and activities.

Supporting relationships:

- Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and unhurried, with conversation and social interaction encouraged. Staff members were readily available to assist any child who required help to open lunch boxes or food packaging.
- Staff members demonstrated awareness of the children’s individual needs were responsive to their cues, such as their need for comfort and reassurance when upset. Steps were also taken to adapt the immediate environment according to the children’s needs. For example, a projector was used in the big classroom during the afternoon session, which helped to create a calming atmosphere and staff were also mindful of the arrangement of furniture within the care room, to avoid over stimulation.

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

- The snacks consumed by the children during the sessional periods were provided by their parents or guardians. Examples were observed to include sandwiches, crackers, yogurts, cheese and a variety of fruit, with water to drink.
- In managing a specific food allergy, the service had implemented a nut free policy.
- The registered provider advised that if a child voiced that they were hungry outside of the allocated mealtimes, they were free to choose something to eat 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:

- Unauthorised access to the premises was prevented through maintaining the security of the main entrance door, while it was not in use.
- The outdoor play area was enclosed by high-level walls and a secured gate.
- Firefighting equipment was securely wall mounted.

Infection control:

- To support the practice of hygienic handwashing, wash hand basins were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins. The children were observed to wash their hands before the mid-morning snack.
- Low-level shelving was in use to store the children's coats and bags.
- The small classroom was naturally ventilated through an open window and openable windows were also provided in the big classroom and in both sanitary facilities.

Administration of medication:

- The medication which may be required for children's use was stored at a high-level, labelled with the children's names and was noted to be in date.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were maintained free from obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

1. The children's perishable foods were not refrigerated prior to the mid-morning snack. This increased the risk of food spoilage. It was confirmed during subsequent discussion with the registered provider that a refrigerator was unavailable.
2. Disposable aprons were unavailable for use during nappy changing procedures, which increased the risk of cross infection. This was confirmed during discussion with the registered provider.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

1. In her written reply, the registered provider stated that a countertop fridge has been purchased, as there is not enough space for a free-standing fridge. All yogurts and dairy products will be put in labelled zip lock bags and placed in the fridge.
2. Plastic disposable aprons have been ordered. The registered provider will ensure that all staff who are changing a nappy will wear a clean, single use apron and will dispose of it afterwards.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

1. A copy of the receipt for the refrigerator and photographic evidence.
2. A copy of the order confirmation for the disposable aprons.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider are accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

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 firefighting 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) Records of monthly fire drills were maintained on a digital application. It was noted that the most recent fire drill was conducted on 25 September 2025.
 - (b) A written list of the of the number and type of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was made available. Maintenance records indicated that both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms were serviced on 3 September 2025.
- (4) The service's fire evacuation procedures were displayed in one of the care rooms.

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