

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC261
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Name of Service:	Maryborough Montessori School
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Address of Service:	5 Lisle Rd., Maryborough Estate, Douglas, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 AP02
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/04/2026
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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).

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Description of service

Maryborough Montessori School is a privately owned sessional service, that was established in 2001. It caters for children aged 2 to 6 years, with registered opening hours from 8.30am to 12.00pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme over 38 weeks of the year.

Located in a suburban area of Cork city, the service is provided from a ground floor room, within a private residence. An adjacent sanitary facility is available and the children have the use of an enclosed outdoor play area, at the rear of the two-storey building.

Staffing

The service is operated single handedly by the registered provider, who holds a major award in early childhood care and education. An emergency contact person has also been appointed.

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 -

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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.

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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 named person in charge at the setting was the registered provider.
 - (b) The registered provider was working at the service when the unannounced inspection commenced and remained present throughout the inspection.
- (2) A staff file which had not been reviewed previously was the focus of the inspection.
- (a) There were two written and validated references required in total. Of these, one had been provided by a past employer.
 - (b) The second written and validated reference on file was from a source other than a previous employer.
 - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure had been obtained for the adult. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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(d) Not applicable. Following a review of the adult's curriculum vitae, there was no evidence that international police vetting was required.

(4) Not applicable, as a qualification was not required for the emergency contact person.

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) Throughout the inspection, the registered provider was available to the children present.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the requirements of the regulation were adhered to. There was 1 adult involved in the direct care and education of 3 children, who were aged 2 ½ to 3 years.

(8)

(c) The service was operated single handedly and the registered provider ensured that an emergency contact person had been nominated to assist her, in the event of an emergency.

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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

All five child registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information, under parts (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) and (h) of this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

- (i) None of the five child records included provision for parents to give their written consent for appropriate medical treatment, in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that the relevant information has been added to the form, including provision for a parent's signature.

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Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the updated child record form.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 15.

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 mid-morning snack, the registered provider sat with the children, who were afforded adequate time to eat and chat, in an unhurried environment.
- Tissues were available within the children's reach, which supported them to attend to their own personal hygiene.
- Developmentally appropriate assistance was offered to the children, as they used the adjacent sanitary facility.
- A rest area, which consisted of a wooden seat, positioned next to bookshelves, was available in the entrance area.
- Within the indoor environment, there was sufficient space for the children to move freely as they initiated activities and followed the daily routine. The children also spent time in the outdoor play area, during the morning.
- The children were dressed appropriately in coats during outdoor play.

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Physical and material environment:

- The care room was adequately equipped with suitably sized tables and chairs, for the children's use during seated activities and mealtime routines.
- Low set, open shelving allowed the children to freely access a selection of developmentally appropriate materials. For example:
 - interest items such as plastic bricks, wooden blocks and a train set, accommodated construction play
 - a play kitchen, with an adjacent supply of utensils and play food, encouraged imaginary play
 - art and craft supplies promoted mark making and creativity
 - jigsaws, connectable shapes and magnet tiles supported the development of fine motor skills.
- Outdoors, the play environment consisted of grass and concrete surfaces. The available equipment offered opportunities for active play, exploration and gross motor development. For example, there were slides, ride on toys, goal posts and hula hoops, as well as an equipped mud kitchen and a sand tray.

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:

- Upon the inspector's unannounced arrival, the entrance door to the building was found to have been secured. This practice minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the care room.
- Outdoors, the play environment was secured through a combination of high-level fencing, hedging and a gate.
- A suitable tension device was in place to secure the blind cord in the care room.
- Display furniture was appropriately anchored.
- Cleaning agents were maintained out of reach of the children.
- The temperature of the water at the children's wash hand basin was thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. A water temperature of 36.2°C was recorded.

Infection control:

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- Suitable handwashing and drying facilities were available in the children's sanitary area, including warm running water, liquid soap, a paper towel dispenser and a lidded, pedal-operated bin. The children were observed to wash their hands before eating.
- The table used for snack time was sanitised before use.
- Children's bags and personal belongings were stored on wall hooks, in the entrance area.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

Some of the children's perishables foods were not refrigerated prior to snack time, which increased the risk of food spoilage. Children were observed to retrieve these snacks from their bags, which were stored in the entrance area. It was acknowledged that one of the children's snacks had been placed in the fridge, when they arrived later in the morning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The children's lunchboxes will be checked every day and perishable foods will be removed and placed in the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

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

Part VI - Safety

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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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection, each of the children present were checked into the service by the registered provider. A sample review of a further four weeks of attendance records, dated between 9 March 2026 and 17 April 2026, also confirmed this practice.

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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider held a current First Aid Response (FAR) certificate, which was valid until 13 October 2027.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored on a high level shelf in the main care room, which was accessible only by an adult.

(b) The first aid supplies were available to the children at all times, should treatment be required.

Part VI - Safety

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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) Documentation in relation to completed monthly fire drills was presented for review. It was noted that the most recent fire drill was undertaken on 18 March 2026.
 - (b) Maintenance records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm were both checked by a fire safety company on 12 December 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation notice was clearly displayed in the care room.