

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC369
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Name of Service:	Siobhans Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Mourneabbey Community Centre, Mourneabbey, Mallow, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P51 AKP9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhan Kenny O'Connor
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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

Siobhans Montessori School is in operation since 2014 in a community building in a rural area in north Cork. The service leases the rooms in use to care for children and has the sole use of the rooms for the purposes of providing an early years service. The service is registered to care for children in the age range of 2-6 years and currently operates between the hours of 9:30 and 12:30. Rooms in the service include an entrance hallway, a playroom, a storeroom, a kitchenette off the playroom and sanitary accommodation for both children and staff. An outdoor play area is provided at the back of the building and parking is available at the front of the community building. Additional rooms in the building include an office and sanitary accommodation not in use by the service. Children have access to a community hall in the building.

Staffing

There are four adult members attached to the service. On the day of inspection, three adults were present including the registered provider and were all working directly with the children.

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 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 children, registered provider and staff 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 person in charge and there was a named deputy to deputise if required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived and remained present throughout the inspection.
 - (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to four adults who were employed in the service were the subject of the inspection.
 - (a) Of the eight required references, four were from a previous employer with required records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the eight required references, four were from another source other than a previous employer with required records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the four adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) Records demonstrated that four of the adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to level 8 as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) International police vetting was not on file for one adult for whom it was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was made by the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The police vetting was applied for and has now been received. The registered provider will ensure this is obtained for any further employees that require it.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the police vetting was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2) (d).

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, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.
- (3) The service exceeded the minimum required ratio as per regulation in the care room for the morning. There were 3 adults directly caring for 15 children for the duration of the inspection.

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 records of early years children attending the service were reviewed. Each of the children's records were found to contain the required information of (a) to (i) above.

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,*

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- The layout of the care room supported the children to move freely within their environments and to actively engage in their chosen tasks.
- Food was prepared by parents or guardians and on their arrival to the service, the perishable foods were placed in the refrigerator. The food was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples of food consumed were sandwiches, yogurts, apples bananas and crackers.
- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the morning.
- Children were observed accessing the toilet area under the supervision of the staff who were available to assist if needed.
- A rest area was available in the care room and was furnished with a low-level sofa and bean bags.
- Outdoor games and activities were promoted, and children were observed to enjoy outdoor play at the time of inspection. Children were seen to have the use of playhouses, slides, see-saw, a water table and outdoor artwork. The registered provider informed the inspector that an indoor hall was also accessible to the children but was not used on the day of inspection.

Supporting relationships:

- The adults were noted to interact with the children in a caring manner throughout the inspection, lowering to their level to communicate and being responsive to the individual needs of the children.
- Staff were heard praising and encouraging children with their artwork.
- Staff were observed by the inspector encouraging group learning through singing songs and engaging in circle time with the children.
- The staff sat indoors and outdoors at the tables with the children engaging in different activities and interests such as using moulding dough and colouring.
- Staff encouraged communication and language development through discussing topics of interest with the children and welcomed children to expand on their discussion. This was observed by the inspector when children and staff discussed caterpillars changing to a butterfly, Easter and starting football training.
- Staff engaged with children at their level, as observed when children were hooking fish in the water table and dancing at circle time.
- Children were observed to play independently using toys such as tractors, a toy mop and Hoover.
- A family photo wall was evident, supporting a sense of belonging in the care room.

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:

- All accessible external doors from the care room were secured with twistable locks. The front door was closed after all the parents and guardians left. This helped to prevent unauthorised access.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The fire extinguishers were wall mounted on secure wall hooks.
- Visibility strips were within the glass of the doors in the care room.
- The appropriate temperature of 18°C was recorded in the care room.
- The appropriate temperature range of the water in the sanitary area and the nappy changing area was recorded between 26.3°C and 36.4°C.
- The outdoor area was enclosed by timber fencing.
- A cover had been placed on the radiators in the care room to prevent the children accessing them.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and a wall mounted air dryer.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack time, after use of the toilet and after outdoor play. Staff were observed to remind them to do so.

Administration of medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was stored on site. Parental consent for administration was gained on the enrolment form of the service.
- The medicine on site was stored out of reach of the children and was in date.

Fire safety:

- Fire extinguishers were wall mounted.
- Fire exits identified by the registered provider were unobstructed.

Outing:

- No outing was conducted on the day of inspection. The registered provider informed the inspector that they occasionally go to the playground adjoined to the community hall and a risk assessment is completed prior to this occurring.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

- The inspector observed that pedal operated bins were not in use in the children's sanitary area or at the sink in the nappy changing area. This posed a risk of cross contamination and infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

- Pedal operated bins have been purchased and will be used in the service in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

- Photographic evidence of two pedal operated bins purchased was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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) The attendance book was available in which the inspector observed that all of the children present on the day had their check in and out times completed for the duration of the inspection.
- (3)
- (b) Visitor records were kept in writing of any person entering the premises and the inspector was asked to sign in and out of the premises.