

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC426
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Name of Service:	Time of Wonder Montessori School
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Address of Service:	1 Castlewood, Little Island, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T45 RC60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Sheedy
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	11
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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

Time of Wonder Montessori School is a privately owned, part time service, that is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme, which is accommodated from 9.00am to 12.00pm and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday. Part time hours operate from 8.30am to 1.30pm and from 9.00am to 2.00pm.

Located in a residential area of Little Island in Cork, the single storey, detached premises consists of one care room and a second smaller room, which is used as additional space. The setting also includes child and staff sanitary facilities, a kitchen and a designated outdoor play area.

Staffing

The registered provider and each of the five adults employed at the childcare facility, work directly with the children who attend. A major award in Early Childhood Care and Education has been attained by all six of the adults.

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, 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 overseeing the operation of the service. A new deputy had also been identified, in place of the deputy who was on leave.
- (b) When the inspection commenced, the registered provider was working at the service and was available for its duration. The roster also indicated that the registered provider was available at the service, throughout the hours of operation.
- (2) Recruitment records in relation to the six adults employed at the early years service were reviewed and the following was deemed satisfactory:
- (a) Ten written references and corresponding validations were from past employers.
- (b) Two of the written and validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (4) Copies of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, were available on file in respect of the six adults.

Non-Compliance Information

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

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that the police vetting has been received and that, going forward, all CVs and staff paperwork will be checked by a second member of staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the police vetting certificate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have adequately addressed the non-compliance.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) During the period of inspection, it was noted that a sufficient number of adults were involved in the direct care of the children, who attended the service.

(2) The requirements of the regulation were met. Four adults were observed to work directly with 17 children, aged 3 to 5 years, during the morning sessional service. In the afternoon, there were 11 children, aged 2 ½ to 5 years present. Two of these children were attending part time care and the remaining nine were attending the sessional service. Four adults were available to these children.

(8)

(a) There were at least two adults rostered to work at the service, for the duration of the hours of operation.

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) From the 35 child records available, a sample of 10 were reviewed and met the requirements 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)

Supporting relationships:

- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion. The children chatted freely, in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults, who sat alongside them.

- The children were afforded ample time in the outdoor play area. This encouraged active play and exploration, such as digging, climbing, balancing and participating in imaginary play. During this time, the children appeared calm and engaged and were appropriately supported by the adults. For example, when using ride on toys, or when minor disputes arose with their peers.
- The inspector was advised by the registered provider that the service operated an open door policy, in working in partnership with parents. Methods of involving and communicating with parents included meetings, phone calls, email, newsletters, the use of a messaging application and daily in-person interaction. Examples of the information and photographs sent via the messaging application were presented for review and informal discussion with parents was observed at arrival and collection times, on the day of inspection.
- A messaging application was also used by staff members to communicate relevant information, along with daily discussion and monthly meetings, for which brief records were maintained.

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 to the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access.
- In the outdoor play area, a secure enclosure was created through a combination of walls and gates.
- The door to the boiler house was secured and inaccessible to children.
- The staff toilet facility was maintained secure when not in use, with the key to the door stored on a high-level wall hook.
- Wall mounted storage was provided for fire extinguishers.
- Electrical flexes and cables were inaccessible to the children.
- There were no blind cords within the children's reach.

Infection control:

- Facilities were in place to support effective handwashing practice; warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basins. The children were observed to wash their hands

after using the toilet and before the mid-morning snack was accommodated. This practice was supervised by one of the adults.

- Wipeable placemats were provided for the children's use at snack time.
- The children's perishable snacks were placed in the refrigerator during the morning and again, when the afternoon group of children arrived.
- There were disposable gloves and aprons available for nappy changing.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be clear and free from any obstruction that may delay a timely exit, in the event of a fire.

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) Certified evidence of up to date, First Aid Responder (FAR) training, was on file for the registered provider. Review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider was consistently available to the children, during the hours of operation.

(2)

(a) The service's first aid box was stored out of reach of the children and accessible only by the adults. A generous stock of materials was maintained.

(b) First aid supplies were readily available, should they be required by the staff to attend to any of the children.

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) A written record, demonstrating the completion of monthly fire drills, was available on the premises. The last recorded fire drill was undertaken on 7 April 2025.
 - (b) A document which detailed the number and type of the firefighting equipment was available. According to the maintenance records, the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 10 September 2024 and the smoke alarm was last tested on 18 March 2025 .
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the notice board in the main care room.