

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE016

Name of Service: Butterflies Montessori

Address of Service: Brickhill West, Cratloe, Co. Clare

Eircode: V95 E984

Name of Registered Provider: Mary Hayes

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 29/01/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Quality and Regulation Directorate
Tusla Child and Family Agency
Ennis Primary Care Centre
Station Road
Ennis
County Clare
V95TY4E

Inspection undertaken by: J Hayes

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 Not applicable

Description of service

Butterflies Montessori first opened in 2003 as a sessional early years service. The service caters for up to a maximum number of 22 pre-school children between the ages of 2- 6 years. The service is open Monday-Fridays 09.30hrs - 12.30hrs.

The premises are in a rural setting near the village of Cratloe in county Clare. The service operates from a single storey structure with childcare provided in one large playroom. A large enclosed outdoor play area is accessed directly from the playroom and is located at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the sessional service with the assistance of one adult who was present on the day when the inspection was carried out.

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 regulations inspected included:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 16– Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(h)(i)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 24 – Checking in and out (1)(3)(a)(b)

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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, 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 the designated person in charge, and a named person was available to deputise when required.

(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge throughout the inspection.

Files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adult working in the service. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Not applicable as all references were from sources other than a past employer.

(b)

Four written validated references were obtained from sources other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and the adult working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required. The adults had not lived in another State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The registered provider and the adult held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)

During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(3)

On the 29 January 2026, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Two adults cared for the eighteen children attending the service on a sessional basis.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1)(h)

The daily arrival and departure times were recorded for each child attending the childcare facility.

(i)

The staff roster was available and detailed the adults working in the childcare facility and their rostered hours.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment having regard to the age and developmental stage of the children.

Basic Needs of Children:

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and equipment, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. Parents/Guardians provided the children's lunches. The lunches observed included various types of fruit, wraps, sandwiches, crackers and yoghurt. The children and adults sat together and conversed amicably during mealtime. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion and the children engaged in roles of responsibility at this time such as preparing the tables and retrieving the lunch boxes. The children were fully engaged in open ended play and educational Montessori based activities in the indoor environment. The children transitioned from opened ended, tabletop, play based activities which included constructive, manipulative and pretend play, then proceeded to engage in group games, song, rhyme and dance and story time.

Physical and Material Environment:

The programme of care and education was facilitated in one, large open plan room. The open plan care room was bright and spacious and was adequately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. . Learning aids and the children's individual artwork were displayed on the walls in the care room. Designated areas of interest were available and included a home corner, a construction area, and a shop. Low level shelving throughout the playroom contained appropriate and accessible materials and equipment for the children which facilitated child led play. A quiet area accommodated soft furnishings and a bookshelf with a large range of reading materials. This area was accessed by the children throughout the morning to rest and relax with their peers.

The outdoor play area offered a large space for the children to play-and engage in gross motor activities. The outdoor play area consisted of a grass and concrete surface. A covered partially enclosed area was provided to ensure all weather access to the outdoor environment. The surrounding perimeter was secured by a fence, a wall and gates.

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) Each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by the registered provider.

This record was available on the attendance register.

(3)(a) The registered provider ensured that any entry to the service by the following persons was approved by her;

(i) Pre-school children attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting the children.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A record in writing was maintained on a daily basis of all persons who entered the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two children attending the sessional service. The insurance policy for the service is valid until 27 November 2026.