

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE056		
Name of Service:	Harmony Montessori		
Address of Service:	19 Inis Sioda, Shannon, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V14 CX63		
Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Commane		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	06/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM 0
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare		
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

Harmony Montessori is located in a residential area in Shannon, County Clare. The sessional service operates Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 for children ranging in age from two to six years. The service operates from the registered provider's private, detached dwelling. The programme of care and education is facilitated in two interlinked care rooms and in the outdoor area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

On the 06 February 2026 the registered provider worked directly with the children. A relief person is available in the event of an emergency. Evidence of the registered providers engagement in continuing professional development was available on file.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

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

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (3) (8)(b)

Regulation 15 Record of pre-school child (1)(a) to (i)

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

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

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

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 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 person in charge, and the service will not operate in her absence.

(b)

The registered provider was available during the inspection.

(2)

Two files were available in respect of the registered provider and the person available to assist in the event of an emergency. The findings included the following:

(a)

Not applicable as references were from sources other than past employers.

(b)

Four written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of adult working in the service and the person available to assist in the event of an emergency

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adult working in the service and the person available to assist in the event of an emergency. 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 as the adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adult working directly with the children held an Early Childhood Care and Education qualification at Level 8 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.

(8)(b) 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)

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

(3)

On the 06 February 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. One adult cared for the seven children in attendance.

(8)(b)

The registered provider ensured that a second person familiar with the operation of the service was available to assist in the event of an emergency.

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) Eight enrolment forms were available for the children attending the service. The records were reviewed and all forms adequately detailed the particulars required in section (a)-(i).

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)

A record of the daily attendance of each pre-school child was maintained in the service.

(i)

A record was maintained of the staff attendance on a daily basis.

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. Two rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adult treated the children in a caring manner. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adult praised and encouraged the children, conversed with the children at their level, used soft tones of voice and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort.

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet.

The adult supervised and treated the children in a respectful manner while the children used the toilet. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care. Children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet.

Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion with roles and responsibilities given to the children to support their learning. Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack without being rushed. All food was provided by the service and included crackers and a selection of fruit such as apples, grapes and dried apricots. Children were supported to develop knowledge and skills to make nutritious food choices. Water was freely available in containers accessible to the children throughout the day.

The adult supported the children's choice of individual and group engagement in a range of enriching experiences. The children were offered a range of opportunities to engage in constructive, sensory, manipulative, creative and pretend play and learning. Children's care and daily learnings were communicated with the parents/guardians in a positive manner as they collected their children from the service.

Physical and Material Environment:

The two rooms in the service were bright, spacious and well-resourced and were laid out to enable the children to freely access the equipment and materials. Throughout the rooms the physical layout was designed to be stimulating, challenging and interesting for children providing a blended approach to the children's learning using the principles of the Montessori Method of education and the emerging interests of the individual children.

The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and educational activities and observed to be fully engaged and highly motivated in their learning environment at all times. Learning aids and the children's individual artwork were displayed on the walls. Designated areas of interest were available with appropriate supporting play materials and equipment. An area was available for children to rest or take a break from activities within the care-room. Seating with soft furnishings and mats with adjacent reading materials were used by the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, sensory, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children.

The outdoor play area located to the rear of the service was accessible to the children. The play area was enclosed and secured and had a grass and concrete surface. The outdoor play environment provided a wide range of activities and opportunities for exploring, engaging and experimenting with nature, such as gardening and picking fruit. Areas for sand and constructive play, climbing, jumping and running were provided for the children.

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 adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the care room. The adult working in the service was familiar with the location of the first aid box.

(b)

The first aid box was available for use by the adult in the event of an emergency.

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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
- (b) an employee, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(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 completed monthly fire drills were available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 06 January 2026.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the smoke alarm system and the firefighting equipment took place respectively on the 29 August and the 02 November 2025.

(4)

A fire action notice was clearly displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in 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 eleven children attending on a sessional basis. The policy is valid until 27 November 2026.