

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE156
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Name of Service:	Woodstock Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Shanaway Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 WP02
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maggie McGuire
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	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:	A. McCarthy
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
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Description of service

Woodstock Montessori School is a privately operated sessional service. The service operates in a purpose-built building, in a residential area located on the outskirts of Ennis, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 and accommodates children ranging in age from two to six years. The service comprises of one open plan care room, an additional room for storage of play equipment and materials. An outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

On the 08 January 2026 the registered provider cared for the children in attendance. The service is singlehandedly operated. The registered provider held an Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Records were available demonstrating the registered providers engagement in continuing professional development.

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) (8)(c)

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

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1)(a)(b)(4)

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

Regulation 28- Insurance

Regulation 29 – Premises (e)

Regulation 30- Minimum space requirements (1)(2)

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. 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 designated person in charge, and an emergency contact is available 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 emergency contact person. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Three written references from past employers with evidence of verification.

- (b)
Where a past employer reference was not available, a reference was obtained from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and the emergency contact person. 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 emergency contact person 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.*
- (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)
During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (3)
On the 08 January 2026, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. An adult cared for the nine children attending the service.
- (8)(c)
The service is operated single handedly and an emergency contact is available in the event of an emergency.

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;

Compliance Information

- (1)(h)
Records of the children’s daily attendance and arrival and departure times were recorded in a book in the service.

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

(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, vegetable, wraps, sandwiches, crackers and yoghurt. The children and adult sat together and conversed amicably during mealtime. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. The children 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.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The adult interacted with the children in a caring, kind and respectful manner. The adult listened attentively and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, and the children were offered praise and encouragement. The adult demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests, preferences and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities in the room were facilitated with ease, as the adult notified the children in advance of any changes in the programme of care and learning. The adult supported the children as they played individually and as part of a group. The children chose their individual activities throughout the session. The adult promoted speech

development through open ended discussions, song and rhymes with the children. An informal communication approach was observed during interactions with parents/guardians at collection 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. Designated areas of interest were available and included a home corner, a construction area, a shop and shelving with appropriate and accessible materials and equipment for the children. A large 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. The surrounding perimeter was secured by a fence, a wall and gates.

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 entrance and exit to and from the service was secured to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- The children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A cleaning schedule was available demonstrating measures taken to maintain and clean the service.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins.

- The children washed their hands at regular intervals during the day. This included after using the toilet and prior to mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. Documentation was available should medication be required.

Fire Safety:

- A fire drill took place during the inspection. A discussion took place in relation to fire safety between the children and the adult.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- A fire assembly point and the fire exit route signage were readily identifiable.

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)

An adult working directly with the children held a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the care room.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the service 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.
- (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 08 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 firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system maintenance service took place respectively on the 05 June 2025 and 03 September 2025.

(4)

A fire action notice 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 twenty-two children attending the service. The policy is valid until 27 November 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e)
The children had access to two sanitary facilities. These facilities were appropriately equipped with two child sized toilets and two wash hand basins, warm running water, liquid soap dispensers, hand paper towel dispensers and lidded pedal operated bins. An adult sanitary facility was available.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)
Adequate clear floor space was provided for the children attending the service on 08 January 2025. The service provided a space for the children to freely move and engage in play-based and educational activities.

(3)
On the 08 January 2026 adequate space was provided for the children attending the service. The care room measured 45.1 m².