

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN049
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Name of Service:	Puddlelane Montessori Playgroup Ltd
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Address of Service:	Institute Road, Rakeevan, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan
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Eircode:	A82 RR71
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elizabeth Burmiston
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 Th Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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

Puddle Lane Montessori Playgroup Ltd has been operating as a private run childcare service since 1998. The service provides a sessional service to pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 09:00 - 12:30hrs each weekday and caters for a maximum of 28 pre-school children.

The service is conducted from the converted basement of the registered provider's home in Bailieborough Co. Cavan. The service currently has 2 care rooms and sanitary facilities. The children have access to an outdoor area directly outside the premises.

Staffing

There are 3 staff members including the registered provider who work directly with the children. There is also a contracted worker who attends the service on a regular basis.

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

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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.

Additional Information

A Garda vetting Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 9/3/27 and the response submitted by the registered provider on 10/3/26 was accepted by the Inspectorate.

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,

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. Both were on the premises when the inspector arrived and were present throughout the inspection.

All 3 staff files and the contracted workers' files were reviewed on the day of inspection:

(2)(a) and (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references available for all 3 members of staff.
- There were 2 written references for the contracted worker.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 3 staff members. The service had not adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice as specified below in Regulation 23.

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(4) All of the 3 staff who worked directly with the preschool children and required a childcare qualification had at least a minimum of a Level 5 childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) The 2 written references for the contracted worker were not validated.

(c) Documentary evidence of a Garda vetting Disclosure was not available for the contracted worker. It is acknowledged that the registered provider provided documentary evidence of the confirmation of the original application having been applied for and processed by the vetting bureau.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider and an adequate response received.

(d) International police vetting was not available for the contracted worker who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction as an adult for a period of 6 months or more.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) Two written and validated references are on file in the school

All regular visitors will now be vetted and have references before entering the service.

(c) and (d) The contracted worker who was a regular visitor to the school, is not attending the service with immediate effect. She will return to the service when she is vetted and has all supporting documentation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and assurances that all vetting processes will be in place before the contracted worker returns to the service were reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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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) On the day of inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending.
- (3) The adult: child ratio observed in the care room was correct, as there were 2 adults caring for 19 preschool children aged 2 years and 8 months – 5 years of age.

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;*
 - (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(h) The details of all children attending the service on the day of inspection were recorded with arrival and departure times.
- (i) A staff rota was available which specified the hours and days worked by the staff members in the service.
- (k) A sample of 11 accident and incident forms were reviewed and all were fully completed detailing the child's details, the incident and signed by staff and manager. A parental signature was also obtained to show they had been informed of the incident.

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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 following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- All lunches were brought in by the children and stored appropriately in the fridge. The lunches were observed to consist of fruit, crackers, yogurts, rolls, pasta and carrots and wraps. Assistance was given to the children with opening certain foods and staff members also sat with the children during lunchtime. The children's drinks were readily accessible to them in the care room. All children were given time to finish their lunches.
- Independence with toileting was promoted for the children who were all toilet trained and discreet supervision was also provided by staff to those who required assistance. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children.
- Nappy changing facilities were available should they be required.
- Tissues were available in the care room and in general children were independent in accessing them.
- All children had free movement in the care room and were able to choose their toys and Montessori equipment of choice.

Supporting Relationships

- Both staff members had a key group of children where they were responsible for the recording of observations and emerging interests of the children.
- The children were observed to be provided with sensitive care and nurturing interactions by the staff. A younger child who was settling in was provided with extra support and attention.
- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in the room. For example, "we have to be nice to each other", "sharing is caring" and "ah thank you,

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you're very good for sharing". The children were observed to seek out the adults for assistance and the staff actively supported the children's play activities.

- The children were encouraged to use timers to encourage sharing, turn taking and for transitions between activities such as tidy up time.
- Communication with parents was predominantly informal at drop off and collection times and via a group messaging system.
- Jobs were given to the children for example helping to give out the lunches.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The service had a soft comfortable area under the stairs which was frequently used. It consisted of some foam matting, soft cushions and soft blankets. Additionally, there was a child sized sofa with some cushions and fleece blankets. Extra blankets and a small stool were also available in the 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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The registered provider had not adhered to the 3 yearly re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for 1 staff member.
2. On the day of inspection there was a sound beeping from the smoke alarm system indicating a fault in the system. This is a health and safety risk.
3. The large dolls house was positioned in front of the emergency fire exit blocking it during the inspection. This is a safety risk.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The Garda vetting has been applied for through an agency. Vetting will be done in a timely manner well in advance of the expiry date. The registered provider will ensure to have reviews around this.
2. The fire alarm was beeping on the day of the inspection, the alarm had been serviced a few weeks before that, the engineer came out, checked the system again and replaced the battery for safety measures.
The engineers always service the system with the highest standard and are on all call if any issues arise.
3. The dolls house was moved to another part of the room, making sure this would never happen again. A staff member moved the doll's house in front of the fire door when she was getting food out of the fridge and forgot to move it back.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of updated smoke alarm service record.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response has been reviewed by the Inspectorate in relation to non-compliances identified under Regulation 23. The actions taken to address the non-compliance regarding the fire alarm (point 2) and the obstruction of the fire exit (point 3) have been accepted. However the non-compliance regarding Garda Vetting (point 1) remains outstanding.

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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 registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times. Two FAR certificates were reviewed.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available to the preschool children.