

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CW013		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Clareville Montessori School		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Tullow Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow		
<b>Eircode:</b>	R93 WA27		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ashling Nolan		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/11/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	28	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N.Thornton.		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

Clareville Montessori school provides a sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) service to children aged 2 to 6 years, between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00, Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purpose-built addition at the back of the registered provider's private residence. The Montessori school is comprised of three classrooms, a designated free play area and has a large secure outdoor play area, which can be accessed through the spacious car park, provided for parents. There is a separate main entrance to the Montessori school from the car park.

### Staffing

There were five staff employed in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children. The registered provider, three staff members and a student of early childhood care and education, Montessori teaching, were present on the day of inspection. The staff members working directly with the children held at least a major award in early childhood care and education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Quality and Qualifications (QQI) framework.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

- 10-Policies, procedures etc. of a pre-school service,
- 11-(1)(3)-Staffing Levels,
- 15-(1)-Record of a Pre-School Child,
- 16-(1)-Record in relation to Pre-School Service,
- 19-(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of the Child,

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the three Montessori classrooms, free play interest area and outdoor play area.

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, student 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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers, and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise in the absence of the designated person in charge.

(b) Throughout the inspection, both the designated person in charge and the named deputy designated person in charge were present in the service.

(2) Staff files for the registered provider, three staff members present, student and relief staff person were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were on file for each of the staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source. Two validated references were available for the student from reputable sources.

(c) Garda Vetting certificates were on file for each of the staff members working directly with the children and was also available for the student.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had lived outside of the State for longer than six months.

(3) On review of each staff file, the registered provider had maintained a record of the dates that references, and Garda Vetting certificates had been obtained which assured the inspector that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any employee commencing employment in the service.

(4) The inspector observed that there was a certificate of qualification in early childhood care and education in each staff member's file, demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 5 or its equivalent to Level 8 on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

(7) A record of policy and procedure training, health and safety training and curricular planning signed by the staff members, assured the inspector that the registered provider annually provided the staff with the required information and training required in the service.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

On review of the documents open for inspection in the service, the inspector observed that the written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Service) Regulations 2016 were available, were adequate in content and specific to the type of service provided

### 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) The registered provider ensured that there was always an adequate number of qualified staff members working directly with the number of children in attendance in the service.

(3) There were 28 children in attendance on the day of inspection with four qualified staff members, including the registered provider and one student directly working with the children.

The 28 children were divided between the three Montessori rooms as follows:

Montessori room 1 had 6 children with 1 qualified staff member directly working with them.

Montessori room 2 had 8 children with 1 qualified staff member working directly with them, and,

Montessori room 3 had 14 children with q qualified staff members and 1 student directly working with them.

### 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) A sample of 12 pre-school records of children in attendance at the service were reviewed by the inspector. On review of the 12 records, the inspector observed that the details of the elements (a) to (i) as required, were clearly recorded by the registered provider.

The inspector observed that the registered provider had developed a detailed child centred plan and medical procedure to be followed specific to the needs of a child in the service. There was evidence that staff had received training and were familiar with the contents of the individual child centred plan.

### 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:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record was maintained of the following details.
- (a) The name, position, qualification, and work experience of each individual employee was maintained on file.
  - (b) Details of the type of service and the age group of children that the service was intended for and
  - (c) Details of the adult to child ratio in each classroom were documented on file and displayed for parents.
  - (d)(e)(f) The curricular pedagogy was outlined in detail, the facilities available, including the outdoor area, opening hours of the service and fees were clearly documented and shared with parents.
  - (g) The service's policies, procedures and statements as required in regulation 10 were available for inspection and their contents specific to the service.
  - (h) The inspector observed that the staff recorded each child's arrival and departure time to and from the service, and the name of the authorised person who dropped /collected each child.

- (i) The staff roster detailed the hours that each staff member worked in the service and that the staff member with FAR training was always present while the children attended the service.
- (j) On review of a sample of an administration of medication records that was available, the inspector observed that the record was completed in line with the service's administration of medication policy and correlated to information provided in the individual record of the preschool child.
- (k) A sample of five accident and incident records were reviewed by the inspector which were observed to have the required details recorded in line with the service's incident/accident policy. Information regarding the details of each accident were recorded, details of first aid administered, communication with parents / guardians and the effect of first aid administered were recorded. The records also documented that a risk assessment was carried out where appropriate post incidents/accidents occurring.

### 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 inspector observed that as parents/ guardians dropped their child to the service, each child's individual early years educator greeted the child and their parents/ guardians, exchanging necessary information regarding the child's wellbeing, before each child joined their friends for a period of free play in either their classroom or in the designated interest area.

The interest area consisted of a choice of a kitchen/home area, construction station, farm table and a soft couch and reading area. The children played together in pairs or independently while in the classroom, some groups of friends looked at items of the well-resourced Montessori equipment discussing what tasks they had accomplished the day before and what items they were planning on working with that day.

After free play, the children divided into their designated classrooms with their designated keyworker. The inspector observed the children confidently working with a variety of tabletop Montessori activities, which included numeracy, cultural and literary activities.

Some of the children proudly showed their writing work to the inspector and confidently pronounced the phonetics of the individual letters and associated words that they were learning.

Children were observed to get their individual learning journals from the shelf and show the inspector the work that they had participated in over their time in Montessori school since September.

As children in each of the classrooms completed Montessori tasks either independently or supported by their keyworker, they were free to try other tasks, choosing manipulative jigsaws or nature peg boards, which were easily accessible on the low-level shelving.

Children were observed to enjoy practical life skills such as transferring, sieving, polishing, threading, pouring, and pegging, which also further developed their fine motor skills.

The children were encouraged by their key workers with positive reinforcement observed as children tried and accomplished tasks. Children and adults discussed transitions such as snack time and preparation for snack time.

Children washed their hands prior to snack time, chatting and smiling in preparation for the ritual of their daily snack. Children independently took turns to lay plates and drinking cups on the tables in front of their friends, while others took responsibility for ensuring that everyone had a drink of water or served the fruit and crackers.

Afterwards children gathered plates and prepared to go outside for their daily outdoor play.

Children were observed to independently put on their appropriate outdoor clothing, wellies, warm coats, and hats. Where required children confidently asked the staff to help them close zips or pop on wellies.

In the outdoor area, the staff supervised children as they enjoyed the physical challenges of climbing the stairs to the slide, running, and balancing on the equipment provided and playing imaginatively in the outdoor classroom.

At collection time, the staff took time to speak with individual parents about how their child participated in the session, discussing areas of particular interest that the child enjoyed, with the children adding personally to the conversations, indicating to parents that they had enjoyed their learning during the session.

## 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) There was one staff member with current certification in first aid responder (FAR) training for children present. The registered provider demonstrated that a second staff member whose certificate in first aid responder training had recently expired, was on a waiting list for refresher FAR training.

It is acknowledged that two staff members had certification in basic paediatric first aid training.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was easily accessible to staff on a shelf in the kitchenette, within the service.

(b) The first aid box was always available if required by the children and records demonstrated that its contents were checked by the registered provider monthly.

### 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) On review of the fire records maintained by the registered provider, the inspector observed that fire drills were carried out in the service monthly, with the details of each fire drill recorded. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 8 November 2023.
- (b) Maintenance records of the service's firefighting equipment and fire alarms were maintained. The last maintenance check for the fire-fighting equipment and fire alarm was recorded as having taken place in January 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be carried out in the event of a fire /fire drill was displayed at the entrance to the service and in each classroom. A fire assembly point was clearly signed next to the garage at the back of the premises.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate displayed on the notice board in the service detailing insurance cover for a sessional preschool provision for 33 preschool children to attend the Montessori school.