

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS178
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Name of Service:	Whitechurch Montessori
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Address of Service:	White Church Old School, Whitechurch Road, Dublin 16.
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Eircode:	D16 YN27
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Name of Registered Provider:	Abi Acheson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	Non-applicable
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin
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).

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Description of service

Whitechurch Montessori is a privately owned preschool service located on the grounds of Whitechurch church in South Dublin. The service is registered to operate a sessional pre-school service for up to 22 children aged between 3 to 6 years, from 9:00am to 12:00pm, Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9:00am to 12:00pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from a single storey and consists of one large care room and an outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service and employs two adults; one who works daily in the service and a second adult who provides staff cover when required. The registered provider and one adult were present when the inspector arrived during the morning.

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 may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed.

- Regulation 9 (1), (2) and (4) Management and Recruitment

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- Regulation 11 (1) and (3)
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 28 Insurance

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8 Notification of Change in Circumstances. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection the care room and the 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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN 0342	05/05/2026	Evidence of police vetting was not available for one adult who required it. The adult had access and was working directly with children.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice and the provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventative actions which were accepted by the inspectorate. Police vetting must be submitted to the inspectorate prior to the person having access to the children.	

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) There was evidence to show that the registered provider had failed to submit a change of circumstance (CIC) form to the inspectorate to notify of the following changes.
- The service is registered to offer care to children aged 3 to 6 years old. However, through discussion with staff and documentary evidence available showed that three children under the age of 3 years had been attending the service.
 - The service is registered to operate between the hours of 9:00am to 12:00pm. However, through discussion with staff and documentary evidence available showed that the service had been operating between the hours of 8:30am to 12:00pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A Change of Circumstances Form was submitted to Tusla on the evening after the inspection took place. Tusla subsequently approved the application. The registered provider has reviewed the circumstances that led to the non-compliance and has implemented a process to ensure that all proposed changes are reviewed against

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Tusla's notification and regulatory requirements. Any changes requiring notification will be submitted to Tusla and approval obtained before implementation. This process will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure continued compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the changed of circumstances approved.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 8.

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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

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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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed that a designated person is rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) The files of the registered provider and two adults were reviewed as part of the inspection.
 - (a) There were two references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were four written and validated references from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and two adults. The service also 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 for two of the three adults; who through discussion it was established had not lived outside of the Ireland for six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the registered provider and two adults who work directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IAN 0342 served.
- (3) The registered provider did not have the required information to conduct the checks required under (2)(d) in relation to two staff members due to the absence of a detailed work history/curriculum vitae. This posed a potential safeguarding risk.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) Following the inspection, an updated staff file checklist was implemented to ensure that all required documentation is maintained for each staff member in line with Tusla's regulatory requirements. A CV was subsequently obtained and reviewed to ensure compliance and completeness of the personnel file. Regular audits of staff files will be conducted to ensure ongoing compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documentary evidence of updated staff file check list.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9.

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) There were twelve preschool children being cared for by the registered provider and one adult on the morning of inspection.

(3) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection.

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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 activities, interactions, materials and equipment was observed to support children's learning and development:

- Staff were observed to be kind, caring and respectful in their interactions with the children which supported a calm atmosphere in the service.
- Children's labelled water bottles were available within their reach throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- Snack time was observed to be calm. For example, children who finished earlier were observed to choose a book to read and relax while the other children finished their snack.
- Staff were observed to give children verbal reminders in advance of moving from one activity to the next activity. This provided the children with a sense of stability, security, and predictability.
- A rest area was available to the children in the care room. This area included a soft mat, soft cushions, and books providing the children with a comfortable place to rest or engage in quiet activities. In addition, there was a soft mat and a bench available for rest and relaxation during outdoor play time.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, providing a comfortable area to eat snacks and take part in tabletop activities.
- Toys and materials were stored on low and accessible shelves and were visible and easily accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. The room was well laid out with designated areas of interest to provide for distinct types of play and learning. Each area was well equipped with equipment and materials which promoted fine motor skills, mathematical conceptual understanding, and language development keeping in with the Montessori curriculum ethos.
- The inspector observed the children engage in outdoor play. Equipment and materials included climbing equipment, a slide, an outdoor mud kitchen with supporting props, sports equipment and a sand tray providing opportunities for sensory play. This supported their social, cognitive, and gross and fine motor development.

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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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspector, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The inspector was asked to show identification by the registered provider who answered the door.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and locked away out of reach of children.
- There were no trailing flexes or wires observed to be accessible to the children.
- The outdoor area was appropriately securely fenced and gated and children who played outdoors were adequately supervised.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, and hand paper towels hygienically dispensed. Children were familiar with handwashing.
- Perishable goods brought from home for snack time were stored in the fridge.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care room, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There were completed cleaning schedules on display in the care room and sanitary facilities.

Fire Safety:

- All emergency exit doors were observed to be clear from obstruction and staff were aware of the number of children present at all times. This helps ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Two children were observed to have uncut fruit; one child had uncut grapes, and a second child had an uncut plum which posed a potential risk of choking. It is acknowledged that the staff immediately removed the fruit and cut it appropriately once the identified risk was brought to their attention by the inspector.

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- The window in the care room did not have a window restrictor. Although the window was not at an accessible height to the children. There was a shelving unit positioned directly in front of the window which could be used by children to climb up and access the window. This posed a potential risk of injury.

Infection Control:

- There was no foot pedal operated bin in the sanitary accommodation used by the children. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- A reminder was issued to all parents regarding the Healthy Eating Policy, which states that all fruit and vegetables provided in children's lunchboxes must be cut appropriately. A reminder notice was also displayed on the refrigerator for staff. In addition, a staff meeting was held to discuss the matter and agree on a procedure whereby staff will check lunchboxes before children begin their lunch to ensure that all fruit and vegetables have been cut, providing an additional safety measure. To prevent recurrence, reminders regarding the Healthy Eating Policy will continue to be communicated to parents regularly. Staff will conduct visual checks of lunchboxes before mealtimes to ensure that fruit and vegetables are prepared appropriately and safely.
- The windows have been secured in the locked position, and the keys have been placed adjacent to each window to ensure they can be opened quickly if required in an emergency. Windows that are accessible to children will remain locked and will not be used for ventilation. Alternative windows that are not accessible to children will be used instead. To prevent recurrence, regular risk assessments of the indoor environment will be conducted to ensure that all accessible windows remain secured, and that furniture or equipment is not positioned in a way that could enable children to climb and gain access to windows. Staff will monitor the environment daily and address any identified risks promptly to ensure children's safety is maintained at all times.

Infection Control:

- The bathroom bins identified during the inspection have been replaced with pedal-operated bins to promote good hygiene practices and reduce the risk of cross-contamination. To prevent recurrence, regular infection control safety checks will be carried out to ensure that appropriate hygiene equipment, including pedal-operated bins, is maintained throughout the service. Ongoing monitoring will form part of routine management oversight to ensure continued compliance with hygiene and infection control requirements.

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Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of reminder notice displayed on the fridge.
2. Photographic evidence of the windows secured.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence of the new foot pedal operated bins.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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 documentation available to show that the registered provider and one adult held a valid First Aid Responder (FAR) certificate.

(2) The registered provider ensured the following.

- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, and unobstructed if needed to access quickly.
- (b) The registered provider showed the inspector a suitably equipped first aid box which was available at all times for the adult caring for children attending the service if required.

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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-
- (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) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with fire drills carried out monthly with the most recent fire drill completed on the 16 April 2026.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment were up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced on 11 December 2025 and the smoke alarms in April 2026.
- (2) (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) There was a notice of the fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent position on the wall in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service had adequate insurance for a maximum of 22 children attending the service on a sessional care basis with an expiry date of 27 November 2026.