

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL020		
Name of Service:	Baloos Montessori		
Address of Service:	8 Beaverbrook, Donabate, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K36 WY03		
Name of Registered Provider:	Eileen Mooney		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM Not applicable.
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15		
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly		
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

Baloos Montessori is a sessional early years service which was established in 2008 by the registered provider. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12.30pm. The service is located in a room directly adjacent to the registered providers family home. An outdoor area directly behind the service is available to the children.

Staffing

The service employs 4 staff members including the Registered Provider and 3 staff including an Assistant Manager who all work directly with the children and were all present on the day of the inspection. The registered provider arrived in the service on the day of the inspection and was available throughout the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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 the child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Montessori Room.

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.

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) There is a designated person in charge of the service and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The assistant manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 09.30am and was present for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived shortly afterwards and remained for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files for 5 adults including the registered provider were reviewed. The file for an external contractor who was not present on the day was also reviewed. The following was recorded:

- (a) Eight written validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Two written validated references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 5 adults whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International Police vetting was available for 1 adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 4 staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

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 the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 4 adults, including the registered provider working with 17 children aged 3 years 1 month to 4 years 9 months on the morning of the inspection.

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 observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes were observed to be a social and pleasant experience for the children. Staff sat with children at snack time and engaged in conversations with the children. Children's lunches and water bottles were brought from home. Snack consisted of cheese and ham sandwiches, rolls, crackers, cucumber, pasta, yoghurts and fruit. Children's water bottles were accessible to the children and stored on a shelf in the room.
- There was a cosy/book area in the service containing 2 seats and a selection of books for children to sit and relax.
- Children's independence was supported. Children also used the bathroom independently with staff support as needed. Children were given responsibilities such as helping to give out the lunch boxes at snack time.

- Children were free to move around the care room and choose materials independently. There was an additional room called ‘the shelter’ where children could engage in dramatic, pretend play and construction materials if they choose to do so.
- All the children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection.

Supporting relationships and interactions around children:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service. Children were comforted when upset and children received praise and encouragement from staff.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a birthday chart display and a family wall with photographs of children’s families displayed in the care room.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; the children engaged well with tidying up and tidied away play materials when they had finished. Children were observed hanging up their coats after playing outdoors. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.

Physical and material environment:

- The furniture provided in the care rooms was low level and appropriate to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care rooms. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children’s independence in play. The Montessori room and ‘The Shelter’ were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. In the Montessori Room there was a cosy/book area in the service containing 2 seats for children to sit and relax and a selection of books which supported storytelling opportunities and children’s language development. There were art materials such as paper, paint, pencils, scissors, glue sticks and chalkboards to support creative art and mark making for children. Small world items included a large wooden dolls house, garage, animals and dinosaurs to support children’s imaginative and dramatic play. There was a range of Montessori materials including a pink tower and broad stairs which provided opportunities for early literacy and numeracy learning. There were tabletop materials such as matching activities and threading, pegboards and jigsaws to support fine motor development. In ‘The Shelter’ interest areas included a home corner with kitchen, play food and crockery and dressing table, large dolls house and dolls to support imaginative and interactive play and a construction area with plastic building blocks and bricks and transportation toys including cars and a truck.

- A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the service. There was a large structure with climbing wall, slide, steps and swings. In addition, there was a caterpillar tunnel and see-saw all of which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills. There was a separate raised area with a house for dramatic play, blackboards and chalk for mark making opportunities and tuff tray with stones and people. There was a bench and seating area for children to sit and relax or carry out tabletop activities and children were observed playing with trucks and diggers to transport the stones which supported schematic play.

Programme of Activities

- Conversations with staff ascertained that the service had a Montessori curriculum and is also play based.
- Children were observed engaging in outdoor play on a couple of occasions providing children with opportunities to engage in safe risky play and development of fundamental movement skills.

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 arrival to the service, the inspector observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The large outdoor play area to the rear of the service was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with an impact absorbing surface in addition to paved footpaths.

Infection Control:

- Children's lunch which was brought from home, were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Children were observed to hand wash before lunchtime, and this was encouraged and supported by staff. Individual cloth towels were available for children's use. Staff reported that these are washed on a daily basis.

Administration of Medication:

- No child required medication to be administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The radiator temperature on one of the radiators located in the care room exceeded the recommended temperature of 50°C. A temperature of 54.8°C was recorded by the inspector. No children were observed to touch the radiator or go close to the radiator on the day of the inspection. However, this posed a potential risk of a child receiving a burn injury. It is acknowledged that the service took immediate action to rectify the non-compliance identified by reducing the radiator temperatures in the care room when the inspector brought the identified risk to their attention.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

- The registered provider has installed a new boiler and a new thermostat.

Preventive Action:

- The registered provider has set the thermostat at the correct temperature.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Invoice for plumbing work carried out in service dated 11 December 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 23 has been addressed.

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 an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. Three staff members were trained in First Aid Response (FAR), including the registered provider, all of whom were present on the day of the inspection. It is acknowledged that one staff member also held current paediatric first aid training who was present on the day of the inspection.

(2)(a) An adequately stocked first aid box was observed in the care room of the service.

(b) The first aid box was stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

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) The registered provider ensured the following:

(a) A record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 10 October 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available.

Firefighting equipment was last serviced in September 2025. Fire alarm and detection system was last serviced on 9 September 2025.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 22 children for the morning session with an expiry date of 27 March 2026.