

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL206		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Maria's Montessori & Pre school		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Clann Mhuire G.F.C., Naul, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	K32 HK76		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Maria Whyte		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/04/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	36	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Coyle		
<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

Maria's Montessori and Preschool is a sessional Early years' service which was established in this location in 2009 and is registered to accommodate 43 children attending on a sessional basis. The service is located in a GAA clubhouse on the outskirts of Naul village in north Co Dublin with 2 care rooms in operation. The Pre-Montessori room is located in the clubhouse building and the Montessori room is located in a separate adjacent building. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the Montessori room. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9 am to 12 midday Monday to Friday with an additional 30 minutes offered from 12 midday to 12:30pm for an additional fee.

### Staffing

The service employs 7 staff members including the registered provider who works directly with the pre-school children in the service. Two staff members are employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary, to work with children with additional needs, in posts funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

### 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.

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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

The files for 7 staff members including the registered provider who work directly with the children and 1 student who was present in the service were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Two validated written references were available for all staff members whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 7 staff members and the student who was present in the service were reviewed. 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 available for 2 staff members who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 7 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

### 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 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.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Pre Montessori room there were 17 children aged between 3 years and 4 years all attending on a sessional basis, being cared for by 2 staff members, a student on work experience was present in the care room.
- In the Montessori room there were 19 children aged between 4 years and 5 years all attending on a sessional basis, being cared for by 3 staff members.

## 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:

- There was a warm and child centred atmosphere in the service. The children in both care rooms were observed engaging in activities and using play materials of their choice, the early years practitioners in both care rooms provided encouragement and support to the children in setting up materials and extending their play.
- The children brought their morning snack with them to the service. The children enjoyed a variety of food including sandwiches, crackers, fruit and yogurt for their snack, there was a relaxed and sociable atmosphere at snack time, with children chatting among themselves with the early years' practitioners joining in with the children's conversation.
- The sanitary accommodation was located adjacent to both care rooms, the children were observed to use the bathroom independently with support provided as the children required it. As needed the children were gently prompted to wash their hands.
- Rest areas were provided in both care rooms should a child choose to take a break from activities during the session.
- The practitioners in both care rooms were observed to approach children's behaviour in a positive and calm way. There was an emphasis on praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- There was a consistency of staff provision in the service, the early years practitioners and children were very familiar with each other, and the children were observed to seek out practitioners for comfort and support as they required it. The early years practitioners were observed supporting children to interact positively with each other, helping children to develop social relationships with their peers and to diffuse any minor disputes that arose between the children.
- The practitioners in the care rooms were observed to work well together and supported each other in the care of the children. Practitioners updated each other on the children's care throughout the day which ensured the children's care needs were met in a timely manner.
- Parents and guardians were observed being welcomed by the practitioners at the children's departure from the service and the opportunity for updating parents and guardians regarding their children's day in the service was taken at this time.

### Physical and material environment:

- Both care rooms had a range of play based materials and equipment which offered opportunities for stimulation, exploration and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which encouraged the children's independence and facilitated the children to select toys and activities of their choice.
- In both care rooms defined area of interest were available to the children including well resourced home areas including kitchens with additional materials available for the children to extend their imaginary play, a play fam with play animals and machinery were provided on raised tables in each of the care rooms. Arts and crats materials, transport toys and a range of tabletop resources including jigsaws were also available to the children.
- A wide selection of books was provided in both care rooms and the children were observed to enjoy storey time in the Pre Montessori room.
- In the Pre Montessori room, the children had expressed an interest in dinosaurs, the practitioners were observed to support the children's interest through the provision of a table with a range of dinosaurs for the children to play with in addition to a wall display of dinosaurs. In the Montessori room the theme of the week was 'healthy eating', and this was reflected in the activities and artwork which the children undertook.

- An enclosed outdoor area was located to the rear of the Montessori room. A well-resourced mud kitchen was provided, a large wall mounted blackboard was available for the children to draw on in addition to a planting area. A slide along with ride on toys were provided for the children to enjoy. Sensory opportunities were provided through the provision of a sand tray. The area also provided the children with the opportunity for running and free movement. All of the children present on the day of inspection enjoyed time in the outdoor area on the day of inspection.

### 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 doors to both care rooms were secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The water temperature in the hot taps did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.

##### Infection Control:

- Perishable items supplied by parents and guardians for the children's morning snack were refrigerated.
- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service.
- The outdoor sand pit was fitted with a secure lid to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

##### Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

##### Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to confirm that fire drills are completed on a monthly basis in the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

#### Compliance Information

(1) An attendance book was in place to record the arrival and departure times for each child attending the service on a daily basis. The attendance book was recorded correctly.

(3)(a) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents/guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. The early years inspector was requested to sign into the service on arrival.

### 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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of staff members.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

### 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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 20/03/2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms, the firefighting equipment was serviced on the 19/07/2023 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 15/11/2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

### 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) The clear floor area was measured during the inspection and is sufficient to cater for a maximum of 43 children attending on a sessional basis.

(2)

Room Name	Age Range	Clear floor space available	No of children that can be accommodated. (Sessional )
Pre Montessori room	2 years 8 months to 6 years	38m <sup>2</sup>	21
Montessori room	2 years 8 months to 6 years	52.88m <sup>2</sup>	22