

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL214		
Name of Service:	Mini Trinity Montessori		
Address of Service:	45 Holywell Green, Feltrim Road, Swords, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K67 TX62		
Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Keegan		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	21/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM 7
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle		
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

Mini Trinity Montessori is a privately owned early years service which is registered to accommodate a maximum of 15 pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis. The service is also registered to accommodate school aged children up to 12 years of age. The service operates from 8.15am to 6.00pm each weekday and facilitates eligible children to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 8.45 – 11.45am daily. Mini Trinity Montessori is conducted from the ground floor of the registered provider's family home, an end-of-terrace house situated in a large housing estate in Swords in north Co. Dublin. There are two rooms in operation in the service, the Montessori room which is located on the ground floor of the family home and the Playschool room which is the larger of two wooden cabins in place in the outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises. The Playschool room is used for sleep, for the storage of additional play materials and to facilitate play experiences for small groups of children. The separate smaller cabin provided in the outdoor area is used as an office and staff room.

Staffing

The registered provider is present in the service on a day to day basis and also employs a service manager to oversee the day-to-day operation of the service in addition to 4 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children in the service. Another staff member is employed in a part-time capacity to prepare meals and work with the school age children each day.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15,19,23,25,26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – record of pre-school child

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, service manager, 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
- (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.

(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.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster and through discussion with the staff team.

The files for 7 staff members including the registered provider and 6 staff members were reviewed. A total of 6 including the registered provider work directly with the preschool children.

(2)(a) and (b) Two written references were available for the registered provider and two written, validated references were available for the 6 staff members employed in the service.

(a) Eleven written references were from past employers.

(b) Three written references were from sources other than past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 7 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for 5 adults who had lived outside the State as adults for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Six staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service, and each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) International police vetting was not available as required for 1 adult in respect of one police vetting that was required for one jurisdiction that the person had lived in outside the State for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(d) The second part of the original international police vetting has now been received by the staff member and placed in their staff file.

Preventive Action

The second part of the original international police vetting was overlooked. The one we received was a certificate from the central registry of sex offenders and human trafficking offences.

The new manager has been advised on what records to accept for international police vetting. And any new employee's required list of documents has been updated.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of police vetting.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been adequately addressed.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service throughout the inspection.

There were 14 pre-school children aged 2 years 2 months to 4 years 5 months being cared for by 4 staff members on the morning of the inspection. Seven of the 14 children were attending the service on a sessional basis.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by weekly staff rosters and the staff attendance records maintained at the service.

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 sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. Seven sampled registration forms were completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) & (i) in this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Four sampled forms did not have subsections (e)(f)(g)(h) & (i) completed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) The four families were emailed the Registration form to complete (only the application forms were on file). The registration form lists the sub-sections e,f,g,h,i. In the past they would only send the application form for children on the waiting list.

Preventive Action

(1) They will send both the application and registration forms to all families enquiring of childcare places even if they are for the waiting list too.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated registration form for children.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child has been adequately addressed.

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

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

Basic Needs

- The children bring their own morning snack with them to the service with dinner and tea provided for children attending the service on a full day care basis. There was a relaxed and sociable atmosphere at mealtimes, with children and staff members chatting together.
- The children's personal care needs were promptly attended to. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required and when changing nappies the staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided as needed. The children's hands and face were cleaned after eating as needed.
- The staff members were observed to approach any minor disagreements that occurred between the children in a positive and calm way and supported the children to resolve any conflict that arose. There was an emphasis on praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour.

- Children were observed to spend time outdoors during the inspection and were appropriately dressed to enjoy time outside.

Supporting relationships:

- Parents and guardians were observed being welcomed by the staff members at the children's arrival and 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.
- The children were observed to engage and interact comfortably with the staff members, using their names in conversations and play, and the staff members were observed responding to the children in an interested and positive manner.
- The children appeared confident and relaxed in their environment and were observed naturally forming small groups and engaging in a range of tabletop and floor play activities during the inspection.
- The staff members in the service were observed to work well together as a team, the staff members supported each other in the care of the children, modelling positive ways of interacting with the children and one another.

Physical and material environment:

- In both care rooms the play materials and equipment were displayed and readily accessible on low level shelving to promote the children's choice and independence when selecting their play activities. The children in the care rooms demonstrated familiarity with their environment to access the toys and play resources they chose to play with.
- Designated areas of interest were established in the care rooms, including home corners, construction area, arts and crafts resources and an adequate range of books to support the children's language development and provide choice for storytelling.
- Play equipment to support the development of the children's fine motor skills were provided in the care rooms. These included jigsaws, a selection of bricks, transport toys, threading equipment, stacking toys and a range of Montessori equipment.
- A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the rear of the premises, surfaced with artificial grass. Play equipment provided in the outdoor play area included a wooden climbing frame with standing platform and slide attached, a free-standing slide, a plastic playhouse and ride on toys.

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 water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene throughout the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- There was a lined, lidded, and pedal-operated bin in the sanitary accommodation where nappy changing took place.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep mats were provided should a child wish to sleep in the service. The staff members were able to describe safe sleep practices.
- The inspector observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting the child's colour, position and breathing pattern was performed and documented on a child who slept in the service..

Fire Safety:

- The records reviewed demonstrated that fire drills were practiced on a regular basis to familiarise both adults and children of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting disclosure that was available for 1 staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. The children's snacks which contained perishable items were not refrigerated and were observed to be kept in children's bags on a shelf in the care room. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food poisoning.
3. The nappy changing mat was not always cleaned after the children had their nappies changed. This is an infection control risk.
4. The appropriate gloves for nappy changing were not available. The gloves that were worn in the service to change nappies were seamed polythene gloves. These gloves are unsuitable due to the risk of them splitting which poses an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. On the date of the inspection, the Garda vetting for the Director of the company who is not working in the classroom had expired by 7 days. Searches were last conducted on the 14th of October 2022.
A new vetting disclosure was sent.

Infection Control:

2. All the children's snacks containing perishable items are placed in a ziplock bag and put in the fridge in the main Montessori room. On the morning of the inspection the inspector arrived shortly after the snacks had been handed out to the children. However, it was observed that the snacks of those children who avail of full-time care had not been placed back into the fridge. All staff have been advised to place perishable snacks for full time children back into the fridge when snack time is over.
3. The hand washing and hygiene procedure has been placed above the changing mat so the staff can follow instructions on nappy changing and hygiene policy.
4. The correct vinyl gloves have been purchased and placed in the shelving unit of the nappy changing area.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The Directors and/or Board of Management recruitment files will be checked annually in unison with all employee records.

Infection Control:

2. The morning Room Leader check list has been amended to include returning perishable snacks to the fridge.
3. The policy has been explained to all employees again to help to ensure the prevention of infection.
4. The vinyl gloves will be included in monthly stock checks and orders.

Supporting documentation submitted

E mail confirming Garda vetting has been processed.

Evidence of purchase of gloves.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been adequately 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) (1) A person appropriately trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the service ensuring that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes were suitably (2) equipped and easily accessible to the staff and available at all times for the children attending the service.

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) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 29/09/2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 18/02/25 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 11/07/25.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate the preschool service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate 20 preschool children attending on a full day care basis.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(b) safe and secure,

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(b) The premises appeared safe, and the front door and side gate were found to be appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the early years' service. The outdoor play area was fully enclosed by fencing and a side gate.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) A seat that was provided for the children to use in the Playschool room in a poor state of repair as it was torn with a large section of the foam exposed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(d) The soft pull-out sofa was washed and stitched. The foam is no longer exposed.

Preventive Action

(d) Any furniture or materials that are showing wear and tear will be recycled or disposed of if not in a state of repair.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of repaired couch.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under regulation 29 - Premises has been adequately addressed.