

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015FL226

Name of Service: Mulberry Montessori School

Address of Service: 9 Mulberry Crescent, Castleknock, Dublin 15.

Eircode: D15 A09W

Name of Registered Provider: Cathy Connolly

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 27/11/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and J.A McKimm
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Mulberry Montessori is a privately operated service providing part-time care 9.00am-1.00pm and sessional care 9.00am-12.00pm for children aged 2-6 years. The service operates the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from a single storey purpose-built building to the side of the registered provider's home. It consists of a care room with sanitary facilities and has an enclosed outdoor area at the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children attending the service and employs two staff members. All three adults were present on the day of inspection.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 28 November 2025 under Regulation 23, in relation to a non-compliance identified under Regulation 25. A response was received from the registered provider which mitigated the risk identified. See body of report for details.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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

(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-

(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

Compliance Information

(2) A discussion with management and a review of available paperwork confirmed there were no new staff working in the service since the last inspection in May 2023. The garda vetting disclosures for all existing staff members were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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 were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs. There were three adults working directly with the 15 children present.

(3) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived and were maintained correctly throughout the inspection.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of ten records were reviewed of children attending the service. All of the ten sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3) (c) The records were available in the premises for the inspectors to review.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)

(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:

- The atmosphere within the service was pleasant and calm, staff interacted with children at their level and engaged with them in play and discussion.
- Staff provided children with clear guidance on the daily routine and supported transitions through the use of music and songs.
- Positive verbal and nonverbal strategies such as low tones, modelling appropriate behaviour, encouragement and praise were observed. These strategies can facilitate emotional and social development in young children.
- Children moved freely through the care room, independently choosing activities.
- Lunchtime was observed to be a social experience as children sat with both staff and their peers. Children were given ample time to enjoy their meal and had access to their drinks throughout the morning at a water station.
- Children were supported to put on outdoor clothing for play in the garden.
- Staff regularly reminded children about toileting and assisted as necessary. Each toilet cubicle had its own door supporting children's privacy and dignity.

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 service entrance was secure when the inspectors arrived unannounced. Staff attend the door to allow access.
- Cleaning products were stored out of children's reach.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- Resources for play in the care room were maintained and suitable for use.

Infection Control:

- Children lunches brought from home containing perishable items were appropriately refrigerated.
- Tables were cleaned and disinfected before and after mealtime.
- Children were supported with nasal hygiene practices.
- The service had openable windows for ventilation allowing fresh air to circulate.

Fire Safety:

- Attendance records were accurately maintained on the day of inspection. This supports safe evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- Emergency exits were observed clear of obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A bottle of medication which was out of date was observed to be stored in the care room and posed a risk of being ineffective if administered to a child. This is not in line with service policy.
2. The flooring at the back of the care room was damaged with a large dip causing the floor to be uneven and posed a potential trip risk.
3. Staff belongings including handbags were accessible to children and posed a potential safety risk to children.
4. The hot water tap located in cubicle one of the sanitary area fluctuated rapidly between hot and cold water. At 10.18am the water temperature was recorded at 46°C exceeding the allowable 43°C. This posed a potential risk of injury to children.

5. The garden area contained a number of damaged items which posed potential risks to children's safety.

The following was observed:

- A large play structure with a swing was damaged and unstable and posed a potential risk of injury.
- A second play structure with a slide was observed with sections of rusted poles and posed a potential risk of injury.
- A low-level fence was damaged and posed a splinter risk.
- There was a large section of chipped and damaged paint and posed a risk if ingested.

It is acknowledged on the day of inspection children played under the sheltered area and were not allowed play on the large structures.

Infection Control:

6. The laminate covering on a low-level shelving unit used to store toys was damaged exposing the chipboard underneath. This prevented effective cleaning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A new bottle of medication was purchased. First aid box and essentials will be checked on a monthly basis by management.
2. Measures have been taken to balance the floor and fill the gap. A full repair will be carried out during midterm. A risk assessment will be carried out each morning.
3. Hooks have been installed out of children's reach for staff belongings. Management have spoken with staff and advised belongings must be hung up on arrival at the premises and again checked during the risk assessment.
4. Hot water temperature has been reduced, and contractor has demonstrated how to check the future. Water temperature will be checked each morning during risk assessment.
5. Garden area has been cordoned off from the children during play time and all items posing any risk will be replaced or fixed during February midterm break. A risk assessment will be completed daily.

Infection Control:

6. Laminate covering on low level shelving also to be repaired during February midterm break. A risk assessment will be completed daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Contractor invoice.

Infection Control:

None.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 points 1, 2, 3 and 4 have been addressed. The non-compliances identified under points 5 and 6 remain outstanding until works are completed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in first aid was available to children at all times during the operating hours of the service. A discussion with management and review of available documents confirmed there is no suitably trained person on the premises between 12.00-1.00pm daily. An immediate action notice was issued.

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box was not available. A review of the first aid box available demonstrated that the three burn dressings on the premises had expired between 2018-2024. A suitably equipped and easily accessible to adults first aid box should be available at all times to support the care and safety of children attending the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) First aid responder certificate has been acquired for a least one person during the hours 12pm-1pm. A refresher training has been booked in advance of FAR certificate expiration.

(2) A new first aid box was ordered and arrived. This is on the risk management assessment and will be checked weekly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certificate.

Purchase invoice.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 25 have been addressed.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated and staff members reported that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 21 November 2025.
 - (b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in November 2025.