

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL280		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	St. Sylvester's Montessori		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Malahide Parish Pastoral Centre, Malahide, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	K36 RY76		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Eleana Foran		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/03/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM Not Applicable
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Y Kelly		
<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

St. Sylvester's Montessori was established in 2013 as a privately owned early years service. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children from 2 years 8 months until they commence attendance at primary school. The service operates from 9:00am to 12:30pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. St. Sylvester's Montessori operates from a hall in St. Sylvester's pastoral centre in Malahide village with exclusive use of the hall and adjacent sanitary accommodation during the operational hours of the service.

### Staffing

The service employs 3 staff members including the registered provider who works directly with the children. On the day of inspection there were 2 staff members including the person in charge working directly with the children. The registered provider was not present in the service on the day of 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 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 and 26. 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 person in charge, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.

(b) The person in charge 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.

(c) The service had a clear management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities outlined.

(2) The files of the registered provider and two staff members were reviewed. The following was recorded:

(a) Three written validated references were available from past employers. One validated reference was available from a past employer.

- (b) One written reference and one validated reference for two adults were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider and two staff members. 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 one adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to show that the registered provider and two adults who 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 Minister.

## Non-Compliance Information

2(a)(b) One written reference for one staff member was not available on the day of the inspection.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Actions:

2 (a)(b) One written reference for one staff member from a past employer was submitted and received on the 26 April 2025. The registered provider reported that this reference has been printed for the staff files.

Preventive Actions:

2 (a)(b) The registered provider reported that written references will be printed and put in staff files.

### Supporting documentation submitted

2 (a)(b) Evidence of written reference received on the 26 April 2025.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 9 has been 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.*
- (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 2 adults working with 20 children aged 3 years and 3 months to 5 years and 1 month 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) Each child's learning and development and wellbeing was facilitated within the preschool in the following ways:

#### **Basic needs:**

- Children's snack and water bottles were brought from home. Snack consisted of cheese or ham sandwiches, yoghurts and fruit including strawberries, apples and grapes. Children's water bottles were accessible to the children in their bags during the morning session.

- There was a cosy area, the 'Reading Corner', observed in the service for the children to relax in as required. The cosy area was equipped with a chair and a selection of books for reading and relaxation. Children were observed reading books in the 'Reading Corner' during the morning.
- Children's independence was supported. Children were encouraged to tidy up their Montessori materials and mats independently after use. Children got their snack and water bottles independently at snack time.

### **Supporting relationships:**

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children and children were given praise and encouragement. Children were offered comfort and support when needed. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service.
- Staff were observed interacting with children at their level and engaging in children's play, for example engaging in Montessori activities, supporting children to paint at the paint easel and chatting about children's drawings with the children.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a birthday chart display and the children's artwork was displayed in the service. The children pointed out paintings that they had created for St. Patrick's Day. In addition, each child had their own cubby and coat hook identified by children's names and photographs of the children on their chairs. Staff discussed that they communicate and share information with parents using an online messaging application.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were given five-minute verbal cues to support them with the transitions. Children were involved in transitions such as taking photographs off their chairs at home time. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.

### **Physical and Material Environment**

- There was comfortable furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit when carrying out tabletop activities or for mealtimes.
- There were many Montessori shelves and materials to include the practical life shelf, sensory shelf, literacy shelf and numeracy shelf. In addition, there was a mark making shelf with materials such as pencils, Montessori insets and scissors, to support children's creativity and mark making and playdough to support sensory play. There were tabletop materials such as jigsaws and matching games to support fine motor development. Small world items included dolls houses and farm animals to support children's imaginative and dramatic play. There were transportation materials to include wooden train tracks and

cars. There were construction materials such as wooden blocks and plastic bricks. There was a wooden kitchen with kitchen materials to provide pretend and dramatic play opportunities for the children. In addition, there was a range of books available in the 'Reading Corner' which supported children's language development.

### **Programme of Activities:**

- There is a Montessori curriculum in place and staff have training to implement the Montessori method.
- Children's achievements of Montessori materials such as number recognition, spindle box, pink tower and broad stairs are recorded in a Montessori record keeping journal. Weekly plans are also kept in this record keeping journal.
- Staff facilitated a circle time which involved doing a roll call in Irish, singing songs and talking about St. Patrick's Day.
- Staff facilitated Irish dancing with the children which promoted gross motor development and 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:**

- Entry was managed by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Montessori room.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.

#### **Infection Control:**

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before eating and after using the toilet.
- Pedal bins were available for disposal of waste and contaminated items in the sanitary accommodation.

## Administration of Medication:

- Staff were aware of children's individual health care needs.

## Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of emergency evacuation.
- There was a fire drill procedure displayed in the Montessori room.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. On review of staffing levels and children's date of birth in relation to the age range of the children, it was ascertained that there was no record of registration available for one child who was in attendance on the day of the inspection. Registration records must be available for all children as they contain essential information necessary to ensure the safety of children and the provision of appropriate care.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

##### Corrective Actions:

1. The registered provider reported that the registration form has been printed and added to children's information folder.

##### Preventive Actions:

1. The registered provider reported that registration forms for all children will be printed.

## 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. There were 2 staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR), including the registered provider and the person in charge, 1 of which was present on the day of the inspection.
- (2)(a) An adequately stocked first aid box was observed in the Montessori room.
- (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)(a) A record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last fire drill dated as having been carried out on the 03 March 2025.
- (b) The number type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 29 June 2024 and the fire detection and alarm system were serviced on the 06 February 2025.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service.