

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

-USLA Identifier:	TU2015GY151
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Name of Service:	Little Treasures Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Ashville, Kiltulla, Athenry, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H65 YP08
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Name of Registered Provider:	Majella O'Reilly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2nd Floor, St Mary's HQ Castlebar Co Mayo
Inspection undertaken by:	Bernice Lavin & F. Nic Dhonnacha
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).

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Description of service

This private pre-school was established in 2006. The service offers the option of full day-care, part-time care and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme, from Monday to Friday. The service caters for children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The preschool service is in a detached premises on its own grounds in a rural setting in Kiltulla, Co Galway. There are three pre-school playrooms, namely the Little Emeralds room, the Little Diamonds room and the Little Sapphires room. There is also a designated Afterschool room for school aged children. There is a kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked and stored on site. There are outdoor play areas to the rear and sides of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There are 9 staff members who work directly with the preschool children, 2 staff work with the school age afterschool programme, a bus driver/maintenance person. Nine staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 (h)(i)(j)(k).

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

(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*

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- (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.*
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*
- (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 was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise.
- (b) The registered provider arrived on the premises approximately 10.30 and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises when the pre-school children were present.
- (2) The files for the 13 staff members were reviewed.
- (a) Eighteen written and appropriately validated references on file were from past employers.
- (b) Six written and appropriately validated references on file were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 13 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Two adults, who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, had the required police vetting. It was recognised that where applicable, these vetting certificates were translated by a reputable source.
- (4) Ten staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b) There were no written validated references on file for one staff member in the preschool service.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out completely before two staff members were appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) There were two staff members working directly with children who was unable to provide evidence that they had obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at least to level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) This staff member is no longer working in the service. The registered provider will ensure that references are on file for all staff members before they are appointed to a position in the service.

(3) The registered provider has stated that they will ensure that the procedures specified in paragraph 2 will be carried out prior to a person taking on duties within the service.

(4) The two staff members are no longer working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence has been submitted to the Inspectorate and statements from the registered provider have been accepted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection.

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 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) There were 6 staff members which included the registered provider working directly with 19 children on the day of inspection. The registered provider provided relief cover.

(2) The little sapphires room had 9 children present aged 4-5 years with 3 staff members present.

The little diamonds room had 10 children present aged 3-4 years with 2 staff members present.

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(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff members on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (h) Details of children's attendance was accurately recorded.
- (i) A staff roster was available and accurately maintained.
- (j) Documentation was available to demonstrate that signed parental consent was required prior to administering medication to a child should it be required and that administration of medication should be witnessed.
- (k) Details of accidents and incidents were recorded and there was evidence available that parents were informed following an accident or incident involving their child.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The qualifications and experience of one staff member was unavailable on file. There was no curriculum vitae available on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) This staff member is no longer working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence has been submitted to the Inspectorate.

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Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on 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.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

(1)(a)

- Drinking water was available on low tables in each playroom to all children throughout the day.
- Nutritious healthy meals were served at regular times. The main meal on the day of inspection was spaghetti bolognese with peas and grated cheese. Second helpings of dinner were available to children.
- Care and attention were taken during mealtimes to eat at the child's pace and staff encouraged and supported children to feed themselves independently according to their age and stage of development.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner during meal and snack times.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting practices.
- Staff responded to each child's individual needs and children's nappies were changed in a timely manner.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in these areas for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- The children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day. Children moved freely between indoors and outdoors. The children spent a lot of time in the well-resourced outdoor area and were observed playing with a variety of materials and activities.
- Appropriate outdoor clothing was available to the children.

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Supporting relationships

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways- discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating and initiating games and activities.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times.
- Each child had a learning journal that was available which reflected each child's work and development over the year and showed their art and craft work.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent a child leaving the service unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The outdoor play areas were secured by fencing and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The door into the kitchen, staff toilets, storage areas and staff room had a system of security.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Blinds had fastener devices as a safety measure preventing any potential hazardous access.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C and 22°C.
- The water was thermostatically controlled with a temperature reading of 32°C and 34.7°C, on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

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- There were two designated nappy changing areas. The nappy mats were intact. The children's barrier creams were individually labelled. Staff wore disposable aprons when nappy changing.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A cleaning and disinfection schedule was available in the service. There were suitable cleaning products available in the service.
- The children were prompted at various intervals throughout the day to wash their hands. Supervision was provided and assistance when necessary.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of children's reach. Medications examined were within date.

Safe Sleep:

- There were stackable beds available for children requiring sleep.
- In each playroom, quiet rest areas with child size seating and soft matting were available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if they wished.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Clear signage was available to highlight the exits.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance specifying the address of the service, catering for full day care service for 75 children at any one time, with an expiry date of 29/03/2027, was available. The insurance covered -

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

Additional Motor Insurance was available with an expiry date of 9/02/2027.