

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D:	TU2015KE153							
Name of Service	Stepping Stones Montessori School							
Address of Service:	Ballymany Road, Newbridge Co. Kildare W12 W310							
Email Address:	steppingstones94@gmail.com							
Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon O' Carroll							
Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	✓	Part-Time	✓	Sessional	✓		
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary			
Proposed change:	Change the age profile from 2-6 years old to 0-6 years Change in number of children from 33 to 43 within the existing premises.							
Proposed Number of Children:	43							
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	Change the age profile of children attending from 2-6 years old to 0-6 years old, with a maximum of 42 children attending on a sessional basis and a maximum of 35 children attending on a full day care basis.							
Registered change:	Change in age profile from 2-6 years to 0-6 years Change in number of children from 33 to 42 (35 full day/part-time) children							
Date of Inspection:	2	5	0	6	2	0	2	5
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, T. Duignan							
Title:	Early Years Inspectors							
Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare W91X38W							

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Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day, Part-Time & Sessional Service for 42(Max 35 Full Day/Part-Time) Children
Date of Registration	18th July 2025

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	Stepping Stones Montessori School is a private full day care service which also provides part time and sessional care and education to children aged 2-6 years old. The service is currently registered to accommodate 33 children and opens from 7:00am-7:00pm. The service is proposing to change the age profile of children attending to 0-6 years old and increase the number of children attending to 43.
Premises	The service operates from an adapted bungalow on the outskirts of Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Three pre-school rooms, one of which is located in a single storey building at the rear of the premises, a sleep room, sanitary with nappy change facilities and a kitchen are provided. There are play areas located to the front and rear of the premises.
Staffing	A sufficient number of adults are currently employed in the service to accommodate the proposed change as outlined above. The adults employed and working directly with pre-school children hold qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education as recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications.
Methodology	The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.

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	The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.
Acknowledgements	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.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

The service has a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1)

The registered provider has appointed a sufficient number of staff members to ensure the required adult:child ratios are maintained.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

- (1) *Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—*
- (a) *having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
 - (b) *there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*
- (2) *A registered provider—*
- (b) *of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1)(a)

The pre-school rooms are constructively planned with clearly defined areas of interest and associated resources. All rooms were bright, colorful and spacious, were very well resourced and had a variety of age-appropriate toys and learning equipment visible and at an accessible height to facilitate a child-led learning environment for children aged 0-6 years to attend the service.

Low level child sized tables and chairs are provided in all rooms to enable children sit comfortably for meals and tabletop activities and 5 highchairs are available in the Baby room.

(b)

Child sized couches are available in the pre-school rooms should a child require to sit and rest during the day. Low level sleep mats are available for any child aged 2years and above who may require a period of sleep while attending on a part time or full-time basis and three standard cots are available for any child less than 2 years requiring sleep in a cot; bed linen is individual to each child and stored accordingly.

(2)(b)

Suitable secure areas located at the front and rear of the premises were available for children to play outdoors and were equipped with a variety of play equipment and

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assorted play materials to promote imaginary play, gross motor activities such as climbing and sand play promoting the children's sensorial experiences.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

A healthy eating policy is in place in the service.

A cook is employed, and all meals and snacks are freshly prepared on the premises.

Parents of children attending the sessional service are asked to provide a healthy snack for their child. A three-week menu displayed a variety of nutritionally complete meals and snacks.

Drinking water was available at all times for the children.

The kitchen is registered with the relevant health authority.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

The main entrance to the service was secure with a bell entry system which was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

The outdoor play areas were secure with high level fencing on the front boundary walls and a front gate that was secured on the inside. The side entrance was also secured with a gate and slide bolt mechanism and the outdoor boiler in the rear play area was fenced off.

Emergency exit doorways were clearly signed and unobstructed.

Sufficient storage was available for cleaning products, equipment and staff belongings.

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Foot pedal operated bins were in place for the hygienic disposal of all waste including soiled nappies.

The hot water supply at all wash hand basins was thermostatically controlled and a supply of liquid soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted dispensers, were available for hygienic hand washing and drying.

The premises is maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and detailed cleaning schedules are in place for all room environments.

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.*

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1)

Current certification in relation to First Aid Response (FAR) was available for two staff members currently working and present in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes are stored in conspicuous positions in the service and are available and accessible to the staff members caring for the children at all times.

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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.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement is met.</p> <p>(1)(a)</p> <p>Documentation was available with up-to-date recordings for monthly fire drills completed.</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>The firefighting equipment and smoke/fire detection alarm system was serviced 25 June 2025 and 28 April 2025 respectively.</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was clearly displayed within the service.</p>
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement is met.</p> <p>The registered provider had evidence of insurance cover for 45 pre-school children. The insurance cover was valid to 27 March 2026.</p>
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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,
- (b) safe and secure,
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(a)

The person in charge advised there were no concerns regarding the structure of the premises and advised it was in a state of good repair.

(b)

The main entrance to the service was secure with a bell entry system which was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

The outdoor play areas were secure with high level fencing on the front boundary walls and a front gate that was secured on the inside.

(c)

There were openable windows to naturally ventilate the pre-school rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Natural daylight was provided by large windows in each pre-school room and windows in each sanitary area. Supplementary artificial fluorescent ceiling strip lighting or LED ceiling box lighting was provided throughout the service. The accommodation has oil fired central heating and a boiler servicing contract is in place as advised by the person in charge.

(d)

Cleaning schedules are in place and the premises, and its environs were clean and well maintained. A pest control contract was in place; this was confirmed by the person in charge.

(e)

The current sanitary facilities in the premises include:

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	<p>Main corridor sanitary area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 adult toilet with 1 wash hand basin• 1 nappy change unit with 1 wash hand basin <p>Busy Bees room sanitary area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 child toilet with 1 wash hand basin• 1 nappy change unit with 1 wash hand basin <p>Pre-school 1 room sanitary area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 children's toilets with 2 wash hand basins <p>Cabin sanitary area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 toilets with 2 wash hand basins
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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.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.
- (4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1), (2)

Adequate clear floor space has been provided for the work, play and movement of 35 children to attend on a full day care basis as demonstrated on Table 1 below:

Table 1

Room	Room 1 (Baby)	Room 2 (Busy Bees)	Room 3 (Pre-school 1)
Clear floor space	27.1m ²	23.4 m ²	42.15 m ²
Proposed age range	0-1 years	2-3 years	2-6 years
Maximum number children	7 (FDC)	12 (ECCE) 10 (FDC)	23 (ECCE) 18 (FDC)

(4)(a)(b)

A maximum number of **42** children may attend during the operation of a concurrent sessional service as demonstrated on Table 1 above.