

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK013		
Name of Service:	Castlecomer Creche & Montessori Ltd.		
Address of Service:	Oakhill, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny		
Eircode:	R95 AK65		
Name of Registered Provider:	Noreen Buggy		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	17/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM 29
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton		
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

Castlecomer Creche and Montessori is a registered full day childcare service which also provides a sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) service and optional part-time service. The service operates from 08:00 to 17:45 hours Monday to Friday for 50 weeks of the year, closing for 2 weeks at Christmas.

The service operates from a purpose-built childcare building in the Oakhill estate in the town of Castlecomer in north Kilkenny. There are five classrooms in total providing care for children from birth to 6 years.

Staffing

There were 14 staff members employed in the service including the two registered providers and a designated chef. All staff members who as part of their role in the service is to work directly with the preschool children held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 16(1), 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the wobbler room and ECCE classrooms.

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, designated 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 designated person in charge was onsite on the inspector's arrival at the service. The registered provider was notified of the inspection, however, was unavailable on the day.

(b) The staff roster that was provided to the inspector demonstrated that there was always the registered provider, designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear visual outline of the management structure in the service was displayed in the entrance hall of the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

(2) Staff files for 14 staff members were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each staff member, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member employed in the service including the registered provider. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A police vetting disclosure certificate was on file for one staff member employed in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications were available for each staff member, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 9 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On review of the service's policies the inspector was assured that the registered provider ensured that all required documents specified in Schedule 5, were available in the service and were communicated to the staff as part of their induction process on commencing employment in the service, with annual reviews and revisions taking place as appropriate.

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) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the preschool classrooms that were in operation during the inspection.

ECCE Rooms 2- There were 16 children aged 4 to 5 years directly cared for by 3 staff members throughout the morning of the session and in the afternoon 12 children remained in the care of 2 staff members.

Play Based Learning Room- There were 17 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 4 years directly cared for by 2 staff members during the morning. In the afternoon 7 children remained under the care of 1 staff member.

Toddler Room- There were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years cared for by 1 staff member throughout the day.

Wobbler Room- There were 4 children aged 15 months to 2 years directly cared for by 1 staff member throughout the inspection.

The designated person in charge and an additional staff member was available to provide relief for staff breaks and support staff with children's care where and when required.

(8)(a) On review of the staff roster and in discussion with the registered provider and staff the inspector was assured that there were always at least two adults on the premises while children were in attendance in 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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of a sample of 12 pre-school children's records, the inspector observed that particulars (a) to (j) as required by regulation 15 were clearly recorded.

(4) The registered provider demonstrated how preschool records are stored securely and appropriately for a period of two years after a child ceases to attend the service.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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

(1) On review of records available and open for inspection, the inspector was reassured that the registered provider, maintained records of the following information.

(1)(a) All staff members employed in the service had a staff record containing written details of their position and role in the service, their qualifications and certificates and professional experience.

(b) to (f) The service’s “Statement of Purpose and Function” which was displayed on the notice board in the service and available to parents/guardians and any authorised persons detailed elements (b) to (f).

(g)The written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were available in the service.

(h) Children’s daily attendance records were recorded detailing the children’s arrival and departure times.

(i) Staff rosters were available for review. The inspector observed that the staff roster recorded for the day of inspection was confirmed on observation of staff present in the service.

(j)The inspector reviewed a sample of six administration of medication records and observed that they were completed and documented in line with the service’s administration of medication policy.

(k) A sample of four incident records were reviewed and found to be recorded in line with the service's accident and incident policy.

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 was secured with a call bell system at the main entrance door, which the staff could respond to from inside the service. A clear transparent window in the main door allowed staff to see any parents or visitors calling to the service prior to access to the service being authorised by a staff member.

The perimeter of the service, including all the outdoor play areas, was secured by a ten-foot-high cement block wall. This assisted in preventing any unauthorised person from entering the service and helped to mitigate against a child exiting the service unsupervised.

The inspector observed that all cleaning materials and equipment were stored safely away from the children in a separate safe secured storage area.

Infection Control:

There was an adequate number of toilet and nappy changing facilities provided throughout the service to meet the needs of the children in attendance.

Each child's toilet was supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use. The older children were observed to use the toilets and hand washing facilities independently, while staff supported and assisted the younger children as needed.

Staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly if needed after using the toilet, post nappy-changing, after messy and outdoor play, and before snack times.

Staff were observed to carry out nappy changing procedures in line with the service's nappy changing policy and in adherence with the service's hand washing and infection control policy.

There was one designated staff toilet in the building.

Administration of Medication:

Staff were well informed of their responsibilities and of the procedures for safe administration of any medication to a child in the service.

Staff demonstrated that child centred care plans were on record and available to staff for any child prescribed with specialised medication for a diagnosed medical condition.

Staff were also reassuring in the knowledge they demonstrated regarding administration of anti-febrile medication to children with high temperatures in accordance with the service's administration of medication policy.

Medications were secured in a safe position in a high cabinet in the administration office.

Safe Sleep:

The inspector observed staff members ensured all safe sleep practices were carried out and recorded on each sleeping child in accordance with the service's safe sleep policy. A sleeping child's colour, sleep position and breathing were recorded every 10 minutes.

Outing:

The registered provider had an outings policy in the event of any outings away from the service, which all staff were well informed of.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) On review of records maintained and in discussion with the staff and registered provider, the inspector was reassured that each child attending the service has their time of arrival to the service and departure time from the service recorded daily.
- (3)(a) Staff ensured that no person other than a pre-school child, person dropping or collecting a child, an employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises unauthorised.
- (b) A daily record of any visitors to the service was maintained and the inspector was requested to ensure that they recorded the details of their inspection visit.
- (4) The registered provider demonstrated that the records were retained for a period of at least one year.

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) There were three staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, the roster demonstrated that a staff member with FAR training was onsite.
- (2)(a)(b) A dedicated first aid box was available in the administration office and was always available to the staff. Records demonstrated that its contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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) The following records were maintained.
- (a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 09 October 2025.
 - (b) The registered provider maintained a record of the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last maintenance check for the fire-fighting equipment was recorded as having taken place in October 2025 and for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having taken place on 01 September 2025.
- (2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.
- (3) The registered provider demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that a fire procedure notice was clearly displayed in the main entrance hall.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate for the service displayed on a notice board in the main entrance hall. The insurance certificate detailed insurance cover for a full day care service provision for a maximum of 70 early years children and covered the period from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.