

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK043		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Kilmacow Montessori School		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Dangan, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny		
<b>Eircode:</b>	X91 HD54		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Helen Murphy-Walsh		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	11/06/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	30	PM 6
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. Ryan		
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Kilmacow Montessori school is a privately owned service located on the outskirts of Kilmacow, a rural village in South Kilkenny. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) and has two morning sessions with staggered times between 08:45hrs and 12:00hrs and one afternoon session commencing at 12:15hrs to 15:30hrs. School age childcare provision is also available in the afternoons. The morning session is facilitated between two buildings, a purpose-built preschool service and a chalet, all on the grounds of the registered provider's home. The main building has one large room with a kitchenette, toilet and laundry room facilities, storage room for toys and equipment, children's toilets, a relaxation room and an office. The chalet accommodates children's toilets, and a food preparation area. The service has two outdoor play spaces adjacent to each pre-school building.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the owner manager and part of the staff compliment. The registered provider employs five childcare workers to work directly with the children in the services.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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, 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

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person able to deputise if required.
  - (b) The registered provider was present throughout the inspection.

Since the last inspection on the 14 September 2021 there were three new staff members employed to work with the children in the service. One student was on placement on the day. The recruitment records of the other staff were reviewed on previous inspections.

- (2)
- (a) Six written past employee references were available in respect of the new staff members working in the service with recorded validations for each reference.
  - (b) Two references from a reputable source were available for the student.
  - (c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána available on file for all staff and these were completed in the last three years.
  - (d) No staff member had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months.
- (4)
- There was evidence that staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5, 6, 7, and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(3)

On the morning of the inspection the following were the ratios of staff to children:

In the Main room building there were 17 children from 4 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff.

In the Junior room there were 13 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff.

On the afternoon of the inspection In the Junior room there were 6 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 1 childcare staff member.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The large pre-school room in the main building was used for the older children usually on their second year in attendance in the service. The room was bright, airy and well ventilated. The furniture such as tables and chairs were age appropriate and arranged in the center of the room. Shelving was arranged along the walls to support a variety of Montessori equipment and activities.

The preschool session in the junior room accommodated the younger children on the first year of the ECCE scheme. The room was observed to be cosy and homely for the younger children. The room was well organised with storage arrangements for age-appropriate activities and toys made available throughout. These were sorted in baskets on low shelving allowing the children to have free and easy access. Children were observed accessing independently and with ease their own personalised plastic containers that held their bags and spare clothing identifiable by their own photograph attached to the box.

The outdoor play spaces were secured with timber and wire fencing from the car park and the registered providers home. The outdoor area had grass surfaces for outdoor ball games, sand trays and mud pits on the cemented area and the tarmac area for balance bikes and ride on toys There was an indoor/outdoor room called the 'summer house' incorporated into the outdoor play area. This room was well equipped with toys and equipment for free play.

(b)

Both buildings had adjoining rest/ relaxation rooms adjacent to the main care rooms in the junior room it was called the rainbow room which was made available to the children for rest and relaxation with coloured mats, wall mirrors and supplies of books and soft couches. This was observed to be cosy and homely for the younger children. Off the main building another relaxation room adjacent to the main playroom was called 'Squashy Couch' and was available for children to relax. In this room there were leather couches with a large selection of age-appropriate books.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The service ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. The registered provider informed the inspector that safety was paramount in the service especially in the carpark as there were established protocols for drop off and pick up times. These were explained to parents and guardians at a meeting on the first Tuesday in September. The registered provider explained that in order to facilitate the utmost of safety there were staggered times in each building for children transitioning to and from the school.

The inspector observed these arrangements as parents and guardians waited in the enclosed outdoor play space while each child was handed over individually to their respective parent or guardian. There were signs in the small carpark reminding parents to be prompt and careful with car turning and reversing. The registered provider reiterated that safety at transition periods was of utmost importance and that regular emails were sent out to parents and guardians as additional reminders of this.

The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. Four of the staff had more than 10 years experience working with this service. The children were observed to have had unrestricted access to the toilet throughout the session. Staff escorted children individually to the sanitary area and stood and waited until the child was finished using the toilet and verbally checking with the child if they needed any assistance. After the child had finished in the toilet cubicle staff were observed encouraging hand washing.

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The service was able to facilitate all children attending to be outdoors at the one time. The registered provider explained that a key worker system was in operation while all children were outdoors. All staff were outdoors during these periods and were observed moving around supervising different aspects of the play spaces and were vigilant in checking in with their key children regarding toileting, access to water and general safety.