

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK047
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Name of Service:	Lilliput Montessori
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Address of Service:	1 Pockocke Valley, Johnswell Road, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 C985
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Name of Registered Provider:	Natasha Riley Byrne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
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Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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.
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Description of service

Lilliput Montessori is a registered sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) service located on the Johnswell road in Kilkenny city, The service provides sessional services between the hours of 09:15 to 12:15 and 13:00 hours to 16:00 hours, Monday to Friday as per the ECCE calendar. The service is in a residential estate in a house which has been adapted to provide two classrooms, the Vygotsky room and the Piaget room. There are two outdoor play areas which each classroom has direct access to at the side and back of the service.

Staffing

There were six staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. All six staff members, who as part of their roles in the service worked directly with the children held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 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.

The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25, and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 15, 19, and 23.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included both classrooms and the outdoor play areas.

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.

Additional Information

On the day of inspection an Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider for one staff member who was present in the service working directly with the children and who did not have Garda Vetting on file. It is acknowledged that a prompt response was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspector and a Garda Vetting Certificate for the staff member was subsequently submitted.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy 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.

(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) A named deputy designated person in charge was present on the day of inspection. The registered provider was not present and there was a second named deputy person in charge to deputise as required.

(b) The inspector was informed that while the preschool service is in operation, the designated person in charge /registered provider or the named deputy designated person in charge is onsite.

(c) A clear management structure was observed in the service with each staff member aware of their roles and responsibilities. Each staff member's role and qualifications were displayed in the office and classrooms for parents and children to see.

(2) Staff files for the six staff members were reviewed by the inspector and the following observations found.

(a)(b) There were two validated references available in each of the staff member's files from either a past employer or reputable source in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available for five staff members employed in the service. The service demonstrated that these five Garda vetting certificates were compliant with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or longer.

(4) Certificates of accredited qualifications were available demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national framework of qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c) A Garda vetting disclosure certificate was not available for one staff member employed in the service and observed on the day of inspection working directly with the children. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider, and it is acknowledged that an adequate response and the required documentation was subsequently promptly submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspector.

(3) The Garda vetting procedure specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to the commencement of one employee in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider responded stating that the Garda vetting was secured on the evening of inspection and submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

The registered provider states that they will not employ staff before obtaining Garda vetting in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of required documentation.

Copy of Garda Vetting Policy.

Summary Comment

The documented actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next 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.*
- (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) The inspector observed that there was an adequate number of staff directly caring for the children attending the service throughout the session.
- (3) In the Vygotsky room there were 17 children aged 3 to 5 years directly supervised by 3 staff members. In the Piaget room there were 10 children aged 3 to 4 years directly supervised by 2 staff members.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) There was a registration form available in respect of each child enrolled in the service. A sample of 12 forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Physical Environments.

Throughout the inspection the inspector observed that the children in both classrooms were engaged in activities of their choice or in activities supported by the staff in their rooms.

Each classroom had clear identifiable interest areas which included kitchen/ home areas, art and creativity areas, construction areas, dress-up areas and reading and rest areas. Play materials and equipment were well resourced with appropriate themed equipment and toys present in each area as well as low level shelves with supplies of connective and manipulative materials, jigsaws, peg boards, Montessori equipment and tasks, dolls houses and a technology area where children could spend a short period of time doing technological tasks and problem solving supervised by their key worker.

The two outdoor areas could be directly accessed from the classrooms and were connected by a narrow walkway and gate at the back of the building. The outdoor area which could be directly accessed from the Piaget room

contained an artificial grass surface , an outdoor mud kitchen, an outdoor art easel, wooden teepee and a circular tree seat under a tree, all of which provided the children with an environment to stimulate imaginary and creative play.

In the outdoor area which could be directly accessed from the Vygotsky classroom, a paved area provided space for children to play ball, plant in their garden boxes or ride their ride on toys.

Basic Care Needs of the Children.

Children had access to their individual drink bottles which had a designated place for storage in the classroom. At snack time all the children were observed to have brought healthy snacks from home, which included meat or salad sandwiches, fruit, yogurts and crackers.

Children were observed to be familiar and independent with their toilet facilities, with staff required to provide little support, apart from the odd occasion where staff prompted one or two of the children to remember to wash their hands.

Staff responded to children’s needs during activities either by supporting them in selecting activities or to engage in group play if they were shy. Staff were frequently overheard instilling positivity in the classrooms, by telling the children how they were doing great work helping one another, praising children’s hard work at learning and ensuring that everyone enjoyed activities that were happening.

Children were learning about Spring, the arrival of fresh blooms and small baby animals and were engaged in an incubator project where they had seven eggs incubating while they were in the process of studying the lifecycle of the chicken. The children sang Spring songs and discussed how they knew Spring had arrived.

Children’s identity in the service was reinforced with each child’s creative spring work displayed on the walls, flowers with photos of their faces as the centre, and cotton wool paper plate lambs which they had created as part of their curricular planning on the subject of Spring.

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 keypad call system at the entrance door to each classroom. Staff could clearly see any potential visitors as they approached the service through the large clear windows in each of the classrooms. The outdoor play areas were surrounded with high brick wall. This assisted in the prevention of any unauthorised person from entering the premises and prevented any child from exiting the service unsupervised.

All cleaning equipment and materials were safely secured in designated storage units, away from the children. The office area was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, messy play, outdoor play and prior to snack times. Liquid hand soap and paper towelling were available in the three child sized toilets and handwash basins available to the children attending the Vygotsky room and in the toilet are adjacent to the Piaget room.

Children had access to face tissues for nose -blowing and were observed to be supported by staff to blow their noses into the tissues, use correct coughing etiquette, to dispose of the soiled tissue in a pedal operated bin, and to wash their hands afterwards.

Cleaning schedules displayed were observed to be maintained daily.

Administration of Medication:

In general staff informed the inspector that medications were not required to be administered in the service. However, staff were well informed of the service's administration of medication policy and the procedures to be followed if a child required anti-febrile medication or a prescribed medication while attending the service.

Outing:

A suitable outings policy and procedure was available in the service for staff to follow if they decided to take an outing away from the service.

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 four staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children.

The deputy designated person in charge demonstrated that there were at least three staff members with FAR training present in the service while preschool children were in attendance.

(2) (a)(b) A new first aid cabinet which was available to the staff, for the children was easily accessible in the office.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate displaying adequate insurance for up to 44 preschool children was displayed on the notice board in the office.

The insurance certificate provided cover from 28 March 2024 to the 27 March 2025.