

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY007
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Name of Service:	Ballyard Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Slumber Haven, Ballyard, Tralee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 AY16
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Name of Registered Provider:	Betty Brosnan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	21/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	07	PM	None
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
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).

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Description of service

Ballyard Montessori School is registered as a privately operated early years service, catering for children aged between 2 years and 6 years on a sessional basis. The children attending on inspection were aged between 4 years and 5 years. The service offers one session between the hours of 8.30 am and 12 pm Monday to Friday. The service is located in a purpose-built setting at the registered provider's home in the urban of Ballyard, Tralee, Co. Kerry. The service consists of 1 playroom, the sanitary accommodation located in the playroom and a spacious outdoor area that is directly accessible from the playroom patio door located at the side of the building.

Staffing

There are 2 adults attached to the service employed to work directly with the children each day. This includes the registered provider. There was 1 adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme.

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.

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

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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

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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 is the designated person in charge and there is a named deputy to deputise in her absence as required.
- (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider and the named deputy were on duty to assist with the inspection process.
- (2) (a) & (b) Following a review of the previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Garda vetting for the 2 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
- (c) The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in relation to the 2 staff members.
- (d) As it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the last inspection, this was not the subject of inspection.
- (4) The 2 staff working directly with the children had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

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(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children attending the service.
- (3) There were 2 adults caring for 7 children attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs: -

- The children had their food for snack time provided by their parents/guardians. During the inspection they ate their food in the outdoors in the covered in area.
- The children were dressed in appropriate clothing for the outdoors, the registered provider supplied protective wet suits and children had wellies that were kept in the service.
- The inspector observed the registered provider went outdoors to check and arrange the area and to sanitize the tables prior to eating.
- The children were observed moving about freely in the spacious playroom and in the outdoors, partaking in play activities of their choice.
- The inspector observed the staff encouraging self-help skills for example putting on their outdoor protective suits and putting away their lunch bags after eating.
- The children accessed the toilets in the playroom as they needed to during the session.

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- The staff were available to assist the children using the toilet if needed and observed to issue gentle reminders for children to wash their hands afterwards.
- The staff were observed to be caring and kind towards the children in their care. The re-assured children and comforted children whilst coming down to their level and sitting them on their laps.
- The playroom was spacious, bright and ventilated by the openable windows. The walls were decorated with a selection of children's artwork and some on the entrance door. There was a selection of educational materials on the walls and the children's family photographs displayed at the children's eye level.
- The children took part in various play activities outdoors during the inspection.
- The activities included for example: -
 - one-to-one planting sunflower seeds in egg cartons filled with peat
 - in small groups using an obstacle course made by the children using various play items of different heights,
 - in pairs playing with the kitchens, making meals in pans using flowers picked from the grass area and story time as facilitated by the registered provider.
- The children remained playing outside until their departure time from the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was a large range of equipment and materials within the playroom to support children's development.
- The toys and play materials included for example included puzzles, a variety of blocks, arts & crafts materials, a designated writing/drawing table with crayons, colouring pencils, paper and themed colouring pages. There was a painting easel with paints, brushes, paper and protective aprons to wear, a selection of books, the kitchen area and a range of Montessori materials.
- The children had access to low level seating, cushions for the floor and a large bean bag to rest/opt out of an activity as they so wished during the session.
- There were child sized tables and chairs for eating and for tabletop activities.

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- The room had open low level open shelving throughout the room where the toys and play materials were easily accessible to the children.
- The spacious outdoor area consisted of a covered in space, with concrete underfoot that continued to the to the grasses area.
- The toys and play materials available for the children included for example: a climbing frame, a variety of mature trees and shrubbery for children to explore and play hide and seek games as seen on inspection. There were outdoor kitchens with pots and pans, planting pots, an open sand box with small animals, shells and containers of various sizes and shapes. There were balls and a low-level basketball ring on a stand and a selection of ride on toys.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The service had a designated written record of the check in and out time for each child attending 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) The 2 staff members working in the servicer had current First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed, the certifications for same were furnished to the inspector.
- (2)

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(a) The sufficiently equipped first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the playroom, out of the reach of children.

(b) At all times when the service is in operation, the first aid box was accessible to the adults in the event that children required them.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certification for the service was furnished to the inspector.

The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- the contact details for the insurance provider
- the name and address of the service insured
- the category (sessional) of insurance cover for the service.
- the number of children covered by the insurance was for 11 children.
- The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27/03/'27.