

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KY113
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	McConologue Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Scart, Gortatlea, Ballymacelligott, Tralee, Co. Kerry
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<b>Eircode:</b>	VP2 P821
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Denise McConologue
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	18/10/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	7
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	134 Bank Place, Mallow Co. Cork.
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Riordan
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<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

McConologue Montessori school is a full day child care service located in a rural setting in Co Kerry. It opens each morning at 8am for breakfast club. It offers an Early Childhood Care and Education sessional service from 8.45am to 11.45am. A full day care service is offered each afternoon up to 6pm. A service for school aged children is also accessible each afternoon. The sessional service accommodates children aged from 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and the full day care service provides care to children aged over 3 years up to school age.

### Staffing

The registered provider owns and manages the service. There are 4 additional staff working at the service all of whom hold the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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/premises and facilities. 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

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*
- (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 registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service indicating the person in charge, the deputy and the additional members of staff.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the staff were vetted prior to starting in the service. All staff files were assessed.
- (a) There were written validated references available in respect of each staff working at the service.
- (b) All references were sourced from either previous employers or from reputable sources such as schools or colleges.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of each staff working at the service. All were dated within the last three years.
- (d) Not applicable.
- (4) All staff working in the service held appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 7 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.*
- (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) The registered provider ensured that there were adequate staff on the premises at all times.
- (2) The service operates a morning sessional programme from 8.45am to 11.45am. The service offers a full day care service each afternoon for 7 preschool children up until 6:00pm. On the day of the inspection there were 16 pre-school children present with 4 staff for the morning sessional service. There were 7 preschool children present in the afternoon for the full day care service. The adult child ratio was compliant with the requirements of Regulation 11.
- (8) (a) The registered provider ensured that there were two adults onsite in the service during the hours of operation when children were in attendance. This was noted on the staff sign in and sign out records daily.

### 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

##### **BASIC NEEDS:**

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service. A nutritious breakfast is offered each morning if required from 8am. Parents provided children attending the sessional service with a healthy snack and drinks each day for their lunch. At break times children were observed eating a variety of sandwiches, fruits, crackers, yogurts, and cheese. All perishable foods were stored in a refrigerator until required each morning. Children had easy access throughout the day to their bottles of water. Each afternoon the registered provider prepared and cooked a hot nutritious meal for the children who remained at the service until 6:00 pm.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets located next to the pre-school room. Nappy changing facilities were available if required. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were accessible to promote hygienic washing of hands. Foot pedal operated, lidded bins were provided for the safe disposal of all waste. A change of clothes was available for all children if needed. Protective clothing was available for outdoor play if required and for all messy play activities.

Soft low-level couches were accessible in the library corner providing the children with a space to rest when tired or sit comfortably when reading. Low level beds were available if a child attending for full time hours, required a rest period in the afternoon.

Where children presented with additional needs, individual care plans were developed. Achievable goals and progress reports were documented and evidence of regular communication with parents and other professionals involved in the child's care were noted in writing.

Children spend long periods outside each day in a well-resourced outdoor play area to the front and back of the premises.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operated from a large well-resourced preschool room. Low level, open shelving units were available around the room with lots of age-appropriate toys and play materials clearly displayed in well labelled boxes and trays. Waist high tables and chairs were located in the center of the room and were used for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes. Lots of posters displayed on the walls of the room promoted learning opportunities for the children. "Our Community" notice board displayed pictures of the buildings in the local parish which provided services to community, e.g., pictures of the local playground, supermarket, train station, pharmacy and primary schools were displayed. Children's artwork was exhibited around the room displaying works completed on the theme of Halloween. To create a sense of belonging and friendship a family wall displayed lots of pictures of each child's family.

The outdoor play area available at the front of the premises was a well-resourced safe enclosed space. Rubber matting covered the area making it accessible in all weather conditions and reduced the risk of injury to a child while outdoors. Here the children had opportunities to improve their gross motor skills using lots of climbing frames, low level slides, swings, hammocks and tunnels, A tarmac area was also available for children to use their ride on bikes, tricycles, scooters and balance bikes. A grassed area was accessible at the rear of the building and here children had an opportunity for planting and gardening.

Children were supervised at all times while playing outdoors. The indoor and the outdoor areas was continuously reviewed, changed, and enhanced to suit the ever-changing interests, capabilities and preferences of the children.

## 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) Two of the staff in the service had first aid responder (FAR) training and this training was up to date.

(2) (a) There was a large first aid box available in the main preschool room.

(b) The first aid equipment was accessible to the staff at all times if required.

## 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.*

*(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)(a) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. Monthly fire drills were carried out. The most recent fire drill took place on the 23rd of September 2024.

(b) The number, the type and the yearly maintenance record of all firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were maintained. A new smoke alarm was installed recently in the service.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises appeared safe and secured. The front door was locked and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. The outdoor area was well secured preventing any unauthorised access to, or exit from this area of the service. Safety checks of all areas were carried out on a daily basis.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation in any area of the service.

(d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service.