

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LK104 |
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| Name of Service: | Lilliput Montessori |
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| Address of Service: | Mount Charlotte, Rhebogue, Limerick, Co. Limerick |
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| Eircode: | V94 KD89 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Ruth McNamara |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 26/09/2025 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 17 | PM | N/A |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, Estuary House, 2 nd Floor, Henry Street, Limerick. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M Riordan |
| 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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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Lilliput Montessori is a private, sessional pre-school service located in the outskirts of Limerick city. It offers an ECCE programme during a morning session from 9.00am to 12.00 md. The service can accommodate a maximum of 22 preschool children at any one time on the premises. The pre-school operates from a purposely designed single story building. It contains 2 well-resourced pre-school rooms. Bathroom facilities are located next to preschool room 2. A carefully designed outdoor play area is located in the front yard and garden of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider is the person in charge of operating the preschool. Two additional adults are employed at the school. All staff have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. One staff has completed the LINC programme, a course designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in Early Childhood Care and Education settings.

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.

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) On the day of the inspection the registered provider was the designated person in charge. 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.

(2)(a) There were written references from past employers available in respect of each staff, with recorded validations where required.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source were provided.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable to this service as none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction.

(4) Both the registered provider and the 2 staff who work at the facility held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 service operates a morning sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00 md. There were 17 preschool children with 3 adults attending on the day of the inspection. This met the requirements of Regulation 11.
- (3) At all times the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.

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. The parents supplied healthy snacks and drinks for the pre-school children. Perishable foods were stored appropriately in a fridge until required each day at the service. Drinking water was accessible to the children at all times. Staff sat with the children while they were eating making mealtimes a sociable occasion.

Large soft couches, cushions and blankets provided a comfortable environment for children to relax when they were tired. A selection of reading material was available next to the rest corner.

Children had easy and unrestricted access to the bathroom facilities. Nappy changing facilities were available if necessary. A change of clothes was available for all children if needed. Tissues and wipes were always accessible to the children, and all waste was disposed of properly in foot pedal operated, lidded bins.

Children got to play in the outdoor area each day at the service. A sheltered space outside allows children to spend time outdoors in all weather conditions.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The indoor and the outdoor environment were welcoming and safe and provided a good range of developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences for the children. Play equipment and materials were grouped together to provide specific interest areas. Some of the areas included an imaginative home area, a construction area, an area for art and crafts, a sensory play area with sand and water play accessible in large tuff trays and a library and reading area. Low level tables and chairs were accessible for tabletop activities and for dining at lunch time. Childrens artwork was exhibited on many walls of the service and lots of educational posters were displayed at children’s eye level throughout the service.

A large garden at the front of the premises facilitated children spending lots of time enjoying the outdoors. Lots of bikes, trikes, cars and scooters were also available outside. Two wooden sheds were set up as play areas and children could use these spaces for small group play activities. A sheltered area at the front of the building had mud kitchens, sand trays and picnic table sets facilitating extra spaces for children to explore and enjoy at the facility. Observation records were kept on all children. This allowed staff to adjust the play environment on an ongoing basis to facilitate children's emergent interests and abilities.

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:

Electric gates at the entrance to the premises ensured that no unauthorised access to or exit from the school was possible. The external entrance door to the school was safely secured.

The person in charge ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children and adults present in the service.

Safe storage out of children’s reach was available for all detergents and cleaning agents used in the service.

Infection Control:

A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in all rooms of the service.

The playrooms and sanitary areas were adequately ventilated with openable windows in the area.

There was hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels at each wash hand basin to facilitate hygienic hand washing for children and adults. Foot pedal operated lidded bins were available to ensure the hygienic disposal of all waste.

Fire Safety:

Fire doors leading from the preschool were unobstructed and clear at time of inspection.

Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service to ensure staff and children were familiar with the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire emergency.

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 registered provider and a second staff member both held a first aid responder certificate. The certificates were in date up to 2026.

(2)(a) A well-equipped first aid box was stored in an easily accessible location within the preschool room.

(b) The first aid box was available to children attending at all times.

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 gate to the school was securely closed. The outdoor area was well secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.
- (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.
- (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 and wash hand basins available at the service. A nappy changing facility was available if required.