

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK155
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Name of Service:	St. Anthony's Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Mungret Soccer Club Rathmale Mungret Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94ND8P
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Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Cusack
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection: Day 1	10 TH June 2025
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Date of Inspection: Day 2	11 th June 2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	
No of pre-school children:		16		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
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Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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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

Description of service

This private montessori sessional service was established in 2008. It operates a morning session from 09:00 – 12:00hrs, Monday – Friday for 38 weeks a year.

The service offers a play-based curriculum through the montessori ethos. It is operated from a designated room in a community building in a rural setting. The children have access to one playroom, the sports hall, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play facilities.

Staffing

Two adults work in the service each day and the registered provider provides relief cover. All three staff have childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications 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 an examination of compliance under regulations 9,10,11,15,19,23,24,25,26 and 28.

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

10/06/2025:

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider as there was no person with up-to-date training in first aid responder (FAR) available in the service at all times while the children were in attendance. Please refer to Regulation 25 - First Aid in the body of the report. This is a reoccurring non-compliance which was identified on the last inspection report for the service dated 19/04/2023 where an immediate action notice was issued also.

11/06/2025:

The registered provider responded that a person trained in first aid would be on the premises at all times following completion of FAR training on 16th June 2025.

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.

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises on the day of inspection.

(2) There were three staff employed in the service.

The registered provider had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all staff members.

(a) References were available from the persons past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) References were available from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures were received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff. Garda Vetting documentation for one of the three staff members was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice EYI-RN12.3 renewal of Garda vetting published by the

inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 01/01/2024. Please refer to Regulation 23 Safety – general safety in the body of the report.

(d) International police vetting was not required for any staff member as no staff had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All three staff working directly with the preschool children had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the national qualifications framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following written policies and procedures were reviewed and available:

- Policy on Outing
- Policy use of internet and photographic and recording devices
- Policy on accidents and incidents.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

Compliance Information

(2) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

On 10/06/2025 Day 1 of the inspection the minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained as there were 3 staff working with 16 pre-school children on the day.

On 11/06/2025 Day 2 of the inspection the minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained as there were 3 staff working with 16 pre-school children on the day.

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) A sample of 10 records for preschool children were examined and all the required information detailed below was contained on each record.

- (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.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h) Five out of the nine childrens records checked did not have the date on which children had received all their childhood immunisations. This posed a potential risk to children in relation to their health and wellbeing and the spread of childhood illnesses.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(h) A new application form that outlines that parents must put in writing the dates the immunisations were given is now available.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated form was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the requirements of regulation 15.

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:

A healthy eating policy was available in the service and children were observed to eat their snacks while seated at tables. Nutritious and healthy snacks such as sandwiches and fruit were available. Children were observed to have water as their drinks. Children played in the outdoor play area in the enclosed all weather pitch for an hour before they went home at 12.00hrs. Staff were observed to be caring in their interactions with the children. They were observed to be interested in the children, listened to them and spoke to them using soft tones of voice and used positive language. All the group of children were toilet trained and went to the bathroom independently.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

This sessional service was operated from a room in a community hall. It comprised of 1 room, sanitary accommodation areas and an outdoor play area. Adequate and varied play equipment suited to the age and stage of development of the child was available in the service and in the outdoor play area. Sand and water play activities were accessible to the children to support sensorial play. Photographic evidence was available in the learning journal of activities such as baking, yoga classes, visits to the farmers market and the outdoor classroom.

A visual timetable was displayed and the curriculum was based on childrens emergent interests.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda Vetting documentation for two staff members present on the day of the inspection were not dated with in the last three years as per the regulatory notice EYI-RN12.3 renewal of Garda vetting published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 01/01/2024. This posed a potential risk to the safety and wellbeing of children in the service.
2. The policy on outings was at variance to the practice in the service as the policy stated that ‘written parental consent would be obtained from the parents of each child to allow children go on outings from the service’. On the day of the inspection there were no written consent forms signed by parents for any child in the service to go on outings off the premises despite outings haven taken place where children had walked to the local village and the farmers market.
3. The policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices was at variance with the practice which stated that ‘written parental consent would be obtained from the parents of each child to allow children to be photographed’ however evidence was not available to demonstrate that parents had signed consent forms to allow their child to be photographed. Numerous photographs of children were available in the learning journal and on displays on the walls in the service.
4. The policy on accidents and incidents was at variance with the practice in the service as the policy documented that ‘all accidents and incidents were required to be signed by parents/guardians when they had been informed by staff of an accident relating to their child’. The accident and incident book were reviewed and there were no signatures by parents.

Infection Control:

5. Thermostatically controlled hot water was not available at the wash hand basin in the sanitary accommodation on 10/06/2025 or on 11/06/2025. This posed a potential risk of cross infection between children and staff in the service as hot water is required for hygienic hand washing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting documentation has been updated for both staff members.
- 2 & 3 Consent forms for sunscreen use , outings and photographic use have been designed and will accompany the child's record form.
4. Parents will sign accident and incidents forms when they have been informed by staff..

Infection Control:

5. A checklist that must be completed before opening is now available which details the requirement that hot water must be switched on before the service opens.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documentation was submitted.

Infection Control:

Documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the requirements of regulation 23.

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.

(3)(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member on the roll book.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)(b) A visitors book was not available to record on a daily basis in writing persons who entered the premises other than parents and staff.

The visitor book must include the following information - date, person's name, their contact number, their reason for entry, the name of the person who approved their entry and the check in and out times. By not maintaining a record of persons entering a service could potentially pose a risk to both staff and children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A visitors book is now available to be signed by adults entering the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the requirements of regulation 24.

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

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) Was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) Was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Evidence was not available to demonstrate that there was a staff member who had completed up to date training in first aid for children (First Aid Responder) and that a staff member with this training was available to children at all times during the operation of the service.

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 10/06/2025 requesting that a person trained in first aid be available on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

This same non-compliance was also identified on the last inspection report for the service dated 19/04/2023 and an immediate action notice was issued.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider detailed the following response.

(1) Evidence was submitted on the 11/06/2025 that a person had received training in first aid responder for children (First Aid Responder) and would be available on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Both staff who have up to date First Aid Responder will complete their first aid training on different dates from now on to ensure there is an adult on site at all times with up-to-date training.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider meet the requirements of regulation 25.

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.
- (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) A record in writing was kept of fire drills that took place in the premises. The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. Fire Fighting equipment was serviced in January 2025. Smoke alarms were last serviced in February 2025.
- (4) The fire drill procedure was displayed in the room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children who attended.