

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK160
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	St. Paul's Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Paul's National School, Dooradoyle, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 R20T
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lorraine Tuohy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	30/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	No.	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Henry St, Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Browne
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector(s)

### 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>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

This privately operated sessional service was first established in 1999.

The service caters for children aged 2 – 6 years for 3 hours a day (08:45 – 11:45 hours), Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year, under the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for eligible children. The service is registered to cater for 22 pre-school children during the hours of operation.

The service is operated from designated rooms in the community centre on the grounds of St Paul’s National School, Dooradoyle, Co Limerick. The service comprises of two playrooms, sanitary facilities for the children and adults and outdoor play areas, a sensory garden and the all-weather school yard on the grounds of the national school

### Staffing

The registered provider and two staff members are working directly with the children each day. There is an additional relief staff member available in the event of an emergency. The staff all hold an award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications.

### 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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, and 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 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, 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of operating the service and was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy was always available on the premises.

- (c) There was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.
- (2) The files of four staff members were viewed on the day of inspection.
- (a) Two written and validated references were on file for all staff members working in the service. References were mainly from past employers.
- (b) Where two past employers were not available, references from other reputable sources were submitted where required.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of Garda Síochána were available for the four staff members working at the service. Garda vetting for the 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 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024.
- (d) Police vetting for persons who had lived in another country for longer than 6 consecutive months was not required.
- (3) All of the above documentation was furnished to the registered provider prior to each new staff member taking up employment at the facility.
- (4) All the staff members working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children during the sessional service. On the day of the inspection, there were 13 pre-school children and 2 adults on the premises for the morning session.

### 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:

A healthy eating policy was in place, with parents providing nutritious snacks and drinks for the children. Perishable items were stored appropriately, and drinks were placed on low level shelves for easy access. Children have unrestricted access to bathroom facilities, with tissues and wipes available, and waste was disposed of in foot pedal operated, lidded bins. Nappy changing facilities were available when needed. Hot water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels were accessible in the bathrooms to ensure hygienic washing of hands. The children and adults were observed washing their hands following outdoor play, toileting and before their snack. The group were allowed to move freely indoors and outdoors from one activity to the next for specific periods of time. A designated rest/quiet area was available in the room, should a child need to rest and have some quiet time. The children have daily access to the outdoor spaces containing lots of sensory and natural play materials. A big emphasis was placed on outdoor play and extending the children's learning outcomes in this area.

The staff modelled positive behaviour for the children, and the children were acknowledged for their kind behaviour when interacting with each other. The staff members' interactions with the children were positive, kind, respectful and caring.

### **Physical and Material Environment:**

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning and development were supported within the daily activities of the service. Both the indoor and outdoor environments were welcoming, safe, and offered developmentally appropriate challenges for children. Play materials were organised into specific interest areas, with topics displayed at the children's eye level. All materials were clearly labelled and placed on low shelves to encourage independent learning. As the children mastered tasks, new materials and equipment were introduced to further challenge them. There was a variety of equipment that rotated to align with the changing programs, interests, and skill levels. Low tables and chairs were available for both tabletop activities and mealtimes. The room was equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. Each of the areas was well resourced with toys and accessories, including sensory and natural materials. Children were observed to make choices in relation to play activities and had their choices respected. A child sized couch was available in the room where children could rest/ relax in and have some quiet time if they chose to opt out of an activity. Good supplies of books were available, which helped support language development and numeracy. The walls of the rooms were decorated with posters and the children's artwork. Facilities were available for outdoor play in the sensory garden and in the all-weather school pitch. Children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection and were supervised by two staff members at that time.

### 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.*
- (2) *Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.*
- (3) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
    - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
    - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
    - (iii) an employee, or*
    - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
  - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*
- (4) *A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) All the pre-school children who attended the service on the day were recorded on the attendance register, and it included their time of arrival and their time of departure.
- (3) (a) No persons could enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee other than the following:
- (i) A pre-school child.
  - (ii) A person dropping or collecting a child.
  - (iii) An employee.
  - (iv) An unpaid worker.
- (b) A daily record in writing was kept of the entry on the premises of any such person on the visitors' book.

## 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 held a current certification in first aid responder (FAR) for children and was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) First aid boxes were accessible and safely stored in the service.

(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child.

## 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) The fire drills were practiced monthly, and the record was available. The last fire drill was May 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in September 2024, and a record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The fire and smoke alarm system were tested and serviced in June 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.