

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK166		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Sunflower Montessori Community Pre-school Ltd		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Monastery Road Doon Co. Limerick		
<b>Eircode:</b>	V94RF44		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Stephen Byrne		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	21/01/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	27	PM 16
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspection Service 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	J Ryan		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

This early years preschool first opened in 1996 and provides sessional and part-time education and care to preschool children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 9am to 2pm and the setting caters for a maximum of 44 children.

The service is located in a rural village. There are 4 rooms in operation namely the montessori room, the seedlings room, the buds room and the fourth room has been developed into a sensory room. The service has an outdoor play area located at the entrance to the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment. An additional sheltered outdoor play area has been provided at the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The person in charge and five staff members work in the service. All staff have an appropriate qualification in early childhood care & education. The registered provider does not work on site.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,15,19,24,25,26 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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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*

*(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 to deputise as required was also available.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived and was documented on the staff roster.

The following documents were available on file for all staff.

(2)(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

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

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff and were dated within the last three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff members as no staff had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The staff working directly with the children attending the service held awards in early childhood care and education between levels 6 and 9 on the national qualifications framework.

## 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 person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in each of the three rooms.

The adult/child of 1:11 was maintained for the morning sessional service as there was 27 children present being supervised by 4 staff.

The adult/child of 1:8 was maintained for the parttime service between 12.00hrs and 14.00hrs as there was 16 children present being supervised by 3 staff.

## 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)-(i). A sample of 10 records of a preschool child were reviewed and all of the records sampled contained the required information 1 (a)-(i).

### 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:

Snacks were provided by the service and consisted of a selection of sandwiches, fruit and yogurts. Children were observed to hand out the plates and cups for snack time which supported their self-care skills and staff offered second helpings to each child also. Milk and water were the healthy drinks served.

Children in each room were observed to wash their hands before they ate their food. Drinking water was available in each room throughout the morning if a child was thirsty and needed a drink. There was a healthy eating theme based on the colours of the rainbow where children were encouraged to taste and eat different coloured fruits.

The children sat together around the tables with the adults and were given as much time as they needed to eat their snack. Children were encouraged to tidy up following snack time which helped promote a sense of independence. For the children who attended part-time an additional snack was available for them in the afternoon.

Children who were toilet trained toileted independently and nappy changing facilities if they were required were provided in a designated area adjacent to the sanitary accommodation. The nappy changing policy for the service indicated that staff wear gloves and aprons whilst nappy changing. Children were assisted as appropriate with their personal care and were encouraged to be self-caring.

All pre-school children had ample space to move freely in the indoor and outdoor environment. Rest/quiet areas were evident in dome pods in each room where children could sit together on soft seating, relax and opt out of an activity if they wished.

There was a positive approach to behaviour management and good behaviour in children was positively reinforced. The use of the key person system helped children form and sustain secure relationships with the adults caring for them. Timers also helped the groups solve their problems in a fair and equitable way such as when children played outside, they understood that the timers were used to allow time for a child to use a piece of equipment that was already in use by another child.

On the day each group of children played outdoors on a rotational basis. The outdoor play area had ample toys and open-ended play equipment such as climbing frames, balance beams, building blocks, tables, chairs, sand play

and adult seating. Children wore appropriate clothing to suit the cold weather on the day (coats/caps) while they played outside. Staff ensured that all children were supervised at all times while they played indoors and outdoors. The outdoor area was roofed, was safely enclosed and had a matted surface.

### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

There were three playrooms and a sensory room in use. The playrooms and the play areas were arranged to provide a range of developmentally appropriate experiences, choices and fun for the children.

Interest areas included a home corner, sand play area, paint/art area, a surgery/doctors/hospital area, food storage and serving area and a space that could be changed according to the emergent interests of the children. Artwork was displayed and each child's work was created by them alone without the use of templates. In the montessori room staff completed activities around 'acts of kindness' between the children and 'paying compliments' to each other. The atmosphere in the room was quiet and calm and children were engaged in the activities going on at circle time. Montessori equipment was available in the home corner and there was a space also in this room that could be changed according to the emergent interests of the children and the themes of the week.

The sensory room contained large soft mats on the floor and walls, a lava lamp, mirror, sensory boards on the walls, seating/climbing blocks and blinds to darken the room if necessary.

Children in each room had access to a large range of toys and equipment on low level shelving.

## 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) 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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) Each preschool child who attended the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.
- (3) (a) Staff ensured that no person other than the following were allowed entry to the service without approval
- (i) A pre-school child attending the service.
  - (ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.
  - (iii) An employee.
  - (iv) An unpaid worker.
- (b) A daily record in writing was kept of the entry on the premises of all persons.

### 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 staff members held current certification in first aid responder for children.
- (2)(a) A first aid box was stored in the hallway.
- (b) The first aid box was available at all times 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 firefighting 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 fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place in December 2024.  
(b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis. The maintenance record demonstrated that the firefighting equipment were last service in January 2025 and the smoke alarm system was serviced in September 2024.  
(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playrooms.

## 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 and had an expiry date of 28/11/2025.