

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH009		
Name of Service:	Athboy Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Greenville, Lower Bridge Street, Athboy, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 KP5W		
Name of Registered Provider:	Frances Tiernan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	09/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham		
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).

Conditions if applicable Not Applicable.

Description of service

Athboy Montessori School was established in 1998. The operating hours are 9.00am and 12.00md in the morning and an afternoon session 12.15pm to 15.15pm and can cater for 20 children at each session. The age range catered for is 2 to 6 years. The pre-school is situated at the registered providers own home with a separate entrance off the main street in Athboy. There is one care room with sanitary accommodation. The service has an outdoor area available.

Staffing

The registered provider is operating the service alongside 3 staff members on a rotational basis. A relief staff member is also available if required.

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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) Five files were reviewed, and the following was noted.
- (a)& (b) Ten validated written references were available for the staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for 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) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.
- (4) The staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- (6A) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the access and inclusion model.

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) On the day of inspection there were four adults working directly with children attending the pre-school service. One staff member was providing AIM support.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct. Four staff members were present with 18 pre-school children (aged between 4 years and 5 years).

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 of the Children:

The registered provider and staff members ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including eating together, tabletop activities, playing in the outdoor area and story time with the staff. Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, children were observed putting away their play materials before they went to the outdoor area. During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development. At snack time children got the opportunity to help to give out the lunches, every child got opportunities to help, the staff maintained a jobs

board for children to visually see when it was their turn. The parents and guardians supplied their children with lunches and drink requirements whilst attending the service. This was a sociable, unhurried time with the children sitting with their friends around adjoined tables. The adults sat with the children whilst they ate and assisted with opening cartons and disposing of packaging as required. Toileting was gently supervised by staff members and children encouraged to independently wash hands, flush toilets and discard of paper towels. A rest area was appointed within the playroom for the children to opt out of scheduled activities if they so wished.

Staff were observed playing with the children in the outdoor area. Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. For example, in the outdoor area staff played games with the children.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

The staff members were observed to work well as a team with smooth transitions between activities. They were found to be patient, friendly and engaging with the children, both on a one-to-one basis and individually when facilitating toileting and organising the lunch break. Low tones and good eye contact was maintained, and the children were relaxed, happy and familiar with the staff.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children. Areas developed included, farm equipment and animals, tabletop activities, jigsaws, puzzles and threading, home corner, blocks, cars, trucks, library area, and Montessori equipment. There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area. There was an outdoor kitchen, picnic tables, climbing frame with a slide, pebble box, and other equipment to support imaginative play. There were ride-on toys provided to facilitate gross motor play. There was a hard surface for the children to play on the ride on toys, and a large area which was covered in natural grass for the enjoyment of all the children.

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:

- Both the secured fencing and secured main door restricted the children from leaving the service unsupervised. Unauthorised access was also restricted.
- Internal doors were suitably secured.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Staff members personal belongings were store out of reach of the children.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- Cleaning products were out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

The service appeared to be clean and in good repair on the day of inspection.

- Cleaning templates were available in the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years rooms and toilet areas.
- There was a fridge available in the service to store the food which was provided by the parents.
- All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, soap, and foot operated pedal bins.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

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 written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service. the last recorded fire drill was March 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises. Firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms were last serviced in 7th March 2025.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 22 children at any one time. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th November 2024 to the 27th November 2025.