

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH126
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Name of Service:	Littlebrook Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Cill Foireann, Johnstown, Navan, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 E9RF
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aisling Hennessy
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	25/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	N/A
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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.
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Description of service

Littlebrook Montessori School is a childcare facility in a residential estate in Johnstown Navan Co Meath. The service is operating a sessional service for children aged 2 years to school aged. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates three care rooms. The Early Years' Service is facilitated on ground floor level of a two-story building in a housing estate in Navan. There are three pre-school rooms and children's sanitary accommodation. The outdoor play area is located to the rear of the pre-school and consists of a hard and a grass surfaced area.

Staffing

Six staff members are employed in the service including the Registered Provider and two staff members providing additional support under the access and inclusion model (AIM). All staff at the facility hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (NQF).

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*
- (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.*

(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 inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)(b) Twelve validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff within the required timeframe of every 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was available for the three staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) Two staff members were employed under 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 an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult/child ratio was correct.

- **Room One:** had 2 staff members (1 Staff member provided AIM support) with 10 children ranging in age from 3 years to 5 years.
- **Room Two:** had 1 staff member with 8 children ranging in age from 3 years to 5 years.
- **Room Three:** had 1 staff member with 5 children ranging in age from 3 years to 4 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,*

Compliance Information

Basic Care Needs of the Children:

A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents. The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings. Snack time was a very

social event with animated conversations and discussions. Staff encouraged children to be independent and to develop self-care skills at every opportunity.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

Interactions observed during the inspection were consistently positive and caring. The registered provider and staff enabled children to engage in their preferred play activities and worked alongside offering encouragements, support and praise. Conversations with the children were delivered using warm vocal tones, welcoming facial expressions and a listening and reflective approach. Children in turn showed confidence and responded positively to the guidance and directions given to them. Children were helped to develop good social skills in their engagement with each other. They learned how to behave within a group, how to take turns, to listen, wait, to share and to be mindful of those around them. The guideline rules that children were asked to adhere to were kept minimal and simple and adults used clear language when reminding children about these. There was a predictable general routine within the session with transitions being announced in advance (e.g. tidy up time, tabletop activities, movement exercises). Children participated in “Spring” activities and enjoyed painting, and a story about the season spring.

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:

The following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained on a daily basis.

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 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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly. The last fire drill was carried out on the 6th February 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers serviced November 2024 and smoke alarms August 2024 in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid insurance certificate for 29 preschool children with an expiry date of 27th March 2025.