

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH133			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Maria's Montessori			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Martin's, Clavinstown, Drumree, Co. Meath			
<b>Eircode:</b>	A85 V660			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Maria Hutchinson			
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	11/06/2025			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	9	PM	0
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray			
<b>Title:</b>	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

Maria's Montessori provides a sessional service from 9am to 12:30pm to children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service is situated in a front room of the registered providers home and consists of 1 care room with sanitary facilities in the main house. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the house.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs 1 staff member. Both staff were present on the day of inspection.

### 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.

## Additional Information

11/06/2024 An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to the regulation 25.

12/06/2025 A response was received which was reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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.

(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) Two staff files were reviewed.

(a)&(b) Two validated written references were available for one staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 2 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)Not applicable as no staff members had resided outside the jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The 2 childcare staff 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.

(6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)One staff member did not have 2 validated written references either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)Two validated written references have been obtained for the staff member and have been placed on file. Staff files will be checked on a regular basis to ensure compliance.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Two validated written references.

### Summary Comment

(2)(a)(b)The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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) The registered providers ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 2 adults working directly with the 9 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 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

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

##### Basic needs:

- The service embraced outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic outdoor play with both their peers and staff members. Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. On the day of the inspection the children were doing handprints.

- Children were well supported during snack time and when going to the toilet with gentle reminders regarding hand washing. During activities children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement and reassurance.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches which they had at 10:30am. Lots of jovial conversation was heard between the staff and children which created a positive atmosphere for language development and relationship building.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The adult's demonstrated knowledge of the individual care needs of the children. Children were comforted when they became upset with the staff adopting behavioural management strategies such as speaking to the child softly and promoting turn taking and sharing.
- The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children. At pick up time friendly conversation was overheard between staff members and parents. One child was inducting with the parent present to support a smooth transition.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

### Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Within the care room there were comfortable children's chairs available should a children need to take a break from activities and rest.
- (2)(a) The outdoor space was enclosed by wooden fencing and a wall with a secure gate. The surface area consisted of grass with cement paving.

## 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 care room had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included a playhouse, ride on/push along toys, swing, see saw, 2 rockers and a plastic bench. A storage room was available for additional toys.

## 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 and the outdoor space was secured to ensure that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- Liquid soap, paper hand towel was available at the wash hand basin in the sanitary facilities. The children's hands were washed after using the toilet and before eating lunch.
- Cleaning schedules were available.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

1. The water at the sink in the sanitary facility was cold to touch with a reading of 15.4°C which was not adequate for effective hand washing.

This was found to be non-compliant at the last inspection on 14/6/2022. The Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA) response submitted by the registered provider after the last inspection stated that “The heating had been scheduled to come on for an hour before the pre-school session started to ensure there was sufficient supply of warm water.” The action stated by the registered provider has not been adequate to address the non-compliance.

2. There were no pedal bins in the care room or in the sanitary facilities for the disposal of general contaminated waste.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. An electric immersion has been installed to heat the water. The registered provider will ensure that the water is warm in the sanitary facilities to ensure effective handwashing.
2. Pedal bins are now available in the care room and in the sanitary facilities. The registered provider will ensure that pedal bins are available for the disposal of general contaminated waste.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence submitted of the electric immersion installed and pedal bins.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) No staff member had First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

This was found to be non-compliant at the last inspection on 14/6/2022. The Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA) response submitted by the registered provider after the last inspection stated that "A FAR course had been booked for September/October 2022". The FAR certificate was reviewed on the day of the inspection with indicated that the training had since expired on 05/11/2024.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection, and a response was received which was reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

One staff member has completed a FAR course. The registered provider will ensure that 1 staff member with FAR training is on duty at all times while the service is in operation.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of FAR course completed.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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 completed in the service. The last recorded fire drills took place on the 14/05/2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) There was no maintenance records available for the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm on the premises.
- This was found to be non-compliant at the last inspection on 14/6/2022. The Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA) response submitted by the registered provider after the last inspection stated that the “Firefighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms have been serviced”. The action stated by the registered provider has not been adequate to address the non-compliance.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)(b) The fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm has been serviced. The registered provider will ensure that the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm are serviced on an annual basis.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Maintenance record for the fire fighting equipment and the smoke alarm.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

### 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 11 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2025 to the 27/03/2026.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(d) The window in the sanitary facility was cracked in several places and was re-enforced with brown tape.

This was found to be non-compliant at the last inspection on 14/6/2022. The Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA) response submitted by the registered provider after the last inspection stated that "The window in the sanitary facility has been replaced". Photographic evidence was submitted after the inspection indicating that the window had been repaired however the recent inspection had found that the window was still cracked.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The window in the sanitary facility has been repaired. The registered provider will ensure that any areas accessible to the children is safe and maintained.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of window in bathroom repaired.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.