

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH167		
Name of Service:	Scoil Na n-Og Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Proudstown Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 AE83		
Name of Registered Provider:	Kathryn Mullen		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	01/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM 8
Address of the 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

Scoil Na n-Óg Montessori School is an established childcare facility located within the heart of Navan town. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 08:00 to 1800 Monday to Friday. The service is in a detached single storey building with an outdoor play area located to the side and back of the pre-school with parking to the front of the pre-school. A kitchen and sanitary facilities were also available.

Staffing

The service employs six adults of which two adults were employed under the Access and Inclusion Model. The staff members providing care to pre-school children hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of 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 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

An immediate action notice was issued on the 4th April 2025 as one staff member did not have garda vetting. A response was received on the 7th April which was accepted by the Inspectorate to be appropriately addressing the non compliance.

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*
- (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.

(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) From a review of the service file and discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that six staff members are employed in the service. These files were reviewed, and the following was noted.
- (a) & (b) Twelve validated written references were available from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for five staff members.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) All staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or 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 scheme known as the Access and Inclusion model.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(c) Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one staff member. An immediate action notice was issued on the 4th April 2025 as one staff member did not have garda vetting. A response was received on the 7th April which was accepted by the Inspectorate to be appropriately addressing the non compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Garda vetting received for the staff member and submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Supporting documentation submitted

Garda vetting for this staff member received by the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

An immediate action notice was issued on the 4th April 2025 as one staff member did not have garda vetting. A response was received on the 7th April which was accepted by the Inspectorate to be appropriately addressing the non-compliance. Garda vetting for the staff was received on the 11th June 2025 by the Early Years Inspectorate. The non-compliance in Regulation 9 has been addressed.

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.

(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

(1) On the day of inspection, the registered provider and 6 adults working directly with the 31 children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

- In the **Beeches room** there were 3 staff (one staff member providing AIM support) with 16 children ranging in age from 3 years to 5 years. Three children attending on a parttime care basis and 13 attending a sessional service.
- In the **Oaks room** there were 3 staff (one staff member providing AIM support) with 15 children ranging in age from 3 years to 4 years. Five children attending on a parttime care basis and 10 attending a sessional service.

(8) The person in charge ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced in the staff roster maintained in the service.

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

The staff spoke to all children in a positive way and listened attentively to each child. The staff were observed offering choices to the children, using the child's name, making eye contact and facilitating age appropriate choice. In both the Beeches and Oaks room on the day of inspection children's individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. Children were observed enjoying meaningful, sustained play with tabletop activities, art and crafts and free playing with lots of conversation and laughter observed. Transitions were handled smoothly with staff giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next. Staff members stated that the theme of the week was "Easter" with art works displayed to reflect these themes in the care rooms. The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on the walls in the care rooms. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The service had sleep mats for children, if required. Children did not sleep on the day of inspection. Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) There was a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor space to the rear and side of the premises. The space was enclosed by walls and fencing. with a grass surface area.

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 rooms had areas of interest with well supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, Montessori equipment, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. Low level shelving facilitated children to select and replace items of interest.

The outdoor space had a grass surface and included ride on toys, slides, balls, sand pits and toy kitchen.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Children attending a sessional service brought in their lunch prepared by parents which consisted of healthy snacks such as fruit, yogurts and sandwiches and crackers. Children attending parttime hours brought in a second snack. Water was always available to the children in their beakers in the rooms.

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:

- Safe storage was available for the cleaning agents and equipment used in the service.
- The person in charge ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children, adults, and visitors to the service.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured.

Infection Control:

- Playrooms, communal areas, and sanitary areas were adequately ventilated by mechanical ventilation and by natural forms of opening doors and windows.
- There was liquid soap at the wash hand basins to facilitate hygienic hand washing for children and adults.
- Paper towels were provided in the dispensers in all the sanitary areas used by the children and adults to facilitate hygienic hand drying.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

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

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A staff member with First Aid Responders course completed was not available on the premises. The service provided evidence that a person had up to date paediatric first aid course.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two members of staff are attending a FAR workshop in mid-June.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the FAR training booked received by the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted evidence of the FAR training completed to the Inspectorate. This has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 25.

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 the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 31st March 2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment which were last serviced on the 10th March 2025 and the 1st February 2025 respectively.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises