

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO021
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Name of Service:	Belmont Montessori School (IMEB Registered)
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Address of Service:	Botharnasop, Ballina, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F26 EH57
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eileen McNamara
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
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).

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Description of service

This service is located in a residential estate on the outskirts of Ballina, Co. Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from two to six years of age. with a morning and an afternoon session provided. The service operates a sessional service from 8:50-12:00 and 12:30-15:30 Monday to Friday during the academic year. The premises comprises of a single-storey building at the rear of the registered providers domestic dwelling that was purpose built for the provision of a childcare service. The service comprises of a playroom, an office, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation. The service has a newly erected covered in play area to the rear of the premises to enable the children play in the outdoors in all weathers The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 22 children at any one time in a sessional service.

Staffing

There are six adults employed in the service including the registered provider who is actively involved in the day to day running of the service. There are two students on work placement, and a transition year student was also present on the day of the 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 Regulation 9,11,23,25,26,28 and 29. 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 -

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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, deputy 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.

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Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the registered provider or deputy were available, on the premises, at all times, when the pre-school children were present.

The registered provider confirmed with the inspector that two staff had commenced in the service since the most recent inspection on the 7th of June 2023 and three students are also in attendance on work placements.

The following documents were available on file:

(a)(b) Ten written validated references from a past employment or from another source was on file for the two adults and three students.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was not required as none of the two staff or three students had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period in excess of 6 months over the age of 18 years.

(4) Evidence of the completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or an equivalent qualification was available for all of the adults who worked directly with the children.

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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

On the day of the inspection, the registered provider and the deputy person in charge were on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the remainder of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated

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that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.

(3) The following child to adult ratios were observed on the day of the inspection, there were 17 children aged 2 years to 6 years attending the service being cared for by five adults for the morning session and 14 children aged 2 years to 6 years being cared for by five adults in the afternoon session.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing and a gate so that unauthorised persons could not enter the premises and children could not exit unsupervised.
- The door into the kitchen and staff room had a system of security access or enter the areas.
- There were high-level windows in the playroom, as a safety security precaution.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Cleaning products were stored out of child reach.
- Water temperature readings were below the recommended 43°C reducing a risk of scalding.

Infection Control:

- Staff prompted and supervised the children to wash their hands before eating, following nappy changing / toileting, messy play, and outdoor play.
- Adequate liquid soap and individual towels were available at the wash hand basins in the sanitary area and the playroom.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- There were suitable cleaning products available in the service.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playroom.
- There were foot operated lidded bins in the sanitary areas and playroom.

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Administration of medication

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any child during the inspection. The staff were aware of safe procedures for storing and administering medication.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for the 6 staff members and the students on work experience. However, three of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and were not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
- A wooden plant box and a wooden pull along toy in the outdoor area were broken, a lath of wood was not secured on the wooden fence, and a wooden post had a rough surface and could pose risk of injury to a child.
- There was metal art on the fences in the outdoor area with evidence of rust and sharp edges and could pose risk of injury to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise

- Garda vetting has been reapplied for the three staff members, and these will be sent to the office of the early years inspectorate once processed. Regular checks will be carried out on the staff files to ensure vetting's are in date.
- The wooden plant box and the pull along toy have been removed from the garden area. The lath of wood was secured to the fence, and the wooden post was sanded off and is now smooth. We will ensure that all outdoor areas are checked regularly for safety and security.
- The metal art on the fence was removed from the fence, and the service will ensure to remove damaged materials.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of

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2. The removed wooden plant box and the wooden pull along toy. The lath of wooden secured and the wooden post sanded down
3. The metal art removed from the fence

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to meet the non compliances to address regulation 23.

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) There was documentary evidence of training in First Aid for children available for 2 adults working in the service and it was advised by the registered provider that an additional 2 adults have completed First aid for children and are awaiting the certificates.
- (2) (a) The first aid box was stored on the lobby wall out of reach of children.
- (b) The first aid box was supplied with sufficient resources and available at all times in the pre-school service.

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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.
- (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 detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service.
- (b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced in September 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) The record available pertaining to the servicing of the smoke detection and alarm system was dated 14th of July 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted the service record of the smoke detection and alarm system to the office of the early years inspectorate on 27th of April 2026 and the service will ensure this carried out annually.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted evidence that the smoke detection and alarm system was serviced.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate has assessed the action taken and evidence submitted and deems it to meet the non-compliance under regulation 26

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was insurance cover for twenty-two children attending the service on a sessional basis including an additional session with an expiry date of the 27 November 2026.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The service was maintained in an appropriate and adequate state of repair.
- (b) The entrance into the service and the outdoor play areas were adequately secured to prevent a child exiting and an unauthorised person entering the premises.
- (c) The playroom was adequately lit, ventilated, and heated.
- (e) The sanitary facilities were adequate for the needs and requirements of the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) There was an area to the side of the premises storing broken toys and equipment, laths of wood and tyres. This area was untidy and could pose pest control issues.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response to advise that the area to the side of the premises has been cleared of broken toys, equipment, wood and tyres and this area will be checked regularly to ensure it is maintained appropriately

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of the cleared area to the side of the premises.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it to meet the non-compliance under Regulation 29.