

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO078
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mahony Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	14 Slieve na Greine, Swinford Road, Foxford, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F26 KW24
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rachel Mahony Toolan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	29/01/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	9	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar. Co Mayo.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Farrell
<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).	

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable.
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### Description of service

Mahony Montessori School is a sessional service in a two-storey converted house in a residential estate in Foxford, Co Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from two to six years of age and to operate sessions from 09:15-12:15 hours and 13:00-16:00 hours each day. The service has one playroom and uses areas of a dining room/kitchen space. Sanitary accommodation for the children is provided on the ground floor with sanitary accommodation for the staff member provided on the first floor. There is an enclosed outdoor play area for the children to play in at the rear of the building

### Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single-handedly working directly with the children. There is a named person available to provide support in the event of an emergency.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 to the Registered Provider on the 29 January 2026 in relation to Regulation 25-First Aid. The notice was issued to the service as no member of staff held current first aid training.

- The registered provider submitted an adequate response to the Immediate Action Notice on the 30 January 2026. Please see the body of this report under Regulation 25-First Aid for further details.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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.*

### Compliance Information

(2) (a), (b) and (d)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. The vetting files for the staff members had been inspected on previous inspections and found to be compliant with the regulation.

(c)

Garda vetting for two staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) The staff member who worked directly with the children in the service held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) On the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service, there was one staff member present caring for nine children.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children of one adult for each eleven sessional children aged from 2 years and 6 months to six years was adhered to with one staff member caring for the nine children present.
- (8) (c) During the inspection the staff member cared for the children singlehandedly. An emergency person was available if needed in the event of an emergency.

### 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

- (1)(a)
- Appropriate activities were observed to be provided for the children during the session. There was a photographic display of the service's daily routine on the playroom walls reflecting the different planned activity times during the session. When the inspector arrived at the service, the children were getting ready for circle/news time and had lively discussions on a range of topics including holidays, Australia and weddings. The staff member and children were preparing to celebrate St. Brigid's day and discussed the story of St Brigid and had made artworks to celebrate the day including crosses. The children enjoyed playing with the large supplies of Montessori equipment provided such as a pink tower, brown stairs and practical life items including pouring activities during the session. Other children enjoyed playing with puzzles and cleaning toy teeth. A group of children were observed to enjoy playing with a toy ironing board, ironing clothes and using pegs to hang them up on a clothes horse. Group activities on the day included one group playing with coloured stacking blocks at a table while another group enjoyed an art activity and reversing groups when the art activity was completed. Towards the end of the session, the children played musical instruments and sang songs with the staff member. The children used the soft cushions available to sit on and look at books at different times during the session. Imaginative play items such as a toy kitchen were provided in the dining room/kitchen area. Outdoor toys and play equipment

provided included a covered sand box and ride on toys. The playroom was decorated with numerous colourful displays such as a seasonal winter display and a display promoting the importance of recycling. The interactions between the staff member and children were very warm and positive with the staff member praising and encouraging children throughout the session. The staff member was observed to greet parents/guardians warmly and provide them with information on the children’s day in the service. The inspector was informed by the staff member that meetings with the children’s parents are held once a year in the spring. Simple service rules were displayed on the playroom wall including positive behaviours such as to “be kind” and “share with others” and were reflected in the children’s observed behaviours. There was a birthday wall with photographs of the children creating a sense of belonging in the service. The staff member prepared the children in advance for transitions from one activity to another for example at snack time a sand timer was used to allow children to see a visual representation of time to help the transition process.

The children ate together at a table in the kitchen/dining room area supervised by the staff member. Healthy lunches were provided from home in line with the service’s policies and included fruit, vegetables, yoghurt, scones and sandwiches. Each child had a drink available to them during the session if they were thirsty. The children attending were all able to use the toilet by themselves and encouraged to use the toilet when they felt that they needed to. The staff member encouraged the children to be as independent as possible, for example encouraging and supporting them to put on their outdoor clothes at home time.

### 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 main entrance door to the service was secured on the inspector’s unannounced arrival and remained secured until parents came to collect children at the end of the session. The inspector was admitted to the service by the registered provider following production and review of identification documents and requested to provide details on an attendance record. Blind cords were secured on the playroom windows. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children. Internal doors leading to a boiler and a garage were secured to prevent children from

accessing these areas. Drawers with sharp objects were secured in the kitchen area to restrict access by the children. The outdoor area was securely enclosed to prevent children from leaving the area unnoticed.

### **Infection Control:**

The staff member prompted the children to wash their hands using soap and warm water at key times such as after using the toilet and before eating. Paper towel was provided for children to dry their hands with. The staff member cleaned down surfaces such as tables after mealtime and kept up to date records of the cleaning in the service. Perishable food items were stored in the service's refrigerator.

### **Administration of Medication:**

The staff member informed the inspector that none of the children needed medication to be administered to them whilst in the service.

### **Fire Safety:**

Emergency exits and routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

## Non-Compliance Information

### **General Safety:**

1. There was a metal screw protruding from a damaged section of a wooden toy kitchen that posed a potential risk of injury to a child.

### **Infection Control:**

2. A push-top bin was provided and used by the children for disposal of paper towels in the children's sanitary unit instead of the required foot pedal operated bin posing an infection control risk.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in writing that:

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

#### **General Safety:**

1. The toy kitchen was removed and is going to be replaced with a new kitchen.
2. The bin has been replaced with a foot pedal bin.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **General Safety:**

Photographic evidence.

## Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Inspectorate and found to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection under 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

(2)

- (a) The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the kitchen area.
- (b) The first aid box was always available during the inspection should it be needed for the children.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)

There was no person with first aid training immediately available to the children in the service and an Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 29 January 2026 in relation to this. The registered provider submitted a response on the 30 January 2026 with evidence that a paediatric first aid course had been undertaken by a staff member on the 29 January 2026 as a short-term measure. Evidence that the required FAR course had been organised for a staff member to commence on the 1 February 2026 was also submitted.

(2)

- (a) There were no eye pads with bandages available in the first aid equipment bag.

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

The registered provider advised in writing that:

##### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(1)

A staff member completed a Paediatric First Aid course on the 29 January 2026 and completed FAR course training on 14 March 2026. In future FAR training will be kept up to date.

- (2)(a) Eye pads with bandages are now in the first aid box.

## **Supporting documentation submitted**

Evidence of the completion of the Paediatric First Aid training, FAR training and photographs of the eye pads with bandages.

## **Summary Comment**

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Inspectorate and found to have addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under Regulation 25-First Aid.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

## **Compliance Information**

The children were observed to be supervised mainly by sight by the adult apart from when using the toilet where the children were within earshot of the adult if they needed assistance. When groups of children were playing in both the playroom and dining room/kitchen area, the staff member positioned herself to be able to supervise the children in both areas. At lunchtime, the adult stayed beside the children while they were eating supervising them closely