

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO082
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mount Carmel Academy Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Killeenfarna, Ballyhaunis Road, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
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<b>Eircode:</b>	F12 E398
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ann Joyce
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Lavin and F Duffy
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager

### 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

This sessional service is located on the outskirts of the town of Claremorris in east Mayo. The service operates a morning session Monday to Friday from 9.30am – 12.30pm for 38 weeks of the year. A service is provided to children aged between 2 years and 6 years. The premises consist of a two-storey former domestic dwelling which has been adapted and extended for the provision of the early years service. There is a large open plan playroom with a secure kitchen area. An enclosed outdoor play area runs along the rear and side of the premises which is directly accessed via the playroom.

### Staffing

Four staff including the registered provider who works directly with the children are employed in the service.

### 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 and safety. 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 inspectors wish 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*

*(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

(1)

(a) The registered provider is the designated person in charge in the service and a named person is available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

The records of four adults employed in the service were reviewed.

(a) Four of the required eight written and verified references were from a past employer.

(b) Four of the required eight references were from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the four adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for the four adults.

(d) International police vetting documents were available on file for two adults who lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as adults.

(4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the four staff 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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained. There were 17 children present on a sessional basis aged from 3 years old to 5 years old with 4 staff members caring for the children.

### 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

##### Basic needs

- During the inspection the children ate a snack which consisted of fruit, yogurt, crackers, filled sandwiches and cheese provided by the parents/guardians, seated at low tables and chairs and supervised by the adults who gave assistance where it was needed and encouraged conversation with the children during mealtime.
- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snacks without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.

- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the preschool room and outdoor area. They were able to explore several different interest areas while outdoors.
- In the playroom, the children had the opportunity to rest or relax on soft seating in the form of a child size couch in a designated cosy area.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move around to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance and fine motor skills of drawing and painting.

### Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child's individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion for example using personal greetings, using the child's first language, news of the day, looking at family photographs, choice board, visual routines chart and giving appropriate encouragement.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, encouraging curiosity, expanding language skills, modelling and initiating games and activities.

### Physical and material environment

The environment supported each child's learning, development, and wellbeing as -

- The playroom was equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. There was a variety of play equipment and materials appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.
- The playroom had various interest areas, farm, house, art, train, shop, reading, sensory, Montessori, natural play materials, home corner and dress up. The various interest areas supported learning across all areas of development- fine motor skills, language development, cognitive development, sensory and imaginative development.
- There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and table-top activities.
- The walls of the playroom were decorated with posters, family photos, children's art work, learning materials in picture style and the daily routine for the children while in the service.
- The enclosed outdoor environment provided children with activities and opportunities for fresh air, discovery, active sensory and imaginative play. An art easel, bird table, tuff table, slides, climbing sphere, climbing frame and stacked tyres, goal posts and balls, seesaw, mud kitchen and utensils, playhouse, seating and a variety of ride-on toys were available for the children.
- Children were observed to play on ride on toys, a seesaw, climbing frames and slides to develop their gross motor skills.
- The outdoor space had numerous areas of play to allow for both individual and group play.
- The staff ensured children had access to appropriate clothing, for example sun hats and sunscreen for outdoor play.

### 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 entrance gate was secured on arrival at the service.
- Documented daily records of attendance were observed to be kept for all of children attending the service.

- The fire doors in the building were unobstructed.
- The outdoor area was secured.

### **Infection Control:**

- Foot operated pedal bins were available throughout the service and observed to be used appropriately by the children and adults when disposing of items such as paper towels following hand washing.
- Hand hygiene was observed to be practiced frequently by the adults and the children for example after outdoor play, toileting and before snack time.
- The preschool room and sanitary areas were clean and well maintained.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded and pedal operated bins. Child friendly handwashing posters were located above the wash hand basins as prompters to promote good handwashing practices.

### **Administration of Medication:**

- Medication was not administered on the day of inspection. However, staff demonstrated awareness of the procedures required for the administration of medication.

### **Fire Safety:**

- A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of fire was displayed on the wall in the service.
- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

### 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 registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid was immediately available to the preschool children attending the service.

There were three adults employed in the service trained in First Aid Response with an expiry date of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 or one and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025 for two others.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available and it was stored safely in the adjoining office to the playroom. The first aid box had adequate supplies for the number of children attending.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

### 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 to demonstrate monthly fire drills completed in the service with the last fire drill completed on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

(b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke detection system with the last annual service 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

(4) There was evidence of the fire evacuation procedures setting out the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in the playrooms and in the entrance lobby.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2026, was for a sessional service, for a maximum number of 22 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.