

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY054
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Name of Service:	Maria Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Old Parochial House, Killeigh, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 RH63
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Name of Registered Provider:	Breda McElduff
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan
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.
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Description of service

Maria Montessori School is a privately owned sessional service operating in Killeigh, Co. Offaly since 2011. The service is registered to cater for preschool children aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years. A sessional service operates from 9:15am to 12:15 hours Monday to Friday. There are two care rooms, and the children have direct access to a secure outdoor space which includes a covered area for use during inclement weather. Car parking is available on the main road or at the rear of the premises

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children but was not present on the day of the inspection. Two adults including the registered provider are employed in the service. A third adult is employed to provide cover when needed.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under.

- Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1), (3), (8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child.

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- Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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

The records of three adults employed and working in the service were assessed.

- (2)
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for three adults working in the service.
- (4) Two adults employed to work directly with children attending the service and held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b) Six verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were not available in respect of three adults employed whose staff files were reviewed.
- (d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (4) There was no documentary evidence available for one adult employed to work directly with children attending the service of at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

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Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(a), (b), All verified references are now on file.

(d), The third staff on the day is not employed in the service.

(4) The third staff on the day is not employed in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Not required.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 9. This area of practice will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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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 were thirteen children attending the service being supervised directly by two adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3)
- There were two adults caring for thirteen years children aged 2 years 8 months – six years. One adult did not have documentary evidence of qualification and is not counted in the adult to child ratio for the care room. Two qualified adults were required to maintain the correct adult child ratio.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3)
- The third staff on the day is not employed in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Not required.

Summary Comment

The written response submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 11(3). This area of practice will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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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 door to the service was secured and managed by the staff to ensure the safety of the children within the service. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Staff members advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

The staff members were aware of the potential choking risks that grapes posed when asked by the inspector.

The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues that arise.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. The staff were observed washing their hands also. The service does not have facilities for nappy changing. A foot pedal operated bin was observed in the sanitary area. The service was observed to be clean, tidy, and well maintained.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practice when administering medication in the service.

Safe Sleep:

A rest area was available for the children in the care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out, and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The fire exits were not obstructed. Fire assembly signage was observed in the outdoor area at the rear of the service.

Outing:

The person in charge confirmed that outings were conducted. An outings policy is available on file.

Non-Compliance Information

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General Safety:

1. There was no documentary evidence available that written daily indoors and outdoors risk assessments were completed to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff.
2. The four unguarded supporting metal beams in covered outdoor area posed an injury risk to a child if they failed to see them when playing and ran into them.
3. The protective cover on the edge of the bookcase was missing, and the high-density chipboard was exposed which was rough and could cause an injury to a preschool child. The bookcase was accessible to the children.

Infection Control:

4. The sanitary area was used for storage which is not an appropriate infection control practice. This is evidenced by the following observations:
 - The children's jackets and outdoor rain wear was observed to be hung up in the sanitary area.
 - The adult's coats and bags were stored in the adult toilet cubicle.
 - Toilet paper rolls, cleaning materials and the first aid box were stored in the adult cubicle.
 - Children's artwork, toys, and materials were observed on the work surface in the sanitary area.
 - A tall resource unit with paper, arts and crafts materials was located in the sanitary area.
 - The two windowsills in the sanitary area were used to store equipment and materials for use in the service which prevented the windows from being opened to ventilate the sanitary area for infection control purposes.
5. The children's perishable snacks were not refrigerated on arrival at the premises.
6. There was an open bin in the sanitary area, and the contents were accessible to the children which was not appropriate for infection control purposes.
7. There was no documentary evidence available that written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments. It is acknowledged that the care room was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

8. A bottle of anti-febrile medication was not available; this did not align to the requirement of the service administration of medication policy and procedure which stated that "It is good practice to have a supply of analgesic and anti-febrile mediation in liquid form in child proof containers with the appropriate measuring devices."

Fire Safety:

9. The smoke alarms not serviced on a yearly basis. The maintenance record on file was dated 16 March 2022.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

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Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Risk Assessment is available and evidence of a daily risk assessment of indoor/outdoor areas are recorded before children come to school.
2. The four supporting poles referred to in the outdoor area had been covered with play grass to prevent children bumping into them preventing an accident occurring.
3. The bookcase was removed but will be returned to the classroom when it is fixed with protection to prevent children getting hurt with splinters.

Infection Control:

4. The following storage is now place:
 - Children's / Adult's jackets & bags are stored in the classroom.
 - Cleaning products are stored in the press above the work sink and cleaning products are stored in clear containers on the top shelf of the tall resource unit for safe keeping (clearly marked for use).
 - Both windows are now clear of equipment/materials to allow air to ventilate in the sanitary area.
 - Three windows are now fitted with safety locks as required by inspection.
5. Children perishable snacks are now placed in a fridge in the classroom area.
6. Two new bins with lids have been replaced the open bin in the sanitary area and classroom.
7. Cleaning sheets are now up to date in both environments to keep a record of our daily cleaning schedules.

Administration of Medication:

8. Calpol available in a child proof container with an updated policy on administration of medication. Parents / practitioners are updated on our medication policy.

Fire Safety:

9. The 2026 fire alarm certificate is now on file.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photograph.
2. Photograph.

Infection Control:

3. Five photographs.
4. Photograph.
5. Photograph.

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6. Photograph.

Administration of Medication:

7. Photograph.

Fire Safety:

8. Document.

Summary Comment

The written response, photographic and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23. This area of practice will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) (a), (b) There was no visitor book available to record the inspector's entry to the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3)(a), (b) Recording the evidence through a record book at the sign in desk each day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 24(3). This area of practice will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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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)
- (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the staff members caring for the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There were no persons trained in first aid response (FAR) present and immediately available to the children attending the service on the day of the inspection.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was not stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the premises as it was located on a shelf in the adult toilet cubicle in the sanitary area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) Staff member shall complete FAR training when it is available.
- (2)
- (a) First Aid box fully equipped is now placed at the entrance door for easy access as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2) Photograph

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 25. This area of practice will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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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 of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 25 February 2026.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in March 2025, and the smoke alarm were last serviced on 16 March 2022.
- (4) Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

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

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them in the care rooms in the sanitary areas and in the outdoor area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for 22 children attending the service. The expiry date was noted to be 27 March 2026.