

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN016
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Name of Service:	Elphin Montessori Preschool
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Address of Service:	Abbeycarton National School, Abbeycarton, Elphin, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F45 V302
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Name of Registered Provider:	Debra Cannell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	n/a
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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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This sessional service is located within a classroom on the grounds of the local national school within a short distance of the town of Elphin, Co. Roscommon. It caters for children from 2 to 6 years of age. This pre-school service is registered to operate a sessional service from 09:00 to 12:30 hrs Monday to Friday. The service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. It is separate from the main building and has its own entrance. There is a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the premises for children's play and exploration.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and has employed a person in charge to operate the service. There are two adults working in the premise-the person in charge and an additional adult. A third adult is employed to provide relief in event of staff absence Each of the adults hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 or over in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 Regulations 9,11,22,23,25, 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-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 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
- (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.

(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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

(b) The deputy person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.

Files for the two staff and the relief staff were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) Six of the six written validated references, on file for the three adults were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the three adults Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Two of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age and had the required police vetting.

(4) The three staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the three staff.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the deputy person in charge ensured that the adult child ratios were adhered to.

(3) Documentary evidence in the form of staff rosters indicated that the adult child ratios were adhered

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 16 pre-school children aged between 3 to 5 years. There were two adults directly caring for these children. The deputy person in charge also assisted in the administration part of the inspection.

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

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- At 11:10hrs, the children had their morning snack which consisted of sandwiches with various fillings, wraps, rice cakes, crackers, a selection of fruits to include strawberries, raspberries, grapes, blueberries, bananas, raisins. apples and yoghurts, cheese and water or juice to drink.
- A refrigerator is provided for the storage of perishable foods
- Clean and safe drinking water was at a low-level and accessible to children in the playroom.

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 preschool and the gate to the external outdoor play area were secured so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, and maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- The playroom windows were high and thereby inaccessible to the children.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There were no pits or ponds in the designated outdoor area to cause any risk of injury to the pre-school child.
- The staff clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children, attending the pre-school.
- The stairgate was adequately and securely fitted at the stairs to prevent children accessing the stairs.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, outdoor play, messy play and after blowing their noses. The children washed their hands under supervision prior to consuming their snacks
- The adults were observed regularly washing their hands including after disposing of tissues into bins.
- Suitable hand-washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The playroom and sanitary accommodations had foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school room and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.
- Mouthed toys were removed after use and sterilised appropriately.
- Fixtures, fittings and play resources were observed to be in a hygienic condition.
- The adults showed awareness of the services procedures including the management of suspected infection when questioned.
- A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable foods.

Administration of Medication:

- The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency
- The exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

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) Three staff working in the pre-school service had first aid training for children and were immediately available to the children.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box were available and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 27th of April 2026.
- (b) Records indicated that the last maintenance for the fire and smoke detection system was dated 12th of April 2026.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

(b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file with the last annual maintenance dated 10th of September 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise that a it was necessary to employ a new company to update and maintain the fire equipment. The service was carried out on 21/05/26. This company will do an annual inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

The person in charge submitted evidence that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 21/01/2026.

Summary Comment

The early years inspector has assessed the action taken and evidence submitted and deems it to comply to 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

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2027 which was for a sessional service for 22 children which included the following: -public liability insurance, insurance against fire and theft, buildings insurance, and insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (a) The premises appeared to be of a sound and stable structure on the day of inspection Windows and doors were in a good state of repair and appeared to be both watertight and weather tight when closed.
- (b) The outdoor play area was safely secured with a combination of fencing and a gate at the rear of the premises to guard against unauthorised access.
- The service was connected to both the public drainage and water supply.
- (c) The openable windows in the room in the service and ceiling mounted fluorescent light fittings which were covered with shatter proof diffusers ensures a good mix of natural and artificial lighting and ventilation in the premises. The electric storage heaters were thermostatically controlled and guarded to ensure a maximum surface temperature of 50°C.
- (e) Two separate toilets and two wash hand basins provided adequate sanitary accommodation for a maximum of 22 children in daily attendance in the service at any one time.
- A separate toilet and wash hand basin was provided for staff use.
- Wash hand basins were serviced with thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins.
- A high openable window and wall vent provided ventilation in both the children's toilet areas.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) A section of the wall in one of the children's sanitary accommodation had evidence of flaking paint and dampness and required attention to enable effective cleaning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise that the wall in the children sanitary accommodation has been sanded down wall, sealer has been applied and it has been repainted and this will be assessed on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

The person in charge submitted evidence of the repainted wall in the children's sanitary accommodation.

Summary Comment

The early years inspector has assessed the action taken and evidence submitted and deems it to address the non-compliance under Regulation 29.