

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO006		
Name of Service:	Collooney Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Church View, Collooney, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 X6W7		
Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Muldowney		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	23/01/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello		
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

Collooney Montessori is a private owned preschool that is in operation since 2011. It is located in the small town of Collooney, 10km west of Sligo town. The service provides a morning sessional service from 9:00 to 12:00, Monday to Friday. It is registered for children aged greater than 2 years and up to six years of age. The service caters for a maximum of 22 children.

Staffing

Four adults are employed in the service. The registered provider works in the service along with another adult and there is also one relief persons familiar with the service if required. All staff and the registered provider hold a qualification in early childhood care and education at Quality and Qualifications Ireland, (QQI) at level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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 registered provider/ 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 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 named person in charge and a person available to deputy as required.

(b) The person in charge and deputy person in charge was available on the premises for the duration of the session on the day of inspection

(c) There is a clear line of governance and accountability with a person in charge, deputy person and childcare workers. All staff were observed to be aware of their role and responsibilities.

(2) (a) (b)

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

Eight written and verified past employer references were available in respect of the four staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff members employed in the service.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for two adults who had resided outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more as an adult.

(4)

The four staff members employed in the service had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)
The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working with the children at all times on the day of the inspection.
- (3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children were maintained at all times with 3 adults providing care to 12 preschool children availing of a sessional service.

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*
 - (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) (b)
Basic Needs:
A rolling snack time was provided in the service where children were free to have their snack brought in from home at a time that suited them in the session. Children were observed to sit alongside staff members and peers

at this time and enjoy their food in a relaxed manner. Snacks brought in from home included a variety of fruits, yogurt and sandwiches in line with the service healthy eating policy. Drinking water was available throughout the session.

Independence was promoted in toileting and children were encouraged to use the bathroom alone with prompts from the staff members if required. Children were observed to wash their hands after toileting and messy play. Some children were observed to have runny noses and were encouraged by staff to use a tissue. Children were familiar with cough etiquette, coughing into elbows and disposing of their used tissue appropriately. Children had the appropriate wet gear and wellies for outdoor play and were able to put on and off coats and wet gear asking for assistance occasionally where staff members were happy to help.

Physical and Material Resources:

The service had a wide variety of materials and resources to suit the age and stage of development of the preschool child. Montessori based play equipment was available on low level shelving to support the child's educational development. Children were observed to direct their own play, choosing activities and resources as they pleased. Interest areas including nature tables, home corners and dress up facilitated role and imaginative play. Paint and play dough allowed for creativity. A rest area with a wide array of books promoted language development.

The outdoor area included a mature garden with pathways, houses and tyres for risky play and gross motor skill development. Mud kitchens with resources supported imaginative play.

The children appeared happy and content in the company of their peers and supporting staff with lots of laughter and positive interactions.

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 service was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival ensuring no child could exit the service unsupervised or a person gain access unauthorised.
- Materials and resources were observed to be well maintained and in good condition.
- The outdoor area was observed to be free of hazards.
- Waste was kept out of reach of the preschool child.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack time and after using the bathroom.
- Warm water liquid soap and paper towels were available for safe hand hygiene practices.
- The service was visibly clean, and tables and floors were observed to be cleaned after messy play.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency evacuation plans were displayed on the walls of the service.
- Emergency evacuation doors were observed to be free of obstruction.
- The assembly point was clearly displayed in the service garden to the rear of the property.

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 there was person trained in first aid available to the children at all times. Certification for two adults in first aid for children was provided to the inspector.

(2) (a) (b)

A fully stocked first aid box with, in date resources was available to the preschool children.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

- (b) an employee, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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) The service had monthly emergency evacuation drills the most recent record dated in December 2025.
 - (b) The service had a list of all firefighting equipment on the premises with a quarterly maintenance record the most recent date of 07 December 2025.
- (2) (c)
- These records were made available to the inspector on the day.
- (3)
- The registered provider is aware of the statutory requirement to maintain these records for a period of 5 years.
- (4)
- Fire evacuation notices are clearly displayed throughout the premises with the assembly point the rear of the property in the garden.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service provided a certificate of insurance for 22 children in a sessional service up until the 27 November 2026.