

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015SO025

Name of Service: La Petite Ecole Montessori

Address of Service: Carraroe Community Centre, Carraroe, Sligo, Co. Sligo

Eircode: F91 H5PT

Name of Registered Provider: Stephanie McGarry Poirier

Service type: Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 04/03/2025

No of pre-school children: AM 9 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, S Killeen
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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 N/A

Description of service

La Petit Ecole is in operation since 2007. It is private run preschool service located in Carraroe Community Centre on the outskirts of Sligo town. The service provides one sessional service in the morning from 9.30 sessional service to 12:30, Monday to Friday, for children greater than two years and eight months up to six years of age. The service caters for a maximum of 22 children. The service consists of one large playroom. The room is part of the Community Centre. The room has sanitary accommodation beside the playroom for children's use. A concrete area just off the preschool room is used for outdoor play.

Staffing

The registered provider is the person in charge and works on the premises directly with the children. There are two staff members including the register provider working in the premises.

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/ records and insurance*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,15,16K,21,23.25,27,28 and 31. 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 inspectors wish 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) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person to deputise as required. On the day of inspection, the person in charge was on site.

(c)

There was a clear governance structure in place and adults were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of the two adults employed in the service and one emergency contact in the service were reviewed on the day of inspection.

Four written and verified past employer references and two references from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of the two adults employed in the service and the emergency contact.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for two staff working directly with the children and the emergency contact. 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 one adult who had lived outside of the state for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Two adults 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) 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.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Compliance Information

(1)
There was an adequate number of staff supervising children on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.

(3)
There were nine children in total attending the service being supervised by two staff members. The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times throughout the inspection. The children in attendance on the day of inspection were aged between 3 years 1 months to 5 years.

(8) (a)
A review of attendance evidence that two adults were always on the premises.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

1) (a-i)

Ten records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, the emergency contact and record of immunisation if any were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection on the day by the authorised officer.

(4)
The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (k)

The registered provider informed the inspectors that there had been no accident, injury or incident involving a preschool child attending the service. The registered provider was able to outline what she would do if there was an accident, injury or incident involving a preschool child. In line with the policy in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There were two child size tables and nine child size chairs available for tabletop activities, art work and snack times. There was a suitable rest/ library area for the children with appropriate child size couch and rocking chair. There was a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available in the pre-school rooms for the children to use and play with throughout the day. Low level open shelving units displaying the pre-school materials and equipment, ensured the resources were freely available and easily accessible to the children at all times. Play items were observed to be durable, easy to clean and well maintained. The equipment

was laid out and adequately resourced to allow children to play in pairs or small groups. The resources and materials in the pre-school rooms facilitated all types of play and learning and encouraged fine and gross motor development. The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the day as they chose their play and learning materials and used the various interest areas.

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 to the service was secured by a locked door with high reach handle that the children could not access. Staff were vigilant when opening and closing the door to prevent a child from exiting the premises unsupervised. Visitor access was controlled by the main door being kept locked and could only be opened from the inside.
- The outside area was secured by perimeter walls and gates. Gates at all three exits had secure locks in place.
- The Cleaning products in the service were securely stored and out of child reach.
- Toys and play equipment and materials were developmentally appropriate, kept in good repair and did not pose an injury risk to children.
- The designated emergency exit doors were observed to be clear and unobstructed.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water was available for use by the children to facilitate safe and hygienic hand washing.
- Blind cords were secure to prevent risk of injury.
- Waste disposal facilities were inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were no trailing flexes in the service.
- The service had a risk assessment system for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.

- The person in charge clearly identified to the early years' inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children and on the day of inspection this was observed by the inspectors.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, after outdoor play and after toileting. Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The sanitary accommodations had foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school room was well ventilated with the windows open at times throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break. Children were seen being encouraged to clean up after snack.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and maintained, staff were observed cleaning the bathroom after the children had finished snack.
- Daily outdoor risk assessments were carried out and documentary evidence was available for inspection.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered on the day of inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.
- On interview staff members were aware of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes were free from obstruction monthly fire drills had been carried out last one completed 24th February 2025. The fire exits were easily recognisable and not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. It was noted on the day of inspection that the foot pedal operated bin in the large playroom was broken with no lid which posed an infection control risk to the children as they could access the contents of the bin.
2. The children's snacks contained perishable items such as yoghurts and were stored in the children's lunch bags on shelving in the playroom.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Actions:

Infection Control:

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

1. The bin has been replaced in the playroom and will be checked regularly to ensure the foot pedal is working.
2. Children's snacks will be stored in the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Infection Control:

1. Picture of bin submitted.
2. Picture of lunches in fridge submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the Registered Provider adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 for children was always immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. One adult had up to date first aid for children up until 25th of August 2025.

(2) (a) (b)
The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location on the premises, and available to the children attending the preschool service at all times.

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 required ratio of qualified adults to children attending was maintained during the inspection ensuring that each child attending the service was under the supervision of a qualified staff member at all times. The children were appropriately supervised primarily by sight while attending the preschool service. At snack time, both staff members sat alongside the children promoting independence and supporting if required. Supervision was also noted when the children transitioned from snack time to self-directed play, the children still eating were supported to finish their snack and not rushed while the children who had finished had an activity of their choice to complete while waiting. Independence was promoted when toileting and staff members remained in ear shot to assist the children and ensure that hands were washed. During circle time/song time children who did not want to participate were supervised reading and playing with small world items. Throughout outside play good communication was observed between staff as materials needed to be brought from inside to the outside. Where children needed to go back inside for toys or toileting, good communication between staff was observed ensuring children were counted while going in and out to the play areas.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated that the preschool service had adequate insurance for a maximum of 22 preschool children valid till the 27th of November 2025.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;*
- (b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*
- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(a) –(e)

The registered provider informed the inspectors that there had been no reportable incidents since last inspection. The registered provider was knowledgeable about the requirements of notifications as set out in the service accident and incident policy.