

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015SO028

Name of Service: Lilliput Montessori/Pre School

Address of Service: 20 Connolly Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo

Eircode: F91 CPT3

Name of Registered Provider: Catherine Masiacz

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 11/02/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	14

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

Description of service

Lilliput Montessori/Pre School is a privately owned Full Day care pre-school service registered for children aged from 1 year to 6 years of age. It also provides a service for school-aged children. The service opening hours are from 8:30am-6:10pm and the setting caters for a maximum of 30 children. The service is located in an adapted 3 storey building in the centre of Sligo town. There are two care-rooms in operation: a Toddler Room and a Preschool room on the ground floor and a room for school-aged children on the second floor. The service has an outdoor play area for use by the Toddler and preschool children located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

On the day of inspection three adults were employed in the preschool service. The registered provider works directly with the preschool children.

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/ 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, 20, 22, 23, 27, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 available to deputise as required.

(c)

There was a clear line of governance with all staff members aware of their roles and responsibilities within the care rooms.

(2) (a) (b)

All three adult files were reviewed within the service. Three validated references from a past employer and three references from another source in the absence of a past employer were available for all three adults employed in the service.

(2) (c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three adults employed in the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(3)

These vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person having access to a preschool child.

(4)

All three adults 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, 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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional 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 adults working directly with the preschool children on the morning of the unannounced inspection. Three adults worked directly with fourteen children.

(2)

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Toddler Room: One adult worked directly with 5 children aged between two years and three years.
- Preschool Room: Two adults worked directly with 9 children aged between three years and five years.

(8)

The registered provider demonstrated on a review of staff attendance that at least two adults are on the premises at all times.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The 'Toddler room' is located to the front of the building and is a bright spacious room equipped with a variety of resources suitable to the preschool child. Ceiling height open shelving is stocked with a variety of toys and resources including musical toys, jigsaws, cars and trucks, small farm animals, dolls and dress up, play food and tea sets, building blocks, magnets and fine motor resources. On the higher shelving out of reach of the children art equipment and educational resources are stored and used throughout the day. A children's height couch and library area as well as t-pee tent with blankets and cushions allow children an opportunity for rest and quiet time throughout the day.

The toddler room is equipped with tables and chairs that are at a suitable height for the two- to three-year-olds in the room to promote independence.

The preschool room is a large room over two levels. One area is equipped with an extensive library and rest area that facilitates language development for the preschool children. A playhouse and equipment stimulate imagination and allows for role play. The lower level is equipped with ceiling height shelving of a variety of resources. The lower-level shelving at children's heights is equipped with puzzles, magnets, shape sorters, blocks, small animals, train tracks, cars and trucks, dolls and dress up to allow for choice and free play. Child sizes tables and chairs are available for mealtimes and tabletop activities.

The outdoor area is fully secure with a surface of a shock absorbing material that can be used in all weathers. A store shed stocked with bikes, trikes, balance bikes, footballs and athletic equipment support gross motor skill activity. An outdoor playhouse and kitchen with resources facilitate role play. The outdoor area has a natural area with fruit bushes and a high-rise bed for growing flowers and vegetables to maintain a link with nature.

(1) (b)

Both care rooms have an area for rest, the toddler room consists of a child size couch and a T-pee with soft matting and cushions. The preschool has a soft child size couch in the library to facilitate rest or an opportunity to relax. A separate room allows for quiet time and sleep, this designated sleep room can be used if required and is equipped with a standard cot as well as stackable floor beds. On the day the inspector was informed that the children present have outgrown their regular sleep, but this room is available for children if they require sleep or quiet time. An adult size chair allows for supervision of sleeping or resting children.

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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place which was reflected in the snack provision brought in from home. Morning and afternoon snacks are provided from home and include a large variety of fruits, yoghurts, sandwiches with a variety of fillings, cheese and crackers, breads and rice cakes. These snacks are stored in the fridges in the care room to ensure perishable items are not spoiled.

The main meal of the day is provided by an outside catering company who delivers the meal to the service at approximately 13.30 each day. On arrival this meal is temperature probed and recorded to ensure to meet health and safety guidelines. These meals are in accordance with the healthy eating policy and the menu includes, Shepards pie, chicken curry, roast chicken mash and vegetables, beef stew.

Drinking water is available throughout the day in the service.

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 door was secure on the inspector's arrival with a buzz entry system in place.
- The outside area was secure with high wooden fencing and locked gates.
- All waste was stored out of the reach of preschool children.
- Toys were well maintained throughout the service.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the preschool child.

Infection Control:

- Hand hygiene was observed to be completed after outdoor play, prior to snacks and meals and after using the toilet.
- Tables were cleaned prior to snack time and after messy activities.
- The nappy changing area was observed to be clean, with individual boxes stored with children's personal belongings of nappies and individual creams.
- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for effective hand hygiene.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no medication administered on the day of the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The room temperature in the sleep room was recorded at 18.0°C on the day within the safe sleeping temperature guidance.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained free from obstruction and walkways remained clear for safe evacuation in an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A sofa in the rest area of the preschool room had rips in the material exposing foam, making it difficult to clean effectively posing an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In a written response the Registered Provider Stated:

1. A renewal of Garda Vetting was applied for in the immediate aftermath of the inspection, and was completed. Management will inspect the existing vetting monthly, so they are aware of any peoples who may need to complete the re vetting process

Infection Control:

2. In the short term the offending section of seating has been removed. We will purchase a new couch in the near future. General wear and tear is unavoidable, however any damage will be immediately fixed, or the item will be removed, and or replaced quickly

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documentary evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

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

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

Supervision on the day was observed to be sufficient and adequate. Supervision is largely through sight both indoors and outdoors. The toddler room is set up to ensure that children are visible at all times by the staff member and in the preschool room staff members position themselves strategically to ensure blind spots are covered.

The inspector was informed that the children availing of the preschool service have grown out of their regular daily nap times and currently sleep and rest is supported if required. On interview the staff members were aware of the requirements for sleep supervision and demonstrated evidence of ten-minute physical sleep checks through an application.

Children were supervised adequately in acquiring personal skills. Independence was promoted in toileting and those children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the bathroom independently while staff members supervised from a distance. Children were also encouraged to wash hands independently and social stories displayed over the sink and on the door of the bathroom demonstrated the steps to take. Staff members were in hearing distance and prompted if required. At mealtimes, staff members sat alongside the children, promoting independence in self-feeding and encouraging children to try new foods. Assistance with cutting or peeling fruit was given if required.

The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment where children could play freely. This area was laid out to ensure that children could move freely and explore while also being in eyesight of the staff members

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated adequate insurance for a maximum of 40 children in a full day care service up until the 27th of March 2025.