

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD044
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Name of Service:	Little Explorers Montessori School
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Address of Service:	24 Garraunmore, Dunmore Road, Waterford, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 WVR4
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jenny Corcoran
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	45	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate. Ely hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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).

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Description of service

This part time service is in a housing estate on the outskirts of Waterford city. A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service provides an Early Years Care and Education programme. (ECCE) from 09:00 to 12:00 hours for 38 weeks of the year. The premises is a detached two storey house with three preschool rooms, toilets, hallway, kitchen and an outdoor area to the rear of the service. The service is also registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

There were 8 staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the early years children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 the following regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment

Regulation 10 Policies and procedures

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of the child,

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Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 26 Fire Safety,
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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.

Additional Information

The registered provider was found to be operating outside their registered status on the day of inspection. The service is registered to provide a part time /sessional service and was found to be operating a full day care service on the day of inspection. At 14:50 hrs there were 2 preschool children in the service in the care of 3 staff. The registration office was informed.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider had failed to inform the registration office that it was now providing a full day care service to preschool children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection the registered provider completed a change in circumstance application to register to provide a full day care service. The application was accepted and is now complete.

Supporting documentation submitted

Confirmation the registered provider's application to provide a full day care service was accepted and is now complete was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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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

(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)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. There was also a person available to deputise if required. The roster in the service demonstrated that these staff were generally on duty to cover the roster in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 8 staff employed in the service including the registered provider.

All required written and validated references were available on file for all staff working in the service.

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(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate regulatory notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for 5 staff members who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for all staff working directly with preschool children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were policies and procedures in place in the service specified in Schedule 5 of these regulations. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on infection control, and the policy on healthy eating in the service.

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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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There were at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service on the day of inspection.

(2)

At 11:00

Sarah's room.

There were 6 children aged between 2 and 6 years cared for by 1 staff,

Upstairs room

At 11:05

There were 20 children aged between 3 and 6 years cared for by 2 staff.

Downstairs room

At 11:10

There were 19 children aged between 3 and 6 years directly cared for by 4 staff,

At 12:50

There were 8 children aged from 3 to 6 years in the care of 4 staff in the downstairs room,

At 14:50

There were 2 children aged from 3 to 6 years in the care of 3 staff in the downstairs room.

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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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection. Children were observed playing in the outdoor area, enjoying circle time and enjoying free play in the downstairs room. There was a supply of well-maintained Montessori toys and equipment for the children available in all three preschool rooms. There was a library area to the side of downstairs room. It was observed to be a cosy restful area for the children and was well resourced with a supply of books for the children to look at. There was a supply of natural play materials such as cockles, twigs and leaves to stimulate the children interest in nature.

Children were observed in the upstairs room during circle time during circle time. Children were observed to be excited and engaged with the various topics up for discussion on the day. Staff were observed to be skilled in keeping the children's interest in the topics discussed.

There was a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the service. This area had been further developed since the last inspection. There was an artificial grass covering the entire outdoor area. Staff who spoke to the inspector said it provided a secure surface for children to run and make use of the ride on toys provided There was also a wooden walkway which had been made by local crafts people. There was a shed, a slide and various balls and toys for children to play with. There was a sheltered outdoor classroom in the area where children could play if it was raining. Staff were observed constantly engaged with the children in the outdoor area. Laughing with them and initiating games.

Staff were observed to be warm and kind to the children in their care for example staff were knowledgeable on where some of the older children would be starting national school next year and were chatting to them on what they could expect their new school to look like.

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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. Parents provided all snacks served to the children in the service. Children were observed enjoying their morning snack which consisted of sandwiches, fruit, yogurt, diced fruit, vegetables and water to drink. Children who were attending on a part time basis were given a second snack when the children who were attending on a sessional basis went home.

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:

Access to the service was gained through the door which was secured on arrival and remained secure for the duration of the inspection. The outdoor area in the service was safe, suitable and secure.

Infection Control

The service was clean. There were daily and weekly cleaning schedules maintained. The service had an infection control policy. The staff were observed to be attentive in supporting the children in washing their hands before meals, after using the toilet and after messy play. There was warm water to support hand washing, liquid soap, disposable hand towels and foot pedal operated bins provided across the service.

Administration of medication:

The service had an administration of medication policy. The policy was reviewed by the inspector and was found to contain the required aspects for the safe administration of medication in a preschool setting.

Outings

The service did not facilitate outings.

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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

(1)

There was a person trained in first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending preschool service. There was evidence that there were 5 staff trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service, which was sufficient to cover across the rota in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position to the staff on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool service.

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)

There was a record of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out in February 2026.

(1)(b)

There was a record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service which was last maintained in May 2025. The smoke alarms were last serviced in December 2025.

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(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.