

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD080
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Name of Service:	Sunny Days Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Elm Park, Tramore, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 P529
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Name of Registered Provider:	Angela Walshe
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14 AE10
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Inspection undertaken by:	L O' Connor
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Sunny days Montessori school is located in Tramore, Co. Waterford. It operates from two separate units within a multi-use premises. The service is registered to accommodate 43 preschool children aged 2 to 6 years. It provides a sessional and a part-time service. Between 9am to 12pm, the service provides the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) programme. The service is registered to operate from 8.30am to 12.30pm.

There are two care rooms in Sunny days Montessori school; Room 1 and Room 2. The rooms are within walking distance to each other from the front or back of the premises. There is a separate outdoor area adjoining both care rooms. Each care room has kitchen facilities, and two sanitary facilities for the children.

The service also runs a school age care service which is registered separately.

Staffing

There are six adults employed by the service to work with the pre-school children. This includes the registered provider who works directly with the children. The staff members working directly with the children had at a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or higher.

On the day of inspection, there were five adults working with the children. A student on placement was present in Room 1.

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 Regulation 9 Management and recruitment, Regulation 11 -Staffing, Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service, Regulation 19. Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and Regulation 29 Premises. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8 Notification of change in circumstances and Regulation 22 Food and Drink.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service (J).

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

A referral was made to the SOORs (Service's Operating Outside) team within the inspectorate as the service was operating outside their registration status on the day of inspection.

Acknowledgments

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

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

- (1)
- a. The service was registered to provide sessional and part-time care. On the day of inspection, it was confirmed by the registered provider that three pre-school children attend on a full day care basis from 8am to 2pm. This was verified through a review of records from 15 to 24 September 2025.
 - b. The registered provider did not notify the Agency of the change in hours of operation. The service is currently registered to operate from 8.30am to 12.30pm. On the day of inspection, the service was in operation from 8am to 2pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- a&b. The registered provider outlined that they have since updated their registration to accommodate children on a full-day care basis. The registered provider will take the time to examine sign in/out sheets to ensure full compliance for all children attending Sunny Days.

Supporting documentation submitted

Communication with the registration office within the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The regulatory compliance for Regulation 8 Notification of change in circumstances has been met.

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.

(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) The service had a designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member was appointed to deputise when required.
 - (b) The person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) A total of seven files were reviewed, and the following was available;
- (a)(b) Six validated references were available from a previous employer and six validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the seven adults within the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

(4) The adults working directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(d) Police vetting was required for two adults within the service and it was available for one adult. The documentation for the second adult was not available was in place.

(3) Recruitment and vetting procedures were not carried in full in advance of appointment of adults. The registered provider did not consider police vetting for one staff member prior to their appointment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(d) The police vetting was received.

(3) The registered provider will make sure to ask newly employed staff members if they lived outside of this jurisdiction when completing vetting forms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of the police vetting.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met for Regulation 9 Management and recruitment.

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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working with the children on the day of inspection. There was a total of five adults and one student present in the service on the day of inspection. The number of adults presented ensured that the needs of children were met throughout the day to include during activities and mealtimes.
- (4) The adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. At 9.45am, in Room 1 there were fifteen children aged 2 to 4 years with two adults and a student was also present. In Room 2, there was nineteen children with 3 adults present. The adult to child ratio was adapted when the part-time service was in operation. At 12.25pm, there were 13 children aged 3 to 6 years in Room 2 with 2 adults. And in Room 1 there were two adults with 11 children; 4 children were aged 2 to 3 years and 7 children aged 3 to 6 years.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

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

Compliance Information

(h) An attendance record was available for Room 1 and Room 2. On review throughout the inspection, the records were maintained and reflective of the children present.

(i) In discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that the service does not routinely administer medication. It is acknowledged that the service did have a template for completion for children who may require emergency medication.

(j) A sample of accident and incident records were reviewed, and these were completed with the required details. The sample demonstrated that the service communicated accidents or incidents with the child's parent and/or guardian in a timely manner.

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

The interactions between the staff members and the children were calm and responsive throughout the inspection. This was further supported through staff members using children's names and responding through smiling. The staff members in both rooms warmly engaged with the children through meaningful conversation and prompts. The staff members encouraged children to play an active role in their own learning within each of the rooms. This was outlined in the service's curriculum policy which described how children's curiosity is enhanced by engaging with a variety learning opportunities. On the day of inspection, the staff members provided opportunities to nurture children's curiosity through providing hands on experiences as follows;

The children in Room 1 were provided with an opportunity to paint a tree using autumn colours in small groups, while the other children played. The staff members sat at the table with the children during the activity talking about the colours of the paint, how some children chose to mix the colours altogether and how some children were putting the paint onto their hands. The staff members prompted conversations to extend children's learning. One example included a staff member asking a child if they saw any leaves on the way to playschool that morning. The child responded non-verbally with the staff member through making eye contact, and the staff member playfully continued by saying 'leaves like what we saw last week, do you remember? And then we used the leaves for our hedgehogs that we made'. The child excitedly responded and the conversation continued between the child and the staff member about the leaves the child saw. This practice was reflective of the service's own curriculum policy which outlined that the curriculum is child centred allowing children to grow and develop within a supportive environment.

In Room 2, the children were emersed into a story of an owl family. The staff member provided three of the children with owl puppets while three other children became the owl babies. The children listened contently to the story being animatedly read by the staff member. The children were fully engaged in the story, watching attentively as their peers brought the story to life through baby owl sounds and when the Mammy and Daddy owls returned to the nest. The staff member later outlined how the children enjoyed story time and how they use different props and roles for the children for Storytime each day.

Children's play ideas were supported through the environment and freedom of choice in their play. The materials and equipment within both rooms were at a low level and easily accessible for the children. The different age groups within the two rooms were recognised and supported through varying equipment and resources which were available. For example;

Room 1 catered for children aged 2 to 4 years. The resources within the room included doll houses; role play materials such as a coffee maker, toaster and cups; cars, trucks and building blocks. In discussion with staff members, they outlined that the children were provided with free play in the mornings and the montessori equipment was not introduced to the children as they were still settling into the service. This practice demonstrated flexibility through familiarity with the individual needs and the needs of the group of children.

Children aged 3 to 5 years attended Room 2. The children had access to Montessori equipment, play kitchens, boxes containing varying types of blocks, cars, dinosaurs and other small world play items. The children's artwork was on display on the walls. The children were overheard to identify the artwork which they had done to their peers. In these conversations, the children explained what paint colours they chose and the reasoning behind it. This sense of belonging within the environment supports children's well-being.

The children were provided with opportunities for outdoor play throughout the inspection. A separate outdoor area was provided for children in Room 1 and Room 2. The layout of the outdoor areas provided children with varying opportunities for play and exploration which was reflective of the service's outdoor play policy.

Opportunities for movement was provided including balance bikes, slides and a low-level basketball hoop.

Children were positively supported through times of transitions. The staff members outlined the routine of the day and provided children with guiding prompts beforehand. For example, prior to snack-time the staff members in Room 1 explained that in a few minutes the children would begin to tidy up as it was nearly time to wash their hands for snack-time. The children positively responded, and after a few minutes the staff members encouraged the children to tidy up. Similar practices were observed in Room 2 whereby the children were informed by the staff members of what was happening next. For example, while sitting at the table for snack-time, the staff members provided insight to the group of children the names of the two children who were helping through handing out cups and the plates with toast. When the children ate their toast, staff members shared the names of the children who had the bowls with fruit. This practice supports children to develop a sense of knowing and familiarisation with the routine of mealtimes in the service.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Children who are attending a part-time service or attending for up to 5 hours should be offered two meals and a snack each day. Through discussion, it was confirmed that the service do not provide breakfast. The children eat a mid-morning snack at 11am. And some children attending on a part-time basis brought additional food from home, which on the day of inspection, they were provided with an opportunity to eat at 12pm, When attending a part-time service, children should be offered two meals and a snack.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A text was sent into both pre-school groups informing parents that breakfast will be available to all children who attend the before the pre-school session. Cereal, toast, fruit and water are always available. A snack table has been created in both rooms so children have access to a small snack during the morning if they so wish. Children communally sit between 10:30 – 11:00 am where there is toast, fruit, water or milk offered and a digestive biscuit. Children who remain on premises for after the pre-school session bring their own packed lunches. The parents/guardians of the children attending 6 hours per day have been asked to provide food that can be re-heated in the microwave. The service held a staff meeting the week after the inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the snack table and evidence of communication with parents regarding the availability of breakfast

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 22 – Food and drink.

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 doors to the service were secured on arrival. There was a buzzer system in place for Room 1 and Room 2. The side gates in the outdoor play area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed. Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving and in locked cupboards. Large play equipment was appropriately anchored and secured. Play equipment was maintained and in good condition.

Infection Control:

Handwashing practices were in line with the service's own infection control policy and the children were encouraged to wash their hands throughout the inspection. This included when returning indoors from outdoor play, before eating and after using the toilet. For handwashing, the children were provided with warm water, soap and paper towels. The sanitary areas appeared to be clean and staff members were observed to carry out checks throughout the day. The tables were cleaned prior to snack-time and the children were provided with plates for their toast and fruit.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

1. The individual details relating to a diagnosed medical condition for two children attending the service was not known. Both children required auto-injector medication in the event of an emergency. While it is noted that there were two displays with the name of the child and the named allergen in place. The displays contained identical information and the information was not specific to the individual children. While staff members were familiar with the displays, in discussion, the symptoms which the individual child may display in the event of potential contact with the allergen was not known.

Through further discussion, the medication requirements prior to administering the auto-injector, was not familiar to the staff and the information relating to the individual child was not available within the service at the time.

The registered provider was requested by the inspector to contact the children’s parents and/or guardians to obtain the information. It is acknowledged that the registered provider obtained the information on the day of the inspection and submitted the documentation relating to the two children to the inspectorate.

- Emergency medication was found by the inspector in a bag containing other emergency medication for one child attending the service. In discussion with staff members and the registered provider, the presence and the purpose of the medication was not known. The registered provider was requested to contact this child’s parent and/or guardian during the inspection to gather further information regarding the child’s medical needs. This practice posed a risk to the child in the event of an emergency as their medical needs were not known.

Infection Control:

- Effective measures were not in place to reduce the likelihood of the spread of infection. The sanitary area in the room 2 was open plan. The two toilets which were separated with a low-level partition and doors were not in place on the two toilets. This posed an increased likelihood of the spread of infection.
- Play equipment and other items were stored in the children’s sanitary facilities in Room 1 and in Room 2. Items including a ladder and mop bucket were stored in the staff sanitary facilities. This did not provide a clear environment for effective cleaning and posed a risk of the spread of infection.
- The sanitary area in Room 2 was not enclosed to reduce the likelihood of the transmission of infection. The sanitary area was adjoining a storage area where there was two sleep beds, blankets, children’s books and play equipment. This posed an increased risk of the spread of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Administration of Medication:

- An emergency action plan has been put in place for both children who may require the use of an auto-injector. These have been placed on a prominent place on the walls of both rooms and all staff are now aware of where these are and exactly what to do in an emergency. All staff with us longer than two years have full First Aid Training and there are always first aid trained personnel on site.

- Medication is now stored in clear plastic box clearly labelled and all staff know of its location. The inhaler in the bag of one child was removed by the child's parent. The service have discussed that going forward, prior to a child starting school with us, all medications will be appropriately stored, labelled and contain an emergency action plan. The registered provider takes full responsibility and as a preventative measure going forward a senior member of staff and the registered provider will take responsibility to ensure the service are fully compliant and fully ready to respond to any medical emergency the service may face.

Infection Control:

3,4 & 5.

The registered provider outlined that they made efforts to secure the services of 3 different carpenters to re-fit the toilet and carry out the works on the adjoining hallway. The registered provider stated that they hope to have this work completed by no later than re-opening in January and as it's a structural issue there shouldn't be any issue going forward. This includes works to the doors to assist with privacy for children using the two toilets and to create a press for storage in the hallway.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

Individual care plans for two children. Photograph of a box with medication labelled with the child's name.

Infection Control:

Photograph to demonstrate the items observed within the sanitary area have been removed. Communication to demonstrate the planned time for the works to be completed.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted regarding the findings under administration of medication have addressed the non-compliance identified. However, the findings under infection control remain outstanding as the planned works have not yet commenced.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child will be re-assessed on the next 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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced through discussion with the staff and the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.

(2) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises and were out of the reach of the children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Compliance Information

Following the previous inspection in 2022, the registered provider installed ventilation measures within the sanitary area for Room 1.