

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015WD095

Name of Service: Villierstown Montessori School

Address of Service: Main Street, Villierstown, Cappoquin, Co. Waterford

Eircode: P51 RX2V

Name of Registered Provider: John Lombard

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 26/03/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	19
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Community Care Centre,
HSE Buildings,
Cork Road,
Waterford City

Inspection undertaken by: Aileen Bradshaw

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

Villierstown Montessori School is a community enterprise and is based in a refurbished building in the village. There are two care rooms with adjacent sanitary facilities, a kitchen and an office. The service offers sessional and part-time care for up to 44 children aged 2 to 6 years. It operates from 9:00 to 15:30, Monday or Friday, for 38 weeks of the year. The secure outdoor area is at the rear of the building.

The service also offers school-age care.

Staffing

The service employs seven staff members, including the registered provider, who does not work directly in the service. On the day of the inspection, four staff members were working directly with the children and the person in charge was available for support if required. All staff members who work directly with the children hold 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 safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11(1)(2)(4) – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 16(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service;

Regulation 20 -Facilities for Rest and Play;

Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures;

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15(1) Record of Preschool Child and Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-school Service.

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 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The person in charge remained on the premises during the inspection, and the deputy person in charge was included in the adult-child ratio. The names and photographs of the person in charge, the deputy person in charge and the staff team were on display in the hallway of the service, demonstrating clear lines of authority and roles of each staff member.

(2) The inspector reviewed eight files including an external contracted person.

(c) Garda vetting was available on the day of the inspection for adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in all cases.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) The inspector reviewed eight files including an external contracted person.

(a)(b) While it is acknowledged that references were available for six staff members, two of these required validation and a seventh staff member required references.

(d) While it is acknowledged that police vetting was available for two adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months, records were not available to demonstrate if police vetting was required for two adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(a)(b) The registered provider stated that the two references had been verbally validated at the beginning of employment, but these are now documented. The additional reference was received and validated.

(d) Documents submitted by the registered provider demonstrated that police vetting was not required for one adult and they stated the second adult does not work in the service any longer.

The registered provider stated that management would ensure that all documentation required will be in place prior to a new staff member commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the validated references and a CV was submitted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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)(2)

During the inspection, there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were 14 staff caring for 38 children. The person in charge was available to offer support if required. An adult from an external agency was facilitating a music workshop with the children on the day of the inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 10 children’s registration forms was reviewed. Details required from (a) to (i) were included in the sample reviewed.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*

(f) the opening hours and fees;

(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;

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

(i) details of staff rosters 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

The information required in this regulation from (a) to (i) was available to the inspector. This information was displayed on the noticeboard, included in the parents' handbook, attendance books, and in staff files.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) The inspector reviewed a sample of four medication administration forms dated from the 8th of January 2024 to the 3rd of March 2025. It was noted that these forms were not fully completed as per the services policy; for example, the dates, written parental permission, and staff signature were not included on the forms. The registered provider stated that communication with parents was verbal or on a messaging application.

(k) The service did not follow the accident and incident policy regarding the recording of these events. Through discussion, a staff member stated that minor accidents and incidents were not formally recorded in the services accident and incident book. The last record was dated the 4th of November 2019. They said that an account of the accident or incident was noted in the child's file, and a text message was sent to the parent via the online application the service uses to communicate with parents. This practice was not in line with the services policy, which stated that the accident and incident book would be completed, counter signed by the manager and shared with the parent on their arrival.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(j)(k)

The registered provider stated that administration of medication records and accident and incident forms were reviewed to include the accurate information and relevant signatures. During a staff meeting correct recording procedures were discussed and staff were reminded of this practice.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of completed forms were submitted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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 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

The registered provider ensured that adequate and suitable facilities were available for the children attending the service.

- (a) The layout of the rooms created definite areas of interest for the children's work and play. Both rooms had low shelving on which extensive Montessori materials were displayed and was easily accessible for children. These materials were grouped into various categories. For example, practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and cultural studies. Each room also had areas for imaginative play, with home corners furnished with play kitchens and accessories, large art easels with paint pots and aprons, and small world materials like farm and zoo animals, cars, trucks and train sets. There were containers for blocks and bricks for building and construction. Both rooms had activity tables, one with mouldable sand, which was available to the children during the morning. There was a low sink in both rooms to facilitate water play.

The room layout encouraged children to work independently with shelving labelled with photographs of the materials and children's coat hooks personalised with their photographs.

There was a large storage space; a staff member described how equipment is moved around depending on the short-term plans for each room.

Both rooms led directly to the outdoor area and had a canopy, which allowed for outdoor play during inclement weather. The toys and equipment for the outdoor area were stored in a locked shed. On the day of the inspection, staff were observed to ask the children what toys they wanted to play with when they were going outside.

- (b) Each room had a quiet area away from the main play area if a child needed a rest or a break from the activities. Each room had low, soft couches and cushions with books nearby to read if the child chose to read. While a staff member stated that very few children required a nap during the day there were low beds available for children who needed sleep.

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 has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. Three staff members were trained to the first aid responder standard with a fourth staff member at first aid training on the day of the inspection.

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the staff toilet.

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)
- (b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The maintenance was carried out on the firefighting equipment on the 1st of August 2024 and on the smoke alarms on the 28th of February 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each room and the main hall in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
(a) While it is acknowledged that staff verbally confirmed that fire drills were carried out monthly, there were no written records of fire drills carried out since 21st October 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the practice of recording fire drills will recommence.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the record was submitted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance for up to 44 children at any one time from the 17th of February 2025 to the 16th of February 2025.