

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WH002
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bluebells Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Killulagh, Delvin, Co. Westmeath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N91 ER2Y
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Siobhan Walsh
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	NA	PM	5
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C.O' Connor Hughes
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

This sessional service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme to children aged 2 to 6 years from 08:30-12:00 and 12:15 to 15:45. The service operates on a Monday to Friday basis.

The service is located in a purpose-built unit adjoining the registered provider's home with two interconnected playrooms for the children's use. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the service. The service is located in a rural area in Killulagh, Delvin, Co. Westmeath.

### Staffing

The service employs three staff members. The registered provider and three staff members were working directly with the children on the 8 December 2025. The registered provider facilitated the inspection and attended the closing meeting.

### 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 for the afternoon session from 12:15 to 15:45. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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, 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

(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 registered provider and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Four staff files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the three staff members. Two written references were available for the registered provider.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the four staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for one adult had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that all staff had been vetted prior to their commencement of employment in the service.

(4)

The staff members and the registered provider working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 6 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

(3)

There were five children attending for the afternoon session supervised directly by three staff members and the registered provider.

## 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,*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service as children learned through play. Children were happily engaged in the various play experiences and activities including creative, free play and physical play in the indoor and outdoor environments supported by the staff members. Children were encouraged to be independent as they put on their own coats as they prepared to go to the outdoor play area and were assisted by the adults as needed.

Children enjoyed a healthy snack provided by their parents and took their time conversing with their peers and the staff members as they talked about Santa and the Toy show they had watched recently.

The registered provider and staff members held children in positive regard using their individual names, interacting and conversing with children at eye level. Adults praised children on completion of activities. An access and inclusion plan was available for children requiring extra support and assistance in the service.

The service worked in partnership with parents in the following ways: A verbal handover is given on collection, the one-to-one meetings are arranged with parents as required. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The indoor and outdoor environments provided an experience that was developmentally challenging, diverse, creative and enriching for the children. The interconnected rooms were bright and colourful. Low level tables and chairs were in place. Montessori equipment, age and stage appropriate toys and play materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Photographs, artwork and posters were displayed in the playroom.

Defined areas of interest included: a construction area, a home area, a hair salon, a shop, dress up and a dolls house. The outdoor play area was located to the rear of the service. Toys and equipment included two

playhouses, an outdoor play kitchen, a sensory garden, a climbing frame with slide and water funnel play. Bicycles, tractors and cars were noted for children's use.

### 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.*

*(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable play equipment and materials were provided in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

(b)

A couch was in place in the playroom for children to rest and relax.

(4)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by fencing. A cement surface was noted in one part of the outdoor play area. A new synthetic turf surface area was put in place since the last inspection on the 28 April 2023.

## 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 secure. Access to the service is by means of a locked gate to the side of the service. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival.

##### Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation. The temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 38.4 degrees Celsius.

Windows provided natural ventilation in the playroom and in the sanitary accommodation.

Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste.

A respiratory station with tissues was noted. Hygienic practices were observed as staff wiped children's noses regularly and washed their hands immediately.

Children washed their hands before the snack and after using the toilet.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable food items.

##### Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was stored inaccessible to children and was available if a child should get a high temperature.

##### Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service.

##### Outing:

The registered provider stated outings are not undertaken from the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

(4)

A record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year by the service.

### 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)

Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

An equipped first aid box was located in the hallway in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the 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)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 6 November 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in August 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

## 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 layout of the playroom, the sanitary facilities and the outdoor play area allowed for children to be supervised by adults during the inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available for review which covered the number of children attending the service and was valid until March 2026.

## Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

### Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

*A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider provided the required information for the inspection.