

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH044			
Name of Service:	Woodlawn Montessori & Pre-School			
Address of Service:	Woodlawn House, Clara Road, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath			
Eircode:	N91 EV66			
Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Rochford			
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	20/05/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	5
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.			
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan			
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.
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Description of service

Woodlawn Montessori and Pre-School is located in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Kilbeggan and is registered as a part time and sessional service to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates two ECCE sessions between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00 and 12:30 and 15:30 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The Early Years' Service is located on a ground floor extension to the home of the registered provider. One large pre-school room is provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. On-site parking and set down facilities are available.

Staffing

The service employs three staff members and the registered provider. Three staff members were present and working directly with the children during the inspection. All adults held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. The registered provider arrived after the inspection commenced and remained for the duration.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

- Regulation 9 (1), (2), (4)- Management and Recruitment.
- Regulation 11 (1), (2) - Staffing levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child (General Safety).
- Regulation 24 – Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 – First Aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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.

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise; both were present on the premises throughout the inspection.

The files of four employees were reviewed.

(2)
(a)(b) Eight written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer reference were available in respect of four staff members whose records were reviewed.
(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all employed staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable, as no staff members employed in the service had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six months.

(4) The four staff members held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) The adult to child ratio was always maintained during the inspection.

(2) There were twenty children attending the service being supervised directly by four adults during the inspection.

(8)(a) The staff sign in book indicated that there was always a minimum of two adults on the premises.

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 door to the service was secured and controlled by the staff members to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised or unauthorised entry.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

There was documentary evidence available that indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed by the manager weekly to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. The staff members were observed to wash their own hands also.

Nappy changing facilities were available in the service.

Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal and containment of used tissues.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the two room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection, written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with the required practices when administering medication and documentation of same. Medicine was safely stored in the service.

Safe Sleep:

A comfortable rest area was available for the children in the care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest. Two low level beds were available for children attending on a part time basis requiring sleep or rest.

Fire Safety:

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed. Fire drills were carried out and records maintained.

Outing:

The service conducts outings. The service has an outings policy in place.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. The firefighting equipment was not serviced yearly as the last maintenance service was completed on 6 December 2023.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Fire Safety:

1. The firefighting equipment was serviced on 04/06/2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

1. Invoice.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 23.

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.*
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.*
- (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 registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in the care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3)
- (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The registered provider ensured that the inspector's entry to the service was recorded in the visitor log.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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

- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the two care rooms.
- (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) Staff members present who trained in in first aid response (FAR) were not immediately available to the children attending the service from 14:00 – 15:30 hours Monday and Thursday and 13:00 – 15:30 hours Tuesday and Friday following review of the daily staff attendance record for the service. It is acknowledged that the staff are qualified in paediatric first aid.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) A staff member will complete FAR training during summer break. There is another staff member trained in in first aid response (FAR) who will temporarily work during the uncovered hours until the other staff member has the training completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The written response submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 25(1). This area of practice will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 1 May 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was serviced on 16 December 2023 and the smoke alarm was serviced on 16 December 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed 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

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, in the sanitary areas, during transitions and in the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Non-Compliance Information

The was no evidence of insurance cover for children attending on a part-time basis as the current insurance cover was for 22 children attending on a sessional basis and was valid until 27 November 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The insurance was immediately changed to ensure that part- time care was covered. The wording on the cover note was confusing so additional clarification was requested from the insurance company to ensure that the children attending the sessional service in the afternoon are covered by the insurance which they are.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email with additional information clarifying insurance cover

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 28.