

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW112
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Name of Service:	Sonasámh Montessori Scoil
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Address of Service:	Kiltegan Road, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	W91 KW80
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Flynn
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and S. Early O'Brien
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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	N/A
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Description of service

This privately owned pre-school service was first established in 2006. The service is open from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.00am and 3.15pm. All children leave the service before 3.00pm.

The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between 2 years and 6 years of age, this includes a sessional ECCE service for 38 weeks of the year, from 9.00am to 12.00pm. The service also runs a concurrent part-time service.

The Montessori operates from a single storey property that has been adapted to accommodate the service. There are three care rooms. The service is located in Baltinglass Co. Wicklow.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service and employs nine adults. There were eight adults and the registered provider present on the day of inspection.

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

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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

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on the day of inspection 4 March 2026, under Regulation 23 General Safety. The registered provider responded to the notice on the 5 March 2026 and this response was accepted by the inspector.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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*
- (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-

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- (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

Following a discussion with the registered provider and reviewing the staff roster, it was confirmed that the registered provider and nine additional adults are employed in the Montessori service. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

On the day of inspection, the registered provider who is the person in charge, was present in the Montessori service and a named person was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

The management structure within the service was clear as were the responsibilities of each employee.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of 10 adults.

(c)

The required 3 year completed Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for 10 adults.

(d)

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International police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than 6 months since turning 18 years of age.

(3)

The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any adult being appointed to the Montessori.

(4)

Ten adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher 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.

(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)

The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the Montessori.

(2)

The minimum adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. There were 8 adults employed and present with 42 children.

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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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

Ten children's registration forms were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(1)(a)-(i)

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the Montessori service.

(3)(c)

The registered provider ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

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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;

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a curriculum vitae available for each adult who is employed in the Montessori.

(3)

The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

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-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were adequate rest facilities for the children who were attending the Montessori in the small sessional room to the back of the service and an area in each of the larger rooms, to the front of the service.

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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

There was a healthy eating policy available in the Montessori. Drinking water was available throughout the day for the children attending the Montessori.

Non-Compliance Information

High sugar snacks, such as chocolate spread, chocolate biscuits and crisps were observed in seven of the lunch boxes of the children in Joanne/Sophie's room. This was not in line with the Healthy Eating policy of the service, which states that "we do not allow fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate, crisps, nuts or nut spreads".

This was noted on the last inspection report 25 April 2024. The corrective and preventive actions submitted failed to prevent the non-compliance from re-occurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

More healthy eating signs on front door and anything unhealthy is sent back home in school bag and healthier option of food distributed by service if needed. Being more observant of what is contained in the children's lunchbox, enforcing healthy eating topics at Circle Time and continuing with our partnership with parents re. healthy options for lunchboxes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted of the new signage in place on the front door was submitted with the CAPA 2 response.

Summary Comment

The above actions should address the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 22 and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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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 door to the service was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the Montessori.
- All toys examined were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route from each care room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.

Infection Control:

- Each Montessori room had access to a sanitary area, with toilets, changing tables, running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- A foot pedal operated bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal operated bins were also available in all Montessori rooms and the nappy changing area.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time as was hand washing by adults and children before snacks and after using the toilet.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The registered provider did not have in date emergency medication for a child in the Montessori who required it. There was no care plan in place for the child should an emergency arise.
An immediate action notice was issued on the day of inspection and the registered provider responded the following day and this response was accepted by the inspectors.

Infection Control:

2. There was no hot water and the tap could not be opened in the sanitary area of Joanne/Sophie's room. Warm water is required to support effective handwashing.
3. Following a review of the nappy changing procedure, the correct time to remove soiled gloves was not noted. Removal and disposal of soiled gloves should follow cleaning of the child and bagging of the soiled nappy. The correct disposal of soiled gloves is an essential part of cross infection prevention.

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The practice observed during one nappy change on the day of inspection, was soiled gloves were not removed and disposed of until after the child had been redressed and the child's hands were washed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The child with out-of-date medication- this was immediately corrected and evidence sent through to Tusla Inspectorate. A Monthly review is taken on children who use medication in the service. Date of expiry is noted.

Infection Control:

2. A plumber came to fix the tap in the care room. We will keep on top of broken fixtures and fittings in the service as a matter of urgency.
3. Detailed step by step guide to Nappy Changing Procedure is hung on the wall over the nappy changing area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of in date medication and a Care Plan was submitted in response to the Immediate Action Notice issued on the 5 March 2026, before the CAPA was issued.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of a fully operational tap was submitted with the CAPA 2 response.
3. Photographic evidence of a revised Nappy Changing Procedure was submitted with the CAPA 2 response.

Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 points 1-3 and will be reviewed again on 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

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(c) an authorised person.

(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 having taken place in the Montessori service. The last recorded fire drill was 6 February 2026.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment on the premises dated September 2025.

(2)(c)

The above records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of what procedures should be followed in the event of an emergency, displayed in the Montessori rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was no in date maintenance record for the smoke detection system. This was noted on the last inspection report 25 April 2024. The corrective and preventive actions submitted failed to prevent the non-compliance from re-occurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

Hugh Fleming and sons issued the school with fire cert the next day as they had not issued it sooner. Notifying electricians quarterly about Cert to be issued.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)

Photographic evidence was submitted in advance of the CAPA response.

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Summary Comment

(1)(b)

The above actions have addressed the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 26 (1)(b) and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

- (a) The premises appeared to be of a sound and stable structure.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- (1) The inspectors observed that parts of the service required maintenance such as the radiator, and a portion of the wall above the radiator in Joanne/Sophie's room. There were also spots of rust along the bottom of the radiator.
 - (2) The wooden boxes encasing the pipes in the sanitary area in Joanne/Sophie's room needed repainting.
 - (3) The laminate covering surrounding the sink in Laura/Bernie's room was torn in several places and in need of replacing.
 - (4) The plaster on the wall beside the exit door in Michelle/Jenny's room was chipped and in need of repainting.
 - (5) The permanent play structures in the outdoor areas needed repainting as there were large areas of chipped paint which needed maintenance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) 1-5

A painter is in working at the moment and has started on the outer building and will continue to re-paint other items. The painter is progressing with what is needed for the school and he is due back to finish the sink surround and play structures.

New wooden play frames were purchased for the outdoors.

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We will keep more of an eye on equipment looking unkept. We have asked Staff to note any broken fixtures and have them fixed quickly.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d) 1-5

Photographic evidence of an invoice for a painting company of works carried out so far and new play equipment in the outdoor area were submitted with the CAPA 2 response.

Summary Comment

The above actions when fully completed should address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation regulation 29 (d) points 1-5 and will be reviewed on next inspection.