

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW151
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Name of Service:	Early Days Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Kouloura, Mount Alto, Ashford, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A67 F668
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ruth Black
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Mona Condon
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	N/A
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Description of service

Early Days Montessori School is a privately operated pre-school which provides care and education to pre-school children. The service operates in an adapted room adjacent to in a rural area in County Wicklow. There is one care room which can be separated into two areas by the use of sliding doors, a separate sanitary accommodation and a hallway at the entrance. The service is registered to care for children a maximum of 22 children, aged two to six years. There are two sessions available, one from 09:15 to 12:45 and the second from 16:30- 13:30.

Staffing

There are six staff employed which includes the registered provider. Five staff members were present on inspection. The registered provider is present on a daily basis and provides support for staff and conducts administrative duties.

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.

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(s) wish 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

(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

(2) Six adults are employed in the service. Two adults were employed since the last inspection.

(a)&(b) Four written and validated references were available for two adults.

(c) The required Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of six adults employed.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had been employed outside the state for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

The six adults employed held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at National Framework for 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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children.

(3) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. There were five adults employed and present with twenty-one pre-school children on the day of Inspection

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Documentary evidence was available that fire drills were being carried out on a monthly basis as per best practice guidelines.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelving and were inaccessible to the pre-school children.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch and after using the toilet. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed and in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures.
- The premises play equipment, and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Foot-operated pedal bins were available in the care rooms and in the sanitary areas.

Outings:

The registered provider stated that no outings are undertaken from the service at this time.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area the fence between the play area and the “woodland walk area” had become loose and there was a risk that it may fall on a child.
2. A blackboard had become dislodged from its mounting on the fence exposing a screw which could cause an injury to a child.

Infection Control:

3. A collection of stagnant water and debris was observed at the base of the water-pump play area in the garden. This was not emptied and cleaned prior to the children playing in the area on the morning of the

inspection. The checking and cleaning of this area was not included in the written risk assessment of the outdoor area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The fence was repaired immediately following the inspection. A new post was put into the ground and the fence safely attached to it. Going forward there will be continuous surveillance of the outdoor area, and prompt attention to any risks. More attention will be paid to items already on our risk assessment checklist
2. The exposed screw was removed immediately following the inspection and re-inserted into a different position on the board to allow for continued use by the children. The remaining hole was checked and found to be no danger.

There is continuous surveillance of the outdoor area and there will be prompt attention to any risks.

Communication of any issues noticed, and more attention paid to items already on our risk assessment checklist.

Infection Control:

3. After the inspection, the water pump area was cleaned thoroughly again, and its position was moved to under our shelter, to ensure no debris from trees will fall into it again.

We placed an item on our daily outdoor checklist to empty and refill with clean water daily. We also included the cleaning of our water pump play area on our daily risk assessment sheet.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the repaired fence and the blackboard re-mounted.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of the cleaned water-pump play area in its new location.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to regulation 23.

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 staff members were trained in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a)

The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position next to the pre-school room.

(b)

At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school 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 fire fighting 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 record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 27th of February 2025.

(b)

A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarm dated February 2025 and January 2025 respectively.

(4)

Notices were displayed in conspicuous positions, detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

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 children present were supervised at all times while they were in the indoor and outdoor areas during the session.