

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW154
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Name of Service:	Ashford Montessori School
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Address of Service:	St. Jude's, Ballinahinch, Ashford, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A67 W635
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Moriarty
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin. A96P3Y6
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

Ashford Montessori is a privately operated pre-school located in the registered provider's home in the village of Ashford, County Wicklow. The service is registered to cater for a maximum of 25 pre-school children who are aged 2-6 years. The service is open for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 12:30. There were 20 pre-school children present on the day of inspection. There are three care rooms. The two care rooms at the front of the premises share one sanitary area and there is a separate sanitary area at the rear of the premises to cater for the children attending the third room. Children have access to an outdoor area which is located at the side of the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff employed, which includes the registered provider. All staff members hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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, and safety premises and facilities. 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

(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) Four adults are employed in the service.

(a)&(b) Six written and validated past employer references were available for three adults.

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

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had been employed outside the state for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)
The four adults employed held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at National Framework for Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two written and validated references were not available for one adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two validated references were obtained for the staff member. Going forward references will be obtained and validated prior to a new staff member starting employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the two written references and proof of validation.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to regulation 9.

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 were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were three adults present with twenty 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 kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- 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.

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.
- Temperature reducing medication was available and stored safely and staff were aware of how to the safely administer medication.

Outings:

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

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), one of whom was 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 31st of January 2025.
- (b) Records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment and smoke alarms both dated August 2024.
- (4)
- Notices were displayed 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

Children were supervised at all times during the session.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27th November 2023. The insurance provides cover for up to 22 children

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,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a)

The pre-school premises was observed to be of a sound and stable structure.

(b)

The pre-school service was observed to be safe and secure.

(c)

The pre-school service was warm, well-ventilated and had adequate lighting.

(e)

The service had adequate sanitary facilities for the age range of the children attending the pre-school.

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

1. The sliding door at the exit to the outdoor area was difficult to open as it appeared to be stuck at its base.
2. The internal door at the entrance to the care room at the rear of the premises was difficult to open as it appeared to be jamming on the saddle-board at its base.
3. The paint on the window frame in the sanitary area off the hallway at the front of the premises was flaking and required re-painting.

4. The area behind the sink in the sanitary area off the hall at the back of the premises required tiling.
5. The service required a deep clean to include the cleaning of all windows, cleaning of shelving in the rooms and the removal of cobwebs in the sanitary area at the rear of the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The sliding door is now repaired and moves smoothly. Regular checks will be carried out on the door to ensure it moves smoothly.
 2. The door saddle was pared with a plane and now moves freely. Regular checks will be carried out to ensure the door continues to move freely.
 3. Under coat paint has been applied and will be covered in a gloss finish. Regular maintenance will be carried out.
 4. The area behind the sink has been tiled. This area will be cleaned regularly.
 5. All windows and shelving have been cleaned, cobwebs have been removed from the sanitary area.
- Going forward checks will be carried out to ensure that the areas are clean and well maintained. The service will employ a regular window cleaner.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of works as listed above completed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to regulation 29.