

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015WW187

Name of Service: Sakura Montessori, Naionra and Afterschool

Address of Service: Main Street, Blessington, Co. Wicklow

Eircode: W91 R66F

Name of Registered Provider: Antoinette Byrne

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 09/04/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	9

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and M. Condon
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

Description of service

This full day care service was first established in 1995 and is located in the urban setting of Blessington Co. Wicklow. It is a privately owned service and is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.30hrs and 18.05hrs (including a sessional service from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs for 38 weeks of the year). A school age service is also provided. The premises is a semi-detached two storey house with four adapted pre-school rooms, a nappy changing room, an office and kitchen. There are two outdoor play areas, one to the front of the premises and one to the rear.

Staffing

There were nine people present on the day of inspection and eight staff members were working directly with the children. The registered provider was present and was supernumerary and available to help where needed.

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.

The inspection plan was to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment, (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4), (6A)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1), (2), (8)(a)

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, General Safety and Infection Control

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b), (2)(c), (4)

Regulation 27 - Supervision

However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under:

Regulation 19– Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 29 – Premises (d)

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 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-

- (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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the registered provider and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that ten adults are employed in the service, this includes the fulltime chef and the administrative staff member. These files were reviewed. The registered providers file was reviewed as they were working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was the person in charge and a named person who 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)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of eleven adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for eleven adults.

(d)

International police vetting was available for three adults working in the service had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Nine staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

(6A)

There were three adults employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion model.

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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were eight adults employed and present with 42 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)
The registered provider ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times. This was confirmed by reviewing the staff roster.

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;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(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), (h)-(k).

The registered provider made sure that a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

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

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, and

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

1. On the day of inspection, the Playgroup room was not an inviting or engaging play space, materials were not displayed in a child centred manner. There were a limited number of age-appropriate toys available to the children in the room and props were missing from the activity table preventing the development of play. The Big Monti room did not have clear areas of interest and equipment was not laid out to promote the emergent interests of the children.
2. The library area in the Big Monti room was insufficiently stocked with books for the number of children in the room. There were five books available, some of which were visibly damaged, for 20 children in the room. This limited the choice for children wishing to engage in reading books.
3. The Playgroup room did not have a suitable cosy area for the children to use, should they require a rest during their day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

1. The Playgroup room is now an inviting and engaging play space.

There is a dress up area, home corner, construction area, puzzle shelves, music & imaginative play shelves, sensory table, small play area and art shelves.

The Big Montessori room shelves are now open for the full 3 hours of the ECCE session. Montessori shelves will be left open when the children are having snack and preparing to go home i.e. for the full 3 hours. The Playgroup teacher will ensure that there are adequate materials and toys accessible to the children at all times.

2. The library in the Big Montessori room has been restocked with plenty of books. The library will be reviewed weekly to ensure enough books for all children.

3. The Playgroup room's cosy area has added teddies and cushions and is located at our library for quiet time. The Playgroup teacher will ensure that there is always soft teddies and cushions in the cosy area.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)

Photographic evidence was sent in with the CAPA response to demonstrate points 1-3 have been addressed

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 19 (1)(a) and will be reviewed on next 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 main door to the premises was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in each pre-school room was free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules for all pre-school rooms and for the remainder of the premises were available and maintained.
- Each pre-school room had access to a suitable sanitary area, with toilets and/or nappy changing facilities, running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- A foot pedal bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all pre-school rooms and the nappy changing area.
- Hand washing by both adults and children was observed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Electrical wires in both the Playgroup room and Naionra room were not secured to the wall and were in easy reach of the children in the room. This posed an injury risk to children.
2. The right-hand side of the windowsill at the back of the Naionra room had a sharp edge which was at the head level of the children in the room. This posed a risk of injury to a child.
3. The storage area in the Naionra sanitary area was unlocked, posing a risk of unsecured items falling on children and causing an injury.
4. No written risk assessment was available in any care room on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

5. In the Big Monti sanitary area and the Naionra sanitary area the removable toilet inserts were being stored on the floor. Toilet inserts should be stored off the floor for infection control purposes.
6. On inspection of the nappy changing area, a large amount of debris was found underneath the changing mat. Nappy changing areas should be thoroughly cleaned daily for infection control purposes.
7. Tables and chairs were visibly chipped and worn, which prevented effective cleaning for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Electrical wire in Playgroup has been secured and is out of reach of the children. All staff have been asked to thoroughly inspect the rooms regularly for any sharp edges and loose wires. The lights on the wall in the Naionra have been removed.
2. The windowsill in the Naionra has been sanded and is due to be painted in early July when the annual painting is done while the ECCE is closed for the Summer.
3. A lock has been added to the door in the sanitary area in the Naionra. All staff have been asked to ensure that all storage areas are kept locked.
4. Risk assessments were completed weekly prior to the inspection. but no risks detected on the preceding days hence why the forms were blank. Staff have been reminded to present the risk assessment folder from their rooms to Tusla upon inspection.

Infection Control:

5. A shelf has been erected to the back walls in the Naionra and Big Montessori sanitary areas to store the removable toilet inserts. All staff have been asked to ensure that when the toilet inserts are not in use that they are placed on the upper shelves over the toilet.
6. The nappy changing area has been thoroughly cleaned. All staff have been reminded that they must ensure they thoroughly clean down the nappy changing area after each use.
7. The tables and chairs will all be painted in July when the annual painting is being done. The tables and chairs will be repainted every summer when the classes are not in use.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence to support points 1-4 was submitted with the CAPA response.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence to support points 5 & 6 was submitted with the CAPA response

Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 General Safety points 1-4 and Infection Control points 5- & 6. Point 7 has not been addressed adequately and the non-compliance remains outstanding

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-

- (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 evidence of regular fire drills haven taken place within the service. The last fire drill took place on the 28th of March 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated the 1st of April 2025 and 12th of February 2025 respectively.

(2)(c)

These records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the pre-school rooms.

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 registered provider ensured that there were adequate number of adults employed in the pre-school service to ensure that the children attending were supervised during their day.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

1. In all care rooms there was visible signs of wear and tear. In the Big Monti room, downstairs and in Playgroup and Naionra rooms upstairs, the children's table and chairs were worn and chipped and some counter tops needed repainting.
2. The windowsills in all care rooms needed repainting.

3. The outdoor seating furniture located in the front outdoor area of the service and used by the children was in a poor state of repair. Several seats were cracked and one seat was being held together with tape. The picnic tables, also at the front of the service, needed painting as the paint was worn and chipped in places.
4. The painted stairs up to the Playgroup room and Naionra, and the hallway between both rooms was worn and in need of repainting or new floor covering.
5. The laminated floor covering in the Naionra room was showing visible signs of wear and was in need of replacement in certain areas.

Furniture, environment and equipment need to be clean, repaired and maintained as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- 1 & 2. All rooms, ceilings, walls, tables, chairs, counter tops, doors, windowsills etc will have their annual painting in July when the ECCE is closed and the rooms not in use.
3. The outdoor picnic tables have been repainted. Seats have been ordered from the UK to replace the cracked ones on the outdoor trestle table.
4. The stairs to the Playgroup and Naionra will have an annual painting in July when the classes are not in use.
5. The laminate floor in the Naionra has been it poses no risk to the children as there are no sharp edges or holes. We will replace the floors when funds become available.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence in relation to point 3, of painted picnic benches and receipts for new equipment ordered was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above proposed actions will address points 2, 3, 4 & 5 in relation to regulation 29. Point 1 has not been addressed adequately to resolve the non-compliance found on the day of inspection and remains outstanding.