

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015WW196

**Name of Service:** Cuala Montessori

**Address of Service:** 3 Cuala Grove, Bray, Co. Wicklow

**Eircode:** A98 X832

**Name of Registered Provider:** Sandra Kiernan

**Service type:** Part Time, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 28/11/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Bourke
<b>Title:</b>	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

### Description of service

This part-time Montessori service was first established in 2010 and is located in a housing estate in Bray Co. Wicklow.

The Montessori is open from Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 2.15pm. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age, this includes a sessional ECCE service for 38 weeks of the year.

The premises is a single storey building located to the side of the registered provider's home. It consists of a large Montessori room, a small hall area and a sanitary area.

There is an outdoor area located to the rear of the premises, which the children have access to on a daily basis.

### Staffing

Three adults, including the registered provider, work in the Montessori. All three adults were working with the children on the day of inspection. An Early Childhood Care and Education student on work placement, was also 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ 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, 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

Following a discussion with the registered provider and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that the registered provider employs two adults. The registered provider works in the service and there was an Early Childhood Care and Education student on work placement also present on the day of inspection. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived and the registered provider arrived a short time later. There was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspector 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 four adults

(c)

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

(d)

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

(4)

Three staff members 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)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the Montessori service.

(2)

The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were three adults working directly with 17 children on the day of inspection.

## 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-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The registered provider ensured that there were appropriate and suitable care practices in place within the Montessori.

Children were given the opportunity for free play during the morning, and children's participation was encouraged in all activities throughout the day.

All the children have the opportunity to access the outdoor area during their day.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. Positive reinforcement of children's behaviour contributed to a pleasant environment for the children in the service. One to one attention was given to a child when required, in addition, support was given to children so that they remained included in activities. Circle time was spent practicing Christmas songs which all the children were involved in and seemed to really enjoy.

The relationships between the adults and children reflected a sense of belonging, inclusion, connectedness and diversity.

There was a suitable cosy area in each pre-school room, with rugs, soft furnishings, cushions and books for children to use should they require it during their day.

Children's parents are spoken to on an individual basis at collection time.

Parents are encouraged to make direct contact with the pre-school, should they have any concerns or issues.

### 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 Montessori was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- 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 in the Montessori room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.

##### Infection Control:

- There was sanitary area located in the Montessori service. There was warm running water at 30°C, liquid soap and paper towels available.
- A foot pedal bin was available in the sanitary area and in the Montessori room for the safe disposal of used paper towels and other waste matter.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- Hand washing by the adults and children was observed before snacks, after using the toilet and outdoor play.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in the service.

### 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)

The were two adults trained in FAR first aid and available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within the Montessori room.

(b)

The first aid box was available to the children attending the service at all times.

## 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 a record of fire drills having taken place in the Montessori service. The last recorded fire drill was 13 October 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke detectors on the premises dated August 2025 and November 2025 respectively.

(2)(c)

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

(4)

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