

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW222
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Name of Service:	Sunflower Montessori
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Address of Service:	Timore, Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A63 DK70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	23/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Sunflower Montessori is a sessional service operates in a purpose-built premises adjacent to the registered provider's home which is in a rural area in County Wicklow. There were 18 children present on the day of inspection. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 20 children who are aged between two and six years. It is open from Monday to Friday between 09.30am and 13.00pm. The service comprises of one indoor playroom, an outdoor covered playroom and a sanitary area. A large outdoor area is available to the children at the rear, side and front of the building. The outdoor area at the front of the pre-school has been changed to a forest garden.

Staffing

There are three adults employed, one of whom is the registered provider, who work directly with the children.

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 announced/unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child 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 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

One new adult was employed since the last inspection. The files for the three adults employed were reviewed.

(a)(b) There were two written and validated references available for three adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as there was no evidence that an adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Two staff members had 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(4)

On the day of inspection, a staff member who was working directly with the children did not hold 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.

It is acknowledged that this staff member was currently completing her Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education and will finish in approximately one month.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member has now completed the course and is awaiting their certificate for a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. I have requested that she contact the college again and request her certificate.

Going forward we will not employ a person until their course has been completed and we have evidence of their qualification is on file.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 9(4) remains outstanding. It will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) There were three adults present working directly with eighteen pre-school children throughout the period of the inspection. The registered provider was present at all times.
- (3) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the morning.

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

The inspector observed that staff were attentive to the personal care of the children. The children were assisted if needed when using the toilet. Their noses, hands and faces were cleaned when needed. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm individual engagement with the children.

Staff sat with the children during snack time and encouraged children to chat. They provided them with help when needed whilst supporting their independence.

Children were assisted to put on their outdoor clothing prior to going to the outdoor area. They ensured that their hats, coats and gloves were worn as it was a cold day. Boots were used outdoors during the period while using the grass area outdoors.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed them by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. During the morning the staff were observed playing with the children, encouraging them to complete puzzles and do crafts and giving them praise for their efforts. It was evident that the staff knew the children very well. In conversation the staff referred to the individual children's likes, dislikes, names of family members and pets. Through conversation and activities, the staff linked their play and activities with the children's home life. The staff comforted the children when they became upset - holding them and talking to them in soft tones.

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. The tables were cleaned before and after snack time.
- A comprehensive care plan was available for one child who had a specific medical condition.

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. Pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas and in the care room.
- The premises play equipment, and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The tables were cleaned before and after snack time.

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. Medication was stored safely. Staff were aware of the procedure to be undertaken should medication be required.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are not undertaken 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) Two staff members who was trained in first aid response (FAR), were available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible position.

(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school.

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 on writing was kept of all fire drills that took place on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on 09/02/2026.
 - (b) Records were available detailing the number, type, and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment. and smoke alarms both dated February 2026.
- (4) Notices were displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.