

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW241
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Name of Service:	St. Gerard's Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Thornhill Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A98 R242
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre Farrell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	02/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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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
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

St. Gerard's Montessori was first opened in 1995. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age, on a sessional, parttime and full-time basis.

The hours of operation are from 8.30am to 2.30pm Monday to Friday and the service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purpose-built classroom located in St. Gerard's private primary school.

There is a small secure outdoor area to the front of the classroom and in addition, the children have access to a large, secure playing field located on the grounds of the school.

Staffing

The Montessori service is now owned by the school and has a named registered provider who does not work directly with the children. The school employs two adults to work in the service. There is an additional relief staff member who works in the service as required.

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.

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 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*

(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

(1)(a)

The person in charge was present on the day of inspection and a named person 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.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of three adults.

(c)

Completed Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for three adults.

(d)

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

(4)

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

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 21 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 main door to the Montessori was securely locked on arrival of the inspector 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 room. 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.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in the service.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given on the day, but there was a robust care plan in place for one child with a nut allergy, that staff were familiar with and in date emergency medication was safely stored and available if required.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

While it is acknowledged that hand wipes were left on the tables in the Montessori room at snack time for the children to wipe their faces and hands, no hand washing took place between children transitioning from Music and Movement and having their snacks. Handwashing by adults and children should be carried out using warm water and liquid soap, before snack time, following using the toilet facilities and following outdoor play. Regular hand washing is essential for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

We have now revised our routine before mid-morning snack - and the children are now supervised while washing their hands, using warm water and liquid soap, directly before being seated for their snack. Staff also wash their hands at this time. This routine is now in place since 03/12/2026 and is working well. To prevent non-compliance from re-occurring in the future, our Montessori Infection Control Policy has been updated to now make specific reference to children and staff washing their hands before morning snack – see Section on “Hand Hygiene”.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

A copy of the revised Infection Control policy detailing the new routine in hand washing was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above evidence has addressed the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 Infection Control and will be reviewed on next inspection

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The person in charge ensured that all children attending the Montessori were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a)(i-iv)

The person in charge ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the Montessori.

(b)

The reception area of the school had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the Montessori.

(4)

The receptionist of the school was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it relates on behalf of the Montessori.

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)

There were two adults trained in FAR (First Aid Response) 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 27 November 2025.

(b)

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

(2)(c)

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

(4)

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

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 person in charge was able to demonstrate that there was adequate supervision of all children attending the service during their day.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The person in charge was able to demonstrate that the service has adequate insurance to cover the type of service and the number of children who attend.