

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX054		
Name of Service:	Hillmount Montessori		
Address of Service:	Hillmount House, Coolacarne, Ballindaggin, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford		
Eircode:	Y21 DF20		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Doyle		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	04/03/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM 9
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspector Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan		
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		

Description of service

Hillmount Montessori is a privately operated service offering a Montessori based programme. It is located in a rural setting outside Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. It offers a part-time and sessional service to children aged 2 years to 6 years of age. The service mission statement “We aim to provide a safe, fun, loving environment where each child is valued as an individual, where their sense of identity and belonging is nurtured and respected”.

Staffing

There are five staff working in the service including the registered provider. There was a named second adult who deputises as the person in charge when required. The staff hold qualifications in Childcare and Montessori Education at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play,

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4) and
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

(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)(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge and was on the premises for the duration of the inspection. There was a second named staff available to deputise as required.

The staff files for five staff working in the service were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff member's file.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

Certificates of qualifications for all staff members working directly with the preschool children were available on file.

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)(2)

There was an adequate number of staff working with the children for the duration of the inspection.

During the morning, there were 18 children being directly cared for by 5 staff.

During the afternoon there were 9 children being cared for by 4 staff.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

All children attending the service on the day of inspection had access to both indoor and outdoor spaces for play. The service consists of two playrooms, an entrance lobby and toilets. Between the two playrooms the registered provider had developed a sensory quiet area which the children used in smaller groups or individually with a staff member. The entrance lobby had labelled hooks for the children's personal belongings such as coats, boots and bags.

Both playrooms were bright and warm with sufficient space for the number of children attending. The rooms were decorated to meet the needs of the age and stage of development of the children using them.

Children had access to the garden and play areas located to the rear of the premises. The outside area and garden were divided into different sections. Each section was well developed and resourced with a variety of toys, equipment and interest areas for the children to use. The areas included digging and planting sections, seating areas, swings and climbing toys, and mud kitchen. Large trees provided natural shaded areas and hedges and fences provided boundaries. The children enjoyed time outside on the front lawn area during the morning. They were well supervised and dressed appropriately in wellies and coats.

(b)

Both rooms had quiet areas for children to sit and relax. They had small soft sofas that were used by the children daily. The area also had soft cushions and reading materials. The children could rest and relax on the sofa as and when they want.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The playrooms were bright and warm with natural light and ventilation from openable windows. Both playrooms had low shelving with trays and boxes of toys including Montessori materials which were easily accessible to the children. The tables and chairs were suitable to the ages of the children using them.

Throughout the rooms the interest areas were well-resourced, and included a home corner, dress up clothes, puzzles, small world, art and craft materials and reading books. The children were observed fully engaged in their play and learning during the inspector’s visit. Staff set out trays and experiences that the children freely moved between. The interactions between the children and staff were kind and gentle, and the staff were familiar with the individual children’s likes, dislikes and personalities.

Throughout the rooms children’s artwork was displayed along with photographs of their families, birthdays, and their daily routine. The atmosphere throughout the morning was calm and relaxed, with the transitions between activities calm.

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 staff trained in FAR and first aid for children available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)
There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position and was available for use.

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)

There was written evidence available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on 6 February 2026.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in September and November 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance for a part time service for 32 children.