

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015WX091 | | |
| Name of Service: | Mulrankin Pre School & Montessori | | |
| Address of Service: | Mulrankin Castle, Bridgetown, Co. Wexford | | |
| Eircode: | Y35 HW95 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Martina Cardiff | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 16/09/2025 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 9 | PM NA |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 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

Mulrankin Pre-School and Montessori is a privately operated preschool service which opened in 1994. It is located outside the rural village of Bridgetown in south Co Wexford. It offers a play-based sessional service to children between 2 and 6 years of age. The service is located in a modern bungalow used solely for the purpose of the preschool children. The service consists of an entrance hall, three playrooms, a kitchen, children's toilets and a separate staff toilet. Outside is a large fully enclosed garden to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are two staff working directly with the children in the service on the day of inspection. The service employs four staff in total. All staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education 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(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2)(4) – Staffing Levels,

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play,

Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 22 – Food and Drink,
Regulation 25 – First Aid,
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures 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 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)(b)

There was a designated person in charge of the service on the inspector's arrival. There was a second named staff member available to deputise as needed.

The files for four 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 also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years.

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

(4)

There were certificates of qualification for four staff members working directly with the preschool children 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.

(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)(3)

During the inspection, there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

During the morning there were 2 staff caring for 9 children.

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)

Children had access to three playrooms, one main room, a reading/quiet room and a Montessori room. The interest areas in each of the rooms were well developed and resourced, and the children had free access to move between the rooms if they wanted to.

The children were facilitated to play outdoors daily. The children wear waterproof coats and wellies to keep them dry and extend the amount of time they could play outside. A covered lean-to area had picnic benches and a wash handbasin.

(b)

The reading/quiet room was carpeted and had a small sofa. The area was suitable for children to rest and relax if they wanted to during the morning.

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

Each of the rooms were equipped with a wide variety of play materials, which were of good quality and suitable for the interests and learning of the children. Open shelving with clear labelled boxes of toys and materials allowed children to access toys and materials independently during free play. Children had access to dress up clothes, farm toys, a shop/home corner, Montessori materials and freely available art and craft material. The large playroom and entrance hall had personalised touches that included family photos, birthday walls, and individually named hooks for children to hang their coats and bags on. A large poster with their photographs in the entrance hall allowed children to check themselves into pre-school daily. The outside play toys and equipment was of good quality and children had access to play houses, balances beams, gardening and digging areas, swings and ride on toys.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service promoted healthy eating, and the parents were asked to provide morning snacks and food in line with this. The children's lunch boxes were stored in the fridge. On the day of inspection, the children choose to eat their mid-morning snacks outside at their picnic benches. Snacks observed eaten on the day included a wide variety of fresh fruit, crackers, cheese, yogurts, brown bread, egg muffins and sandwiches. Most of the children drank water. A staff member chopped up fresh pears and these were provided to the children at snack time.

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 registered provider has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. Two staff members were trained to the first aid responder standard.
- (2)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were in the service and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position.

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)
Fire drills were completed monthly. Through discussion with the staff, it was established that fire drills were completed monthly and recorded as outlined in the service's fire safety policy.
- (b)
A record was maintained when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in October 2024.
- (4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of 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 sessional care for 20 children.