

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX123		
Name of Service:	The Mill Montessori		
Address of Service:	Ballyhyland, Caim, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford		
Eircode:	Y21 N126		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Earley		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	08/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years 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

The Mill Montessori is a privately owned preschool service. The service offers a Montessori and play based curriculum to children aged between 2 and 6 years and can accommodate up to a maximum number of 22 children at any one time. The service operates Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00. The Montessori is located in a building beside the registered provider's home. The service consists of one large playroom, sanitary accommodation and an outdoor garden and play area.

Staffing

There are four staff working in the service, which includes the registered provider who works directly with the children. All the staff working directly with the children in the service held the minimum Fetac level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 21 Equipment and Materials,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4)
Regulation 27 Supervision 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)

On the day of the inspection the registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service. There was a second named staff member available to deputise as needed.

The staff 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 demonstrated partial compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years. See regulation 23.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)

Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service. During the morning there were 19 children in the care of 4 staff.

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

On arrival at the service the staff and children were outside and welcomed the inspector. The children were observed to be confident and familiar with the staff and enjoyed introducing themselves and asking the inspector questions.

The outside play area included a large garden and a covered area directly off the playroom. When the children were ready to return to the playroom for their snacks, a fenced off pathway led them from the garden to the playroom. The outdoor play area was well developed and resourced. It included sand trays, a sensory pathway, flower beds, a maze, swings, a shed and seating areas. The space allowed the children to freely enjoy imaginative play uninterrupted and two campsites with makeshift tents were set up in the garden by the children. After their mid-morning snack, the children were observed to be excited to return to the garden where staff organised a tabletop activity that included gluing dried flowers onto cards.

The playroom was well-resourced and laid out with equipment and toys of interest for the developmental stages and ages of the children. Materials and toys included art and crafts, Montessori materials, reading area, a cosy quiet area and artwork including birthday walls and daily routines were displayed. The children were observed playing in small groups, individually with staff and together in circle time.

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 outdoor areas were fully enclosed and secured. The covered area directly off the playroom was fenced off from the car park. Storage of cleaning products was out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate handwashing for staff and children. Good hand washing practices were observed after toileting and outdoor play and before eating. Lunch boxes that included perishable food items were stored in the fridges in the playrooms in line with safe food guidance.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of medication and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspector in line with the service policy.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to re-new Garda vetting every 3 years. There were Garda vetting disclosures on file for all staff members, however the vetting disclosure for one staff member was not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective & Preventive Action:

Garda vetting was applied for immediately for the staff member.

A form has been added to individual files as a reminder to ensure Garda vetting is renewed on time in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted:

Photographic evidence that Garda vetting was applied for.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted a response that was satisfactory to meet the requirement of the regulation.

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 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 firefighting 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)

The last recorded fire drill was carried out on 28 February 2025.

(1)(b)

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

(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 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The service ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. All staff were suitably qualified and had extensive experience working directly with children. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

The service operated between the outdoors and indoors and the fenced pathway between these allowed the children to safely return to the garden after snack time and also allowed for children to be watched easily by the staff. A staff member was always present with the children in the outdoor area and the supervision observed on the day showed the balance which allowed children to play uninterrupted.

Parents and guardians were observed at the collection time where children were handed over and parents spoke directly with the staff who cared for their child.

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 sessional service for 22 children.