

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX124
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Name of Service:	The Wexford Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Cedarwood, Windmill Hill, Wexford, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y35 FT73
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Name of Registered Provider:	Clodagh Dunleavy-Smythe
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	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
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Description of service

The Wexford Montessori School is a privately operated pre-school service in Wexford Town. It offers a Montessori programme to children aged 2 years 6 months to 6 years of age. The service operates from 09:30 to 12:30 and can accommodate 10 children. The service is located in a prefabricated building located to the rear of the registered provider's home. The building consists of an early years room, lobby and a toilet. An outdoor garden and play area are available to the rear of the property and is safe and secure.

Staffing

There are two staff working in the service, which includes the registered provider. The staff working directly with children held the minimum 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 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child,

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 26 March 2025 regarding non-compliances identified under regulation 25 First Aid. (see regulation 25).

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 register 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 two staff working in the service were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

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

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for both 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.

(d)
Police vetting disclosures were available for staff who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.

(4)
Certificates of qualifications to a minimum level of five and above 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) (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)
Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service. In the morning there were seven children in the care of two staff.

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-*
- (a) *each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)
The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service focusing on the areas of basic needs, supporting relationships and the physical and material environment on the day of inspection.

The service consisted of one room which was well resourced to meet the needs of the ages of the children. The room reflected the Montessori ethos with good quality toys and materials. The children were colouring together at the table when the inspector arrived and were currently interested in frogs and spring flowers. They had spent some time in circle time earlier in the morning. The atmosphere was relaxed and calm, with the children enjoying telling the inspector about their daily routine and the birthday party planned for Friday. The children were observed to freely choose what Montessori work they wanted from the open shelves and staff were engaged in conversation with the children all morning. The transitions between activities were calm and relaxed. Staff asked the children if they wished to use the toilet, and help was given if needed.

The service supplies the mid-morning snack. The children participated in the snack routine by setting the table and helping to chop up the fruit and serve it to each other. The morning snack consisted of a variety of freshly chopped fruit and crackers. Children used plates and glasses, and water was served. The snack time was relaxed and unhurried. Staff supervised the children with handwashing before eating and sat with them to help as needed.

The children had access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the premises. There were ride on toys and equipment, digging and planting areas, willow huts and swings. The natural garden environment allowed the children opportunities for free imaginative play. The staff helped the children into their wellies before going outside.

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

(2)(a)(b)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
There were no staff trained in FAR and first aid for children available to the children attending the preschool service. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider requesting that this non-compliance be rectified immediately.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action:

The registered provider submitted the following response:

A First Aid Refresher Course has been booked for Saturday 24th May.

Going forward the registered provider stated she will ensure first aid is up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted:

The registered provider will forward a copy of the certificate to the office of the early years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted a response to address the non-compliance.

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 20 February 2025.

(1)(b)
A record was maintained for when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in February 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 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a certificate of insurance for children attending on a sessional basis.