

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC009
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Name of Service:	An Tobar Eolais Montessori
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Address of Service:	Lisvaird National School, The Pike, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P85 HK88
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eilish Kingston
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly
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).

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Description of service

An Tobar Eolais Montessori offers early years care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years. At time of inspection the service was catering for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years offering a choice of part time and sessional service. Sessional services are provided from 09.00 to 12.00 hours and the part time service operates until 14.00 each day Monday to Friday, over a 38-week annual period, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

The service operates from a prefabricated unit located on the grounds of Lisvaird National School in a rural setting a short distance from Clonakilty town in Co Cork. Facilities include a playroom and toilet facilities for children and staff. The children have access to a designated secure partially covered outdoor area beside the service.

Staffing

There were 3 adults associated with the service, this included the named registered provider who is service based. Each of the 3 adults that work directly with the children holds a major award in 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.

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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/ person in charge, deputy, 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.*

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(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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to 3 staff attached to the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the required 6 references, 5 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.
- (b) The remaining 1 reference was from another source other than a previous employer with the required validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the 3 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable as the 3 staff members had not resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- There was evidence that the 3 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be 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.*

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the playroom on day of the inspection.
- (2)
- During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- There were 17 children present in the morning sessional service with 3 adults in attendance. There were 10 of the 17 children attending the part time service with 2 adults in attendance at all times. The adult child ratio was correct.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
 - (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
 - (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
 - (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
 - (e) the facilities available;
 - (f) the opening hours and fees;
 - (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
 - (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

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Compliance Information

- (1) A record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications, and experience of the staff members.
 - (b) Type of service and age profile of children for which the service is registered.
 - (c) Details of the adult child ratio
 - (d) The type of care programme provided.
 - (e) The facilities available
 - (f) The opening hours and fees.
 - (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.
 - (i) The staff rosters for the week of inspection was assessed. The roster was in keeping with the staff working in the service on the day of inspection.

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)

Basic Needs

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- Snack time was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment. Staff members sat at tables and offered appropriate assistance for example assisting with the opening of cartons as required.
- Drink bottles were observed to be easily accessible to the children so that they could help themselves to drinks when thirsty.

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- Slippers were available to the children for safe indoor play which were stored in their individual photographed cubby boxes to encourage independent dressing.
- Staff members assisted with toileting and gently reminded the children to wash hands afterwards. Additional hand washing was observed after the children had played outside and prior to lunch.
- The daily routine was observed to be both adult and child led, mainly child led after lunch where the children had the choice of playing indoors or outdoors under the close supervision of staff.
- Aprons were available to protect the children's clothes during art and messy play activities.
- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children, building their confidence and communication skills within the setting. Staff helped children to recognise and understand sharing and working together as a group as seen on day of inspection when children were involved in various activities indoors and outdoors.
- The person in charge stated the service operated in partnership with parents, regular updates and information were furnished to parents and guardians via the services electronic system and at drop off and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment

- The care room was airy and bright with dual aspect openable windows to allow for natural ventilation and light.
- The care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as colouring and drawing, imaginary play, book reading and tabletop activities.
- The care room had open shelving units to display the play materials and equipment in an accessible way to the children.
- The care room was furnished with low couches, a large soft matting area with a selection of books for the children's comfort.
- The room was furnished with sufficient child sized tables and chairs for the number of children in attendance.
- Children had a choice of playing outdoors after the mid-morning snack. The outdoor play area was located beside of the premise.
- There were all weather mats under the slide and climbing bars. Tyres were present for the children to practice balance games. There was a raised covered sand unit with accompanying play equipment for sensory and imaginative play.

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- On the day of the inspection the children were observed enjoying physical play outdoors, using the large slide, jumping and balancing on the large tyres. Imaginary play while digging with spades and buckets in the sand unit. There was a large group with one staff member discussing the planets in outer space with a placard of the planets for the children to visualise.

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 children's parents and guardians provided all food items and the children had their own water bottle.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, bread rolls and wraps with chicken, ham and cheese, yogurts and a selection of chopped fruit and diced vegetables.
- Perishable foods were stored in the service fridge.

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 entrance door leading into the premises was kept secured to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets were 29°C on day of inspection.
- Openable windows were not accessible to the children in the playroom.

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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 ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that two staff members held current up to date training and the two staff were present on day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box were stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises

(b) The first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 12 March 2026.

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(b) The emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 07 April 2026.

(4)

The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b) Records indicated that the fire extinguishers were not serviced on an annual basis. The recorded date of when the fire extinguishers were last serviced was in August 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(b) In the corrective and preventative written response, (CAPA) the registered provider stated that the fire extinguishers in the service were serviced on the 13 May 2026. The registered provider stated that the fire extinguishers will be serviced on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the maintenance service record from the company that serviced the fire extinguishers dated the 13 May 2026 was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

The responses submitted by the registered provider is accepted in meeting the requirement of the regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

- The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 22 children until 28/03/2027. The records detailed the category of service covered was part time day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.