

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC014
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Name of Service:	Rosscarbery Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Church Road Rosscarbery, West Cork
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Eircode:	P85 NX20
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caoilfhionn Casey
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Service type:	Part time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Social Work Dept. Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen P81 PD78
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Inspection undertaken by:	M Carney & V McCarthy
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Rosscarbery Montessori School is a private early years service which is registered to cater for children aged from 2 to 6 years on a part time and sessional basis. The times of operation are from 08:50am to 13:50pm daily. The service is situated within the town's historical cathedral community hall. It offers a large playroom, toilet facilities, adequate storage and a newly designated outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. There is some available car parking to the front of the building for the safe arrival and departure of the children with their families.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children and manages the service. There are an additional 5 adults employed as childcare professionals with Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

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.

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, the deputy 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)

The registered provider worked directly with the children and was the person in charge. An adult had been designated to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were on the premises on the day of the inspection and were available to facilitate the visit. A review of the staff roster indicated that at least 2 adults were present on the premise during service operation.

(2)(a)

Each of the staff members files were reviewed and the following information was obtained -
There were 10 written past employer references available, each had a record of validation.

(2)(b)

There were 2 written references from sources that the registered provider considered to be reputable with the appropriate records of validation.

(c)

There were 6 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file.

(d)

Police vetting available for the 1 adult who had worked outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period of 6 consecutive months or longer.

(4)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were on file for each staff member above Fetac Level 6.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The service healthy eating policy was reviewed and found to be compliant.

Non-Compliance Information

The following policies were examined and found to be inadequate-

1. Whilst there was a policy on behaviour management it did not set out practices that are prohibited in the service for example, corporal punishment or degrading and neglectful practices.
2. Although a comprehensive policy on the administration of emergency medications was on file it was incomplete as it did not set out the procedures for dealing with and administering children's prescription and over the counter medications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

1.&2. The registered provider stated that both the behaviour management policy and administration of medication policy have been updated. In addition, all staff members have read them and understood them. Scanned copies of the policies were submitted.

Summary Comment

Documents in the form of updated policies were forwarded to the early years office. They were reviewed and found to adequately meet the Requirements.

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)

There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2)

There were 32 children aged from 3 to 4 years attending on a sessional basis and 4 children attending on a part time capacity. There were 4 adults in attendance.

The adult child ratio was correct.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

(a) the name and date of birth of the child;

(b) the date on which the child first attended the service;

(c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;

(d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;

(e) authorisation for the collection of the child;

(f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;

- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
Fifty percent of the enrolment forms were examined which totalled 16. The following sections of the forms were found to be compliant.
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency was available.

Non-Compliance Information

- The following sections of this Regulation was not available –
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child for was not available on 3 forms;
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child was not documented on 2 forms;

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that the required fields have been completed on the children's enrolment forms. Going forward, a staff member has been designated to ensure all the enrolment forms are correctly completed.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met for this Regulation.

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;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

The above information was reviewed and found to be readily available and compliant in relation to (a), (h), and (i).

(j) The service had templates for the recording of all medications that are to be administered to the children. There were no entries.

(k) The service had an accident/incident recording logbook that had been developed by an agency affiliated to childcare settings. The most recent entry was dated 22 February 2023; this involved a minor incident. Alongside the information being relayed to the parent a personal letter was issued by the registered provider requesting how the child was after the incident and a signature to acknowledge the event.

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

Basic Needs

- Parents and guardians supplied the children with the food and drink requirements which was organised on a rotational basis. However, on the day of the inspection the children were making pumpkin soup to eat for their main meal. This was a sociable event with the children sitting mid-session at 11:15 with their friends to enjoy their homemade soup.
- Staff members unobtrusively assisted the children with the serving of the soup so that hot spillages were avoided. Bread was served with serving spoons and the children were offered additional portions if they so wished.
- The children sat with their friends in an unhurried companionable manner at tables set with place mats, cutlery and beakers for their drinks of water or milk.
- Some of the younger children were assisted with using the toilet, flushing, washing of hands and correctly discarding of paper towels.
- Each child had their own coat hook and shelf space for the storage of bags and outdoor shoes.
- Slippers were worn by the children and staff for their comfort, safety and to reduce noise levels.
- The children were encouraged to dress independently for the outdoor play area and discreetly assisted as required.
- Spare clothes were stored in the event of spillages and aprons were made available to protect the children's clothes from arts and crafts, painting and messy play.
- The children had ample indoor space to enjoy free play, socialise and enjoy the play opportunities available. In addition, the children had access to a newly laid out playground to the rear of the premises for a fresh air and gross motor skill play.
- The children were observed to be happy, relaxed and familiar with their environment.

Physical and Material Environment –

- Rosscarbery Montessori School operated from a cathedral community hall which was spacious, well maintained, airy and bright.
- Three large windows unopenable allowed for natural light.
- The playroom was furnished with a sufficient number of wooden child sized tables and chairs which were clean and well maintained.
- Low open display units were situated around the perimeter and centre of the room to allow the children to access the wide range of displayed play equipment.
- At the entrance a table displayed autumnal items such as conkers, pumpkins, cones and sweet chestnuts.
- Montessori materials were clean and well maintained. They were pleasingly laid out to entice the children's interaction and engagement. There were utensils available to encourage the children to master fine motor skill practice such as, as pouring, spooning, use of tongs, elastic bands and peg boards.
- Imaginative play materials included a well-furnished and equipped home corner. Domestic experiences included pegging washing and setting the table with child sized utensils.
- The rest area included 3 armchairs situated in a homely fashion around a pretend fireplace, with rug, soft toys and access to books to allow the children to opt out of scheduled activities and relax and look at picture books.
- Floor play was observed with the children playing with large floor puzzles and construction.
- A table equipped with small farm animals allowed for individual or sociable play.
- A cordoned area of the playroom was devoted to arts and crafts. It was suitably equipped with a wide range of art materials and paints, easels and low tables for the children to complete their crafts and paintings.
- The walls of the service were adorned with international flags, a birthday graph depicting the children's birthdays. Colourful pictures of the solar system and Irish birds on their migration path to South Africa was displayed for the children's interest.
- The children had access to a newly developed secured outdoor play area. This was approached by a gravel path to the rear of the premises. A compact playground which was laid with critical fall matting was accessible to the children for outdoor games and activities.

Supporting Relations Around the Children

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Staff were observed in one-to one floor play and small group activities; good eye contact with the children was maintained and low voices were used to compliment good works and guide play. In addition, staff members practiced good listening so that the child was allowed to communicate, express and explain and be heard.
- The staff members worked well together and the children were familiar with the routine, for example preparing for lunch time and getting ready to use the outdoor play facility.
- A key worker system was in place to ensure a closer and more personal link with the children.
- Communication with parents about service issues was conducted via individual digital applications.

Implementation of the Programme of Care

- The service followed a Montessori curriculum with the inclusion of the children's emergent interest and current news.
- Documentation evidenced that curriculum planning was attended to with short term and long-term topics planned.
- Children's observations were maintained for example, to capture their learning/social development progress, ensure that each child had completed scheduled crafts and had opportunities to master Montessori fine motor skill activities.
- As the group was large with 32 children present, they were divided for circle time and outdoor play for individual attention and supervision.
- On the day of the inspection the children were industrious, engaged and were particularly eager to make soup and more importantly, consume it for their lunch.

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

- Rosscarbery Montessori adhered to their healthy eating policy and only healthy food items were offered to the children.
- Parents and guardians provided the food items on a rotational basis. Foods provided included or example, seasonal fruits, vegetables, cheeses. Only water or milk drinks were offered.
- Soup made and consumed on the day of the inspection included carrots, potatoes, pumpkins, butternut squash and sweet potatoes.
- Children attending on a part time basis had additional lunches which were eaten after the sessional children departed.
- A fridge was available for the safe storage of the perishable foods.

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 was suitably secured to prevent unauthorised access and to prevent the children leaving the premises unsupervised.
- Internal doors leading were adequately secured for example the storage cupboards and the kitchen so that the children did not have access to potentially hazardous objects.
- Staff members personal belongings were not accessible to the children.
- Cleaning products were stored on high shelving out of reach of the children.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- Curtains were secured with tiebacks.
- Units were suitably anchored to prevent falling on the children.

- Play materials such as the Montessori equipment were found to be clean and in a good state of repair with no sharp edges, pinch points or loose fittings.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained.
- Staff members were responsible for cleaning tasks and operated as clean as you go policy.
- Well maintained cleaning schedules were displayed.
- An eye-catching mobile sanitising unit was placed at the entrance to encourage both adults and children to sanitise hands. Additional sanitising products were strategically placed to allow the adults to regularly clean hands.
- The children were observed washing hands prior to their lunch meal and after using the toilet.
- The bathrooms were modern and well equipped with 3 separate toilet stalls and 3 wash hand basins.
- A wall mounted nappy changing unit had been installed for children requiring nappy changing.
- There was liquid soap, paper towels and generous supplies of toilet tissue.
- Clean and well-maintained step ups were available for the children's comfort.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered 28.9 degrees Celsius.
- Hand washing posters were strategically placed to encourage the correct hand washing technique.
- Tissues were available for nasal hygiene in the playroom.
- Clean non-contact pedal operated bins were in use throughout the service.

Administration of Medication:

- In conversation with the staff members, it was established that they were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a child requiring emergency medications.

Safe Sleep:

- The service was categorized as a part time service and was required to provide a sleep facility. The registered provider stated that a sleep facility was available in the form of 2 soft mats, 2 fleece blankets and 2 pillows. It was reported and documented that the bedding was washed after use.

Fire Safety:

- The fire door situated to the rear of the premises was unobstructed.
- Fire cylinders were tethered to the walls.
- In conversation with the staff members, it was reported that staff were familiar with the procedures that are required to be followed in the event of a fire

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings had not resumed since the Covid pandemic.

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 had first aid responder certification in place with an expiry date of 11 November 2024. Each of the other staff members had first aid certification with expiry dates of February 2025.

(2)(a) & (b)

The first aid box was stored on a high shelf in the kitchen out of reach of the children but accessible to the staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

On examination of the contents of the first aid box it was found that some of the dressing's dates had expired.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that the dressings which were out of date have been replaced.

Also, a staff member has been designated to oversee the checking of the first aid box on a 2 monthly basis to ensure that it is adequately stocked, and medical supplies are in date.

Summary Comment

Documents in the form of templates and checklists were forwarded to the early years office to evidence that the Requirement has been suitably addressed.

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 service stored templates of their monthly fire drills. The most recent drill had taken place 23 October 2023.
 - (b) A record was in place which detailed the number, type, and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The most recent service on this equipment was conducted on the 07 January 2023.
- (4)
- A fire evacuation plan was stored on file and displayed on the back of the main entrance door for occupants to follow in the event of a fire

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was on file to indicate that up to 40 children were adequately insured to attend the service on a part time and sessional basis.

The expiry date was 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (e)
- There were no adult sanitary facilities available for use in the service.
- At the previous inspection, on 21 June 2022, it was found that both an adult and child toilet, as well as the nappy changing table, were in the same room with no cubicle to separate the adult toilet. In addition, there was no wash hand basin for adult use.
 - A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 09 November 2022 and the registered provider stated that building works would be carried out during the Christmas 2022 break.
 - Further to this, the registered provider contacted Tusla to state the required building works would be carried out in the summer of 2023 to rectify this issue.
 - At this inspection it was found that building works had not happened. An adult wash hand basin had not been installed and the toilet had been rendered out of use with black and yellow tape applied over the lid.
 - Separate, adequate, hygienic and soundly constructed toilet and sink facilities are required to be provided for adults employed in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that a builder has agreed to work on the disability bathroom to return it to a cubicle and to install a wash hand basin.

A headed invoice from a building contractor was submitted to evidence that the remedial works are to be completed within the next few weeks.

Summary Comment

A document in the form of an invoice was submitted to the early years office; it was reviewed and found to adequately evidence that the non-compliance is to be addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.