

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DR034
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Name of Service:	Ruths Montessori
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Address of Service:	187 Trimbleston, Goatstown Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D14KR50
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ruth Quinlan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Early O'Brien
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	NA
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Description of service

Ruth's Montessori is a sessional service located in an urban, residential area of South County Dublin. The service is registered to provide sessional care to children aged two to six years. The service is registered to operate from 08:30 to 12:00 and from 12:15 to 15:15, Monday to Friday. The service is a purpose built, two storey property and comprises of two care rooms, one on the upper and one on the lower floor: a staff kitchen and an office. The children have access to an outdoor play area adjacent to the premise with a shock absorbent surface.

Staffing

There are six staff members currently employed to work in the service including the registered provider who were all present on the day of inspection.

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 and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1)(3) - Staffing levels

Regulation 16 (1)(h)(i)(j)(k) - Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
Regulation 25 - First aid
Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures
Regulation 28 – Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16, Record in relation to pre-school service.

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

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 works in the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 09:35 on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and a review of six staff files it was confirmed that there was one new employee since the last inspection on 14 March 2023.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of all adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b) Twelve written and validated references were available as required. Eleven were available from a past employer and one from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff members demonstrating that the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for two adults employed in the service who had spent time outside of the state of Ireland for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

All six adults employed in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the morning of inspection there were 26 children being supervised by 5 adults and in the afternoon, there were 8 children being supervised by 2 adults.

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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)

Eleven children’s records were sampled and reviewed. The records contained in 9 of these meet the required information as set out in Regulation 15 (1)(a) to (i). Please refer to Regulation 23 of this report.

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

Heathy eating is promoted in the service and children bring their own lunch from home for snack time in the ECCE session. Water was available to the children from their own bottles which they had access to.

On the day of inspection, children were observed to take their lunchbox from the fridge and were encouraged to open and close lunch boxes and bottles and be responsible for their own belongings. Snack time was a social experience during which time the staff members interacted with and engaged in social conversations with the children.

Children are encouraged to use the toilet and engage in handwashing independently with assistance provided where needed.

Children are encouraged to be responsible for their own belongings.

Supporting Relationships

The children appeared happy and content and were engaged and relaxed within the care rooms. The staff members ensured that the children were supported in all aspects of their physical, emotional and social wellbeing and demonstrated warmth and respect in all interactions with the children. Staff members were heard using gentle tones with the children and encouraged them to share their stories, ideas and opinions. Children's learning is documented in learning journals, and these are shared with parents at the end of the year. Staff informed the inspector that they share children's daily experiences with parents through an online application.

Physical and Material Environment

The indoor environment was bright and arranged into defined areas of interest, providing children with freedom to play and explore. Designated interest areas within the room included an arts and crafts and mark making station, a construction area, a dolls house, a dress-up area, a home corner, a play kitchen, and a library area. Photos of each child's family were displayed on a family wall. Birthday charts and children's artwork were also on display, and this demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.

On the day of inspection, the children spent time in the outdoor play area. Access to the outdoor play space is timetabled daily for children from both the Oaks room and the Acorn room. Equipment and materials available appear to provide appropriate learning opportunities for the children based on their age and stage of development. The outdoor area was surfaced with a shock absorbent surface. There was a storage shed next to the rear of the outdoor play area which contained equipment for use including balls and ride-on toys.

Programme of Activities

While it is acknowledged that the service follows the Montessori curriculum, there are opportunities throughout the session for free play. During the inspection children's individual choice was respected in the daily routine in which they are encouraged to participate. Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment with freedom to access resources from low level shelving. Children are familiar with the routine and handle transition between activities very well supported by the educators.

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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending.

General Safety:

The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid any unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised,

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.

Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

The children in the Oaks room were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before lunch. Staff in this room were observed to carry out consistent hand washing and sanitising as appropriate.

Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service.

Liquid soap and warm water were available to facilitate hand washing in the adjoining sanitary accommodation for both care rooms.

Administration of Medication:

Staff detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspector and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

Care plans were in place for 5 children with additional medical needs.

Fire Safety:

On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

Outing:

The registered provider explained that outings are undertaken with the children. Prior to any outing a risk assessment is carried out and the staff members explained the procedure in line with the services outings policy.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. While it is acknowledged that a paper towel dispenser was available next to the sink in the sanitary area adjacent to the Oaks room, the paper towels for hand-drying were not appropriately stored here. The towels were stacked together in a basket on a table and children were observed handling the stack of towels prior to taking one posing a risk of cross contamination. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection and the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have not addressed this adequately
2. Children in the Acorn room were not observed to wash hands consistently after toileting or before snack when playing and eating in the outdoor area.

Administration of Medication:

3. On the day of inspection two children's records did not have signed consent for medical or emergency treatment. This is not in line with the services own policy on Administration of medication and poses a risk to the health and safety of the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. To correct this non-compliance, paper towels for children to dry their hands are now appropriately stored in paper towel dispensers which are regularly refilled by staff. They will ensure there are always sufficient paper towels in the paper towel dispenser. Staff have been made aware of how to refill dispensers when needed.

- Staff will ensure that children's hands are washed after toileting, before snack and when coming in from outdoor play which is in line with the services Infection Control policy. Staff have been reminded of the importance of washing hands after toileting, before snack and when coming in from outdoor play which is detailed in the services Infection Control policy.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider contacted the parents of two children whose registration forms were incomplete and requested signatures for consent for medical and emergency treatment. The registered provider will ensure in the future that parents understand the importance of signing the consent for medical and emergency treatment while the child is attending the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence submitted on paper towel dispenser, complete with paper towels.

Administration of Medication:

Signed copies of both children's records to give consent for emergency medical treatment.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliances. These will inform the next inspection.

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)

A person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)(b)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available and safely stored on the premises

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) There was evidence of a record of fire drills being carried out monthly, the last recorded fire drill was documented as having been carried out on 29 April 2025.

(b) A service record was maintained for the fire detection system and smoke alarms. These were last serviced on 13 March 2025.

Firefighting equipment service records were available demonstrating that this equipment is serviced annually and was last serviced in May 2025.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous places throughout 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 which expires on 23 March 2026 for a sessional service which covers a maximum of 32 children.