

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2016KE004

Name of Service: The Montessori Children's Academy (Maynooth)

Address of Service: The Mews, Main Street, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Eircode: W23 R1H1

Name of Registered Provider: Christina O Riordan

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 21/10/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern
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 Montessori Children’s Academy (Maynooth) provides a sessional and part-time service to children aged 2-6 years. The service currently operates from 09:00 – 15.30, Monday to Friday. The service operates from the ground floor of a building in Maynooth town. There are two pre-school rooms with adjoining sanitary facilities named Classroom 1 and Classroom 2. An outdoor area is available adjacent to Classroom 1.

Staffing

There are seven adults employed including one adult who works in an administrative role. Six adults are employed to work directly with the children including the registered provider. Six adults were present during the inspection, five of whom were working directly with the children.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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) & (4) – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1), (2) & (8) (a) – Staffing levels

Regulation 19 (1) (a) – Health, welfare and development of child
Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
Regulation 25 – First aid

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under the following regulations:

Regulation 16 (1) (a) & (3) - Record in relation to pre-school service
Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

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

At the time of inspection, the service was involved with the Enforcement Department due to works required regarding fire safety.

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.

(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 service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge and deputy were on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.
- (2)
- (a) & (b) The inspection focused on references for three adults employed since the previous inspection dated 17 October 2023. References had been sourced from past employers for two adults. The references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) The inspection focused on three staff employed since the previous inspection dated 17 October 2023. International police vetting was not required for one adult and was available for a second adult for whom it was required.

(4) The inspection focused on the qualifications for three staff members employed since the previous inspection. Two staff members held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) & (b) There were no references made available for one adult. Please see regulation 33 for further information.
- (d) There were no records available to evidence that consideration was given to whether international police vetting was required for one adult employed since the previous inspection. Please see regulation 33 for further information.
- (4) There was no record made available for one adult (Adult A) to evidence they held the required qualification to work with children. Please see regulation 33 for further information.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a) & (b) The staff file was available on the day of inspection but not reviewed as we thought the staff member had joined before the last inspection date. We will ensure to check start dates versus last inspection date in the future.
- (2)(d) International police vetting submitted.
- (4) The file for staff member A was available on the date of the inspection. It was not reviewed as we thought she

had started before the previous inspection date and been reviewed then. We will review new starts against last inspection date to avoid this confusion.

Supporting documentation submitted

9 (2) (a) & (b) Two verified references

9 (2) (d) International police vetting

9 (4) Outstanding qualification

Summary Comment

9 (2) (a), (b), (d) & (4) The actions have been deemed to adequately address the non-compliance.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. There were 5 adults working directly with 28 children.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for at least two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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;

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

16 (1) (a) & (3) On the day of inspection the inspector requested a record of the qualifications and experience of all staff employed since the previous inspection dated 17 October 2023. The record of qualification and experience for one adult (Adult A) was not made available as outlined under regulations 9(4) and 33.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

16 (1) (a) & (3): As per corrective and preventive actions under regulation 9 (4) above.

Supporting documentation submitted

Outstanding documents for Adult A.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to adequately address the non-compliance.

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

Staff supported the children to manage their personal care independently. The children brought drinks and food from home which they accessed independently throughout the sessional period. Children staying for the part-time service had a designated lunch time after the session. The children used the toilet and washed their hands independently as needed. Older children put on their coats and outdoor shoes independently before going outside to play. The younger children were guided and supported to access these and put them on independently. Transitions between activities were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next. Areas with soft seating were provided where children could rest or take a break from activities.

Supporting Relationships around Children

The children appeared content and approached the adults freely. The adults were familiar with the children, addressing them by name and providing comfort when needed. The adults fostered positive relationships with children by offering support through attentive listening, responsive interactions and gentle guidance. Staff discussed maintaining connections with families by communicating at drop-off and collection and holding meetings when needed to support children's development.

Physical and Material Environment

The rooms were bright and organised with a variety of Montessori materials which were easily accessible to the children. Low tables and large matted areas were available for children to engage with materials comfortably. The layouts provided for children's independence with low-level sinks for handwashing/drinks and a snacking area. Reception areas were equipped with low level hooks with photographs to assist the children access and care for their belongings independently. Designated areas were provided with soft seating and books where children could rest or take a break from activities. All children accessed the outdoor area which had an all-weather surface,

sheltered areas and seating. Equipment was available to support movement and play including ride-on toys, a climbing frame, a small slide and a sand table.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Hazardous items including cleaning products and cables were secured out of children's reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises appeared clean and well-maintained. Staff guided children to wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play and before eating. Pedal operated bins were in place to manage waste appropriately.

Administration of Medication:

The registered provider reported that no child attending receives medication routinely. Staff were aware of procedures for administering medicine safely if required including obtaining parent/guardian consent and making a record.

Outing:

The registered provider reported the children are never taken on outings from the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for one adult. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

There were no dispensers to hygienically dispense paper towels for hand drying in the sanitary areas. The paper towels were stored in single sheets in containers in these areas posing a risk of cross infection. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 17 October 2023. The registered provider had not taken any actions to correct or prevent the non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

This relates to an administrative person who does not access the classroom. An application for vetting has been submitted. The completed document will be forwarded on receipt. Amend our policy on this.

Infection Control:

We are investigating the most suitable alternative and will install this over this Christmas break as we are completing other works in the classrooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of Garda vetting application dated 22 October 2025

Infection Control:

No supporting documents submitted.

Summary Comment

General Safety: The action submitted should address the non-compliance. However, the regulatory requirement remains outstanding until a copy of the Garda vetting disclosure is received by the inspectorate.

Infection Control: The action submitted should address the non-compliance.

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 with a recognised certificate in first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a person with recognised training to be available to the children at all times.

(2)

(a) The service had suitably equipped first aid boxes which were stored in conspicuous positions in the children's rooms.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available for use by staff.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(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 had a record of fire drills. The most recent fire drill was dated 29 September 2025.
- (b) The inspection focused on records relating to the firefighting equipment. The service had a certificate of conformity for the firefighting equipment dated 9 May 2025. See the Additional Information section on page 3 regarding the smoke alarm system.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position.

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 children were observed to be appropriately supervised throughout the inspection. This included within the pre-school rooms, when playing outdoors, when using the sanitary facilities and when transitioning between different areas of the premises.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider was informed that the records as per regulations 9 (2) (a), (b), (d) & (4) and 16 (1) (a) & (3) were required for all staff employed since 17 October 2023. The registered provider reported that only one adult had been employed since that date. However, the registered provider was unable to provide the inspector with the start dates of all staff when requested. Following subsequent emails, it was evident that a total of three staff had been employed since the previous inspection. A total of two staff files were made available. The staff file for one adult was not provided. See regulation 9 (2) (a), (b), (d) & (4) and 16 (1) (a) & (3) for further information.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

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We will note staff start dates in relation to inspection dates to avoid the same error in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

As per regulation 9

Summary Comment

The action submitted has been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance.