

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016WD003
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Name of Service:	Park Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Knockboy, Ballygunner, Waterford, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 K0EN
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ruth White
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/02/2025
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate Ely hospital, Ferrybank Wexford
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	Not applicable
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Description of service

This full day care service is operated from a purpose-built premises in Ballygunner on the outskirts of Waterford city. The service is open from 8:30 to 17:00. The service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education programme (ECCE) in the morning from 9.00am to 12.30pm. The service consists of two large preschool rooms, Casa one and Casa two, eight children's toilets, six children's wash hand basins, a separate staff toilet, an office, nappy changing facilities. There are two large outdoor play areas to the rear and the side of the service. The service is also registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

The service employed a total of seven staff, including the registered provider. There were three students also available to assist the qualified staff. Certificates of qualification were available for all staff members working directly with the preschool children. All staff held at least an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

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 the Child (1) (a)(b),
Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 22 food and Drink,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4).
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.

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)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. The roster demonstrated there was always a person in charge and a designated person to deputise when the registered provider was not available in the service.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were seven staff employed in the service. There were also three students in the service on the day of inspection. All files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were 10 required references available on file for 7 staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 7 staff members and 3 students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff and students present.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for two staff who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff working directly with the preschool children held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(a)(b)

1.

There were no references available on file for one staff member.

2.

One staff member had two references on file which were not validated.

3.

There were three students in the service who had three references on file which were not validated. All adults in a service are required to have two written and validated references available on file in the service.

It is acknowledged that all required written and validated references were received shortly after the inspection by the inspector and are now in place in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All required written and validated references will be obtained and available on file in the service prior to staff commencing work in the service going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

All required written and validated references were received by the inspector

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children.

(2)(4)

At 11:15

There were 36 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 5 staff.

At 14:10

There were 15 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 3 staff.

There were 3 students in the service on the day of inspection who were available to assist the qualified staff as required 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)

The registered provider ensured that each child’s learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of interesting activities including eating together, enjoying circle time, and playing in the outdoor play area.

Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. For example, circle time was observed. A staff member was observed engaging the children in an animated presentation all about the work of William Shakespeare. A painting was discussed with the children called “A meeting on the turret stairs”. Children were encouraged to share with their friends what they already knew about the painting. Children who required additional support were given extra attention from staff present. For example, if they had difficulty sitting and engaging with the planned group activity they were facilitated to engage in free play.

Children were observed doing their yoga poses in the afternoon. Staff sang songs with them and all present enjoyed singing the “hokey pokey”.

Children were observed playing in the outdoor areas on the afternoon of the inspection. Staff made sure they were warm by ensuring they wore their hats and coats as it was a particularly cold day on the day of inspection.

(1)(b)

There were adequate nappy changing facilities in the service. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. There was a small room available for children over two to sleep in if required. There were two cosy rest area in both preschool rooms which consisted of child sized arm chairs with a supply of books beside them.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Both preschool rooms were observed to be well equipped with a diverse range of well-maintained equipment and materials. There was a large range of Montessori equipment and arts and crafts materials. There was a display of historical figures which staff made reference to throughout the morning of the inspection. There were posters of snakes, there was a large globe of the world, there was art work which the children had made consisting of paper

roses made for valentines day. There were other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children such as a varied supply of picture books and small dinosaur figures. There was a dress up area with a range of costumes available. There was a large wooden dolls house, a supply of art materials, and a jigsaw of the solar planets.

The inspector noted the children were encouraged at all times to have respect and care for the materials and equipment provided for them in the service by placing toys back on shelves and helping staff to organise the equipment on offer in the service.

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 service has a healthy eating policy in place. This policy included the schedule of meals and snacks required for children attending on a sessional, part time and full day care basis.

Non-Compliance Information

At 13:30 there were 15 preschool children who were attending on a part time basis observed getting their second snack. The snack provided for the children did not contain 2 food groups which is required to provide an adequate snack for the children at this time of the day.

Children were observed having a single piece of fruit or a single biscuit which had been provided by their parents in their lunch boxes. Children who said they were still hungry were given crackers which was the only extra food available in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection parents were contacted and were reminded of the services requirement for them to provide adequate food and snacks for the children attending the service. Additional information on healthy eating was circulated to parents. The registered provider has seen an improvement in the variety of food parents are now providing for the children. The registered provider has planned to include healthy eating in the meeting planned in June with parents who are planning to send their children to the service in September 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation received.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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)

There was a person trained in a first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool service.

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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place in the service in February 2025.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in April 2024, and the smoke alarm in August 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.