

# TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2016WD005

**Name of Service:** Tir na nÓg Montessori School

**Address of Service:** 2 Upper King Street,  
Abbeyside,  
Dungarvan,  
Co. Waterford.  
X35 EH94.

**Email Address:** siobuck@hotmail.com

**Name of Registered Service Provider:** Ms Siobhán Buckley

**Type of Service Registered:** **Sessional**

**Date of Inspection:** 0 9 0 6 2 2

**No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:** **AM** 18 **PM** n/a

**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Community Care Centre,  
HSE Buildings,  
Cork Road,  
Waterford City.

**Inspection undertaken by:** Ms. M. Ryan.  
**Title:** Early Years Inspector.

| Areas which were the subject of this Inspection |   |        |
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| Governance                                      | Health Welfare and Development of Child | Safety |

**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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| <b>Description of Service</b> | <p>Tir na nÓg Montessori is a privately owned and managed service. The service has operated since 1992. Tir na Nóg Montessori can provide for a maximum number of 22 children on a sessional basis. The opening hours are from 09.15hrs to 12.45hrs Monday to Friday. The age range of children catered for is 2 years 10 months to 5 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE).</p>  |
| <b>Premises</b>               | <p>Tir na nÓg Montessori operates from a single-story terraced house in a residential area in Abbeyside, Dungarvan. The house has been specifically designed and modified to operate as a Montessori early years service. There is one early years room, toilet facilities, a large cloak room and storage room. The service has a secure outdoor play area at the rear and side of the premises.</p>  |
| <b>Staffing</b>               | <p>The registered provider and owner of the service employs two staff to work directly with the children in the service. The registered provider holds a Montessori Diploma with the Association of Montessori Internationale (AMI). Both staff hold an award in Early Childhood Care and Education to Level 5.</p>  |
| <b>Methodology</b>            | <p>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.</p> <p>The findings on inspection are based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information obtained through examination of documentation</li> <li>• Direct observation</li> <li>• Discussion with relevant staff</li> </ul> <p>This inspection was unannounced and focused on areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that the inspector spends in the service. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>       | <p>The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.</p>  |

## GOVERNANCE

### 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.
- (6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who—
- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
  - (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date
- (6A is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of "paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)" for "paragraphs (5) and (6)", and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): "
- (6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

#### Compliance Information:

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and had a named person who was able to deputise as required.
  - (b) The registered provider was available on the premises throughout the inspection.
- One staff file was made available for inspection of a staff member that had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection:

## Part III - Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (2)(a)(b)  
There were two written validated references from past employers.
- (c)  
A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for this staff member.
- (d)  
Not applicable as the staff member had not resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)  
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.
- (6)(a)  
Not applicable as no staff member working in the service had signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intended to retire from employment in an early years service before 1 September 2021, and
- (b)  
No staff member working in the service had in possession a letter from the minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

## 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 registered provider had recently updated and enhanced the policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and amendments. Staff had confirmed in writing that they had read and accepted the policies and procedures. For parents, there was a hard copy of each of the policies and procedures available on the premises in a designated folder.

## 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

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| Compliance Information: | <p>(1)<br/>On the day of the inspection there were 18 children from 3 to 5 years of age, being cared for by 3 staff.</p> <p>(2)<br/>The minimum adult: child ratios exceeded the regulatory requirements in the room.</p> <p>(8)<br/>(c) Not applicable as the service did not operate single-handedly.</p> |
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## 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

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| Compliance Information: | <p><b>BASIC NEEDS:</b></p> <p>The food break was child led on a rotational basis where children helped themselves and sat at a table set aside solely for eating. The service supplied lunch and on the day of inspection children were observed plating up strawberries, slices of cheese and crackers as well as pouring their drinks, and walking to the table with a tray. After lunch children washed and dried the crockery at a low-level sink in the room. Children were observed enjoying this task as they spoke and directed each other on how to put away the tableware.</p> <p>All children were toilet trained and were observed accessing the toilet off the Montessori room whenever they needed. Staff were observed checking in with children and gave assistance as required.</p> |
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## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Children's independence was encouraged through self-care such as taking on and off coats and their garden gear which comprised of plastic pull-ups or rain suits. The children enjoyed demonstrating to the inspector how they were able to put on their garden suits without help. Children were observed changing footwear from shoes to slippers for indoors and into their wellingtons for outdoors with some direction from the staff if needed.

Since the last inspection, the registered provider advised that the children's routine had changed and the children were increasingly spending more time outdoors. The daily programme starts and ends in the outdoor play garden. Parents drop children to the entrance of the outdoor play garden already dressed in their plastic pullups, garden gear and wellingtons.

There were two comfortable seats, cushions, and a roll out bed available if a child needed to rest or was sick.

There was a warm caring atmosphere in the service and staff were observed to be courteous in their interactions with the children and interested in what they were saying and doing. Any misbehavior was gently interrupted and sensitively managed by the staff who set clear boundaries while encouraging a positive outcome. This was observed by the inspector when staff had to intervene between some children not wanting to be inclusive of others.

#### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

A terraced house had been adapted with an open plan design for a childcare setting. The setting was welcoming and homely. Off the main hall was a large cloak room that was laid out and well organised to facilitate each child's personal belongings such as wet/garden gear, slippers, wellingtons and spare clothing. There was sufficient space to move about freely in the Montessori room, in the cloak room and the outdoor play garden area.

The Montessori room was comfortable and well maintained with children's tables, chairs and all the furniture appropriate for the setting. The room was divided with low level shelving to provide zones for the different Montessori exercises and equipment such as a practical life area, sensorial area, mathematical and language areas, and cultural area. A separate alcove off the main room supported creative activities with an ample supply of arts and crafts materials. A large, carpeted area had under floor heating for children to sit around in a circle for group activities, circle time and floor play.

There were various pictorial wall displays such as, the daily routine, daily weather charts and children's timeline photographs were displayed on the walls accessible for the children.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

#### Outdoor environment.

The service opened directly onto the outdoor play space to the side and rear aspects of the house. Cement and stone walls separated the outdoor play area from the surrounding residential houses. The outdoor area was divided with surfaces of Astroturf, cement and gravel. The gravel play space was well resourced and organised for children's interests, with diggers, wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, raised beds, and large pots for gardening projects. The pots had a selection of large colourful windmills that created a cheerful atmosphere in the outdoor play space.

The cemented area had an outdoor sink with running water and an ample supply of watering cans. A large corner raised sand pit extended along two of the exterior walls of the premises. Children were absorbed with filling the watering cans and pouring it in the sand. Other features were a crawling tunnel and a willow den. The activity corner had a new sheltered activity frame with a sizeable slide.

Since the last inspection two new shelters were incorporated into the outdoor environment by means of overhanging canopies. The grassed area was covered with synthetic grass and the larger canopy of the two extended from boundary wall. This was mechanically operated to facilitate total enclosure.

On the day of the inspection children were playing circus in this area and were keen to perform their tricks for the inspector such as balancing on rockers, demonstrating hula hoops, disappearing into large woven piping and hand stands all conducted to circus music.

Furthermore, the mud kitchen had been extended along the gable end wall of the house and children were observed collecting in this area and playing with a supply of large bowls, saucepans, and wooden spoons. Some children had a particular attraction for the mud kitchen and were observed busily mixing up water, sand, gravel, and dried leaves to make mud cakes.

## 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 service has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending:

#### GENERAL SAFETY:

Access to the service was from the street through a large timber door at the side of the dwelling and through the main front door of the house. Both doors were appropriately secured to restrict unauthorised persons gaining access into the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

The outdoor play area was to the side and at the rear of the dwelling and surrounded with high concrete walls from the neighbouring houses. The oil tank was securely fenced off to one corner of the play area.

All cleaning agents and toxic materials were stored in a locked separate storage room inaccessible to children, keys were stored on a high-level hook out of children's reach. Radiators were thermostatically controlled to ensure the surface temperature was safe for children. Warm water at the taps available to the children was thermostatically controlled. All cord blinds were appropriately secured with safety devices.

Attendance records were completed daily for the staff and children attending. The attendance book corresponded with the number of children present on the day of inspection.

#### **INFECTION CONTROL:**

A high standard of hygiene was maintained throughout the whole building. Childcare staff were responsible for routine cleaning of the childcare rooms and the materials and equipment used throughout the day in these rooms. There were completed and up to date cleaning records documented for all rooms, equipment and toys on the premises.

Hand sanitisers were available for the staff on entry into the service. Child height wash hand basins were available in the toilet area and children were observed being encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet.

## 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 service provided evidence that all staff working in the service had certified current First Aid Responder training for children.

(2)  
(a) There was a first aid box in the Montessori room on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was suitably equipped, available and easily accessible to the 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 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

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| Compliance Information: | <p>(1)</p> <p>(a) A record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 3 May 2022.</p> <p>(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained.</p> <p>It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced on 31 August 2021 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 7 October 2021.</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the lobby area to the outdoor play garden.</p> |
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