

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016WD005
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Name of Service:	Tír na nÓg Montessori School
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Address of Service:	2 Upper King Street, Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X35 EH94
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Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhán Buckley
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	05/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, Cork Rd, Waterford City X91 VX09
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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

Tir na nÓg Montessori School is a sessional service based in a residential area on the outskirts of Dungarvan town. The premise is an adapted house with a care room, sanitary facilities, a cloakroom and a secure outdoor area at the rear of the building. The service is registered to operate from 09:15 to 12:45 from September to June and can care for up to 22 children aged 2-6 years old.

Staffing

The registered provider and two additional staff work directly with the children. All staff working with the preschool children held at least the minimum QQI (Quality Qualifications Ireland) Level 5 qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education 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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15 – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-school Service;

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play;

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink;
Regulation 25 – First Aid;
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures;
Regulation 28 - Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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)(c)

The person in charge was in the service on the inspector's arrival, and the registered provider arrived within 30 minutes. Staff roles and responsibilities were outlined in the parent handbook.

(2)

The inspector reviewed three staff files, including the registered provider.

(a)(b)

Validated references for all employees were available for review.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were available on file for a staff member who had worked or lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with children had achieved 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.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(3)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the pre-school children. During the morning, two staff members were caring for 10 children. The registered provider was available for support if required.

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

On a review of all the children's registration forms, the details required from (a) to (i) were available to the inspector.

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;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (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 information required in this regulation from (a) to (i) was available to the inspector. This information was available in the staff files and in the parent's handbook.

- (j) Through discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that there was no record for the administration of medication in the previous 12 months, as children attending did not require medication.
- (k) A sample of three accident and incidents reports were reviewed, and all the required information was recorded in line with the service's accident and incident policy.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that adequate and suitable facilities were available for the children attending the service.

- (a) The layout of the room created definite areas of interest for the children’s work and play. The classroom had low shelving on which extensive Montessori materials were displayed and were easily accessible for children. These materials were grouped into various categories. For example, practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and cultural studies. The room was L-shaped, which created a quiet area away from the main play area if a child needed a rest or a break away from the main activities. The room layout encouraged children to work independently, and in the cloakroom, children's coat hooks were personalised with their photographs. The room led directly to the outdoor area, which had an area with a canopy which could be opened to allow for outdoor play during inclement weather. The outdoor space includes areas for digging, building, water play, planting, sandpit, crawling, climbing and balancing. There was an outdoor kitchen, a low sink and a buddy bench.
- (b) Each room had a quiet area away from the main play area if a child needed a rest or a break from the activities. There were two low, comfortable chairs in the corner where children were observed to sit and read their preferred book undisturbed.

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

Snack time was observed to be a social occasion led by each individual child. The staff members had arranged the snacks, which consisted of apple slices and a small portion of plain cake in serving baskets, each with a serving tong. A jug of water and a jug of milk were the choices of drinks available. Each child served themselves when they were hungry. They were observed getting a small tray, placing a napkin, a plate and a glass on it. Then they choose their snack and pour themselves a drink. They then moved to the snack table, which accommodated two children at a time. There was a third chair to the side if a child wanted to wait their turn. Once finished, each child washed their plate and glass and returned the tray for the next child.

Staff described the choices for the snack varied from crackers, cheeses, rice cakes, and a variety of fruits, depending on the day.

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 has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. One staff member was trained to the first aid responder standard, with a second staff member due to renew their training.
- (2) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the classroom.

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) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the fire drills were carried out monthly.
- (b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The maintenance was carried out on the firefighting equipment on 4 October 2024 and on the smoke alarms on 20 May 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each room and the main hall in 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 for a sessional care service for 22 children.