

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016WW037
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Bunnies Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 1, Parnell Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
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<b>Eircode:</b>	
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Aisling Walsh
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	20/11/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Early O'Brien & M. Bermingham
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Little Bunnies Montessori is a sessional service which was first established in 2017. The service is registered to provide care and education for pre-school children aged 2-6 years and operates from 09:00 to 12:30 and 13:00 to 16:00 daily. The service occupies a purpose-built premises in an apartment complex in Bray town, County Wicklow. There are two preschool rooms with adjacent sanitary accommodation, a storeroom, and an office. The outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs eight staff members who work directly with the children including the service manager. On the day of inspection there were six adults working directly with the children, one student on placement and a contractor hired to deliver a class with the children. The registered provider was not present in the service 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 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 a Pre-School Service,  
Regulation 19 (1)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child,  
Regulation 22 – Food and Drink,  
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(1) – 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.

### Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 20 November 2025 for non-compliance with regulation 23. This was issued in relation to a child attending the service who requires emergency medication. There was no care plan available and no clearly labelled medication stored in the service in its original packaging available as required in the event of a medical emergency.

The registered provider submitted a response on 21 November 2025 which should address the risk identified on inspection.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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.*

*(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) There is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived at 11:05 on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Upon review of the staff roster and staff files there were six staff members employed to work in the service since the last inspection on 23 October 2023. The staff file for a student on placement was also reviewed.

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

Of the 14 validated, written references that were required, 8 were available from a past employer and 4 were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for 12 adults in the service who work directly with the children, 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. 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, in relation to two adults who work directly with the children. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available demonstrating that three 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

While it is acknowledged that four written references were available for two staff members, there was no evidence to demonstrate that these references had been validated by the registered provider prior to both adults commencing employment in the service.

A second written and validated reference was not available for two staff members.

(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

There was no documentary evidence available to demonstrate that four staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(a)(b)

To correct this non-compliance the registered provider has now ensured that all references have been validated and placed on file.

A second written and validated reference is now on file for two staff members.

(d)

A police vetting disclosure is now available on file and translated by a certified translator for one staff member.

(4)

Qualification certification is now available on file for 4 staff members demonstrating that they hold an award at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

To prevent non-compliance in the future, the registered provider has undertaken to ensure that for any new staff that join the team, that the checklist of required documents is on the staff file prior to start date and these records reviewed during the year. Responsibility for ensuring this has been assigned to a member of the staff team.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Written and photographic records

### Summary Comment

The corrective actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The Regulatory requirement has been met and will inform the next inspection.

### 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)  
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3)  
The correct adult to child ratio was maintained at all times. There were thirty-one children being supervised by six adults on the morning of inspection.

### 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:*
- (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

- (1)  
(h) The arrival and departure times of each child was recorded daily in a hardcopy notebook.  
(i) There was a staff roster available and this was representative of the staff present and working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) Two administration of medication records were available for review in a hardcopy book. One record had not been completed appropriately as there was no parent signature on the record.
- (k) A sample of five accident and incident records were available for review in a hardcopy book. While it is acknowledged that four of these records were completed appropriately, one record did not include the child's full name, was not signed by the manager or parent and there was no evidence that this had been shared with the parent.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

To correct this action, the registered provider has stated that all records have been completed.

To prevent this from re-occurring in the future, the registered provider has stated that a staff meeting was held to remind staff of their responsibilities and the requirements of this regulation.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

None

### Summary Comment

The corrective actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The Regulatory requirement has been met and will inform the next 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-
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

### Compliance Information

- (1)(b)
- Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly on the day of inspection. Staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals. Staff reminded and assisted children with hand washing and cleaned their noses as needed.

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all meals are provided by the parents with additional snacks such as fruit available if required. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within the care room. Water was available for drinking in the care rooms.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly, offering comfort and support when needed. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff encouraged and praised the children when promoting positive behaviour. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's choice and independence during play and mealtimes.

### 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. Children's snacks are provided from home and perishable items are stored in a refrigerator in each of the care rooms. On the day of inspection, children's lunches consisted of fruit, crackers, sandwiches, cheese, rice cakes and yogurt. Children's drink bottles were available to them in each of the care rooms throughout the session. Children were supported and encouraged to be independent in opening and closing their individual lunchboxes, bags and bottles. Support was promptly offered to those children who required assistance.

### 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:

- The entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children in the indoor and outdoor areas on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

- The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children.

### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and warm water were available to facilitate handwashing for staff and children in the sanitary areas adjacent to the care room.
- Good hand washing practices were observed after toileting, before eating and when returning indoors from play.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste products.
- Tables were cleaned before and after snack time.
- Perishable food items were stored in the refrigerator as required.

### Administration of Medication:

- An adequate administration of medication record was available to document medication given should this be required in an emergency. All staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the services administration of medication policy.

### Fire Safety:

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

### Outing:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that the children from the service do not go on outings.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosures for two adults were 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:

2. In the sanitary areas adjacent to the care rooms, there were no facilities for hand-drying on the day of inspection. In the sanitary area beside the staff toilet, the hand dryer was not working, and a roll of toilet paper had been placed on top of it. In the sanitary area with two toilets and handbasins, the paper towel dispenser was empty, and a roll of toilet paper had been placed on top of it also. This poses a risk of cross contamination and infection for staff and children.

### Administration of Medication:

- An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection 20 November 2025 in relation to the fact that emergency medication required for one child was not immediately available in the service in addition to a care plan. This poses a risk to the health and safety of the children concerned.
- Anti-febrile medication was not available in the service should it be required in an emergency.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

- Garda vetting disclosures have been renewed for 2 adults employed in the service. To prevent recurrence of this non-compliance, responsibility for staff files and ensuring garda vetting disclosures are always in date has been assigned to a member of staff and will be reviewed regularly.

##### Infection Control:

- To correct this action, additional paper towel dispenser has been fitted and re-filled and staff reminded to ensure daily that there is sufficient hand towel available. Paper towels are ordered monthly.

##### Administration of Medication:

- A response to the Immediate Action Notice issued on 20 November 2025 was submitted to the inspector on the 21 November 2025 which addressed the fact that emergency medication was unavailable for a child who required this. This medication is in-date and is now stored in the service as required. A care plan has been updated and a new template will be used in the future.
- The registered provider has stated that anti-febrile medication is now available and stored safely in the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

Garda vetting disclosures

##### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of dispenser and paper towels.

##### Administration of Medication:

Photographic evidence of medication now available on site and stored safely.

A copy of the revised care plan template.

### Summary Comment

The corrective actions as stated by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The Regulatory requirement has been met and 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. Two staff members hold current FAR certification.

(2)(a)(b)  
A suitably equipped first aid box for children was 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.*

*(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)

There was evidence of regular fire drills taking place within the service. The last fire drill took place on 09 October 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated 02 September 2025 and 10 March 2025 respectively.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the Montessori room and the main hallway of the building.

## 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 27 March 2026 for a sessional service which covers a maximum of 22 children at any one time with 2 additional sessions.