

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY140
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Hands Montessori
-------------------------	-------------------------

Address of Service:	Annagh Hill National School, Annagh Hill, Ballyglunin, Tuam, Co. Galway
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	H54 F104
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Mannion, Martin Mannion
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	18/08/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	22
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This full day care service is based in Annagh Hill Primary School Ballyglunin, in a rural area of County Galway. The service operating hours are 7.30 am to 6.30 pm, from Monday to Friday, for children aged from 2 to 6 years old. The service caters for full day-care, part-time care, the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) and sessional pre-school care programmes operate from 9.15 am to 1.15 pm. This ground floor premises has a total of two converted classrooms in the primary school. The service has a designated kitchenette where food, which is supplied by an external company, is reheated and snacks are prepared. To the side of the premises children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

Staffing

The service currently employs seven adults, which includes the manager, five other adults working directly with children and an adult working in the school aged service. The registered provider does not work in the service and is not detailed on the staff roster.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 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.*

(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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection the manager was in charge and facilitated the inspection.

Since the last inspection on the 10 December 2024, it was confirmed that there were 3 new staff members and 1 of these was employed to work in the school aged service. On review of the files another adult required garda vetting renewal which is required every three years.

(2)(a) All six of the required six written and validated references available for the three new adults employed were from a recent employer.

(b) None of the required six written and validated references were from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the three new adults and for the one adult requiring renewal of garda vetting within three years. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for two adults working in the service, who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months.

(4) Two of the 3 new adults who are working directly with children had obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualifications deemed to be equivalent by the minister. In addition, one adult had a temporary letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The other new adult did not require a qualification as they were working in the school aged service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 on the day.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to.
There were 4 adults working directly with 22 children in the morning and 4 adults working with 22 children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a) Documentary evidence on the roster indicated that at least two adults were on the premises when the pre-school was operating.

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;*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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

(15)(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i).

Out of the 44 children registered in the service a sample of 10 children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent and accurate.

The 10 sampled records of children contained the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.
- Details were recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. Children had fruit, sandwiches and yogurts for the morning snack. The main hot meal of the day was chicken korma with rice which was supplied by an external company.
- Crockery, plates and water were given to children during the hot meal and snack times.
- Perishable items belonging to children were stored in the service fridge.
- The children had access to water on a low-level table which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Hand washing was observed at appropriate times, it was observed prior to snack time, after outdoor play and toileting.
- Each child's privacy and dignity were respected while they were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- Nappy changing took place as required throughout the day and the correct nappy changing procedure was observed.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches in a designated rest and relaxation area in the playrooms.
- Stackable beds were available for rest and sleep for children over 2 years and appropriate bed linen was also available for use.
- Adults were observed to pick up on childrens cues for example sleep, nappy changing, support with activities and toileting.
- Children were observed at tabletop activities, sensory play, playing in the clearly defined interest areas in the playrooms, arts/crafts, outdoor play and in circle time.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Physical and Material Environment:

- The playrooms were equipped with resources and materials suitable to the age and stage of the children attending these rooms.
- Opportunities for imaginary and role play were provided in the home corner and dress up area as well as construction area and farm animal areas.
- Fine motor development was supported using jigsaws, pins and threading puzzles. Arts and crafts provided opportunities for children to express their creativity.
- The playrooms had a library equipped with age-appropriate books which enhanced language development. All materials were stored on open shelving, ensuring they were accessible to the children throughout the day.
- The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. The outdoor area provided two different play areas with various resources suitable to the age and stage of the children. These included tyres, slides, a playhouse and a variety of ride on toys, bikes and trikes which allowed for gross motor skill development.

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 into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The outdoor play areas were secure, so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- Perishable items from children's lunch boxes were stored in each playroom fridge.
- The children were observed washing their hands before eating their morning snack, dinner, after toileting and after outdoor play. Hand washing was supervised by the staff.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Airtight, pedal operated, sealable bins were available for the disposal of used nappies in the nappy changing areas. Disposable aprons and gloves were available.
- The children's belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled and in designated storage containers.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.

Non-Compliance Information

The following non compliances may pose as a safety risk to a preschool child:

General Safety:

1. The mud kitchen in the outdoor play area was maintained in a poor state of repair.
2. The wooden boat in the outdoor area was in a poor state of repair.
3. The cover on the sand pit was not kept clean and was covered with leaves and water and in need of cleaning.

Infection Control:

4. A supply of warm water was not available in the sanitary area off playroom 2.
5. There were two containers in the outdoor play area with stagnant water which wild life had access to.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider responded to say:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- 1.& 2. The outdoor mud kitchen was repaired and painted.
3. The cover on the sand pit was cleaned.

Infection Control:

4. There is now a supply of warm water in the sanitary area.
5. The containers were removed from the play area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- 1– 3. The registered provider submitted documented and photographic evidence to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Infection Control:

- 4– 5. The registered provider submitted documented and photographic evidence to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

1-5 The Early Years Inspector has reviewed the evidence submitted and has deemed it has met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

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 a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position in the office.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped with all contents within expiry dates and were available while the children were attending the pre-school service.