

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY217
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Name of Service:	Riverview Montessori
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Address of Service:	Barrack Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H62 WR67
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Name of Registered Provider:	Julieanne Loughnane
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/09/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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).

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Description of service

Riverview Montessori established in 2005, is a privately owned early years care and education facility providing both Montessori and play based curricula. It offers a choice of full day care, part-time and sessional services, currently accommodating children aged from 2 years to 6 years. Daily opening hours are from 08:30 to 18:00, Monday to Friday. The service is open for 38 weeks of the year and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme runs in the morning from 09:00 to 12 noon, 09:15 to 12:15 and in the afternoon from 12:45 to 15:45. It operates from a two-storey building in the town of Loughrea in Co Galway. There are three main classrooms in operation on the ground floor, where the early years children are based, these are named- Green, Yellow and Blue. The Blue classroom changes name to the Red classroom in the afternoon. There is a reception area on entry which leads to a main atrium off which the classrooms, kitchen, adult and children sanitary areas and an office are located. A school age care service is available on the first floor in the morning from 08:30 to 09:15 and from 13:30 to 18:00 in the afternoon.

Staffing

There are eight adults currently working in the service including the registered provider.

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.

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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, deputy 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,*

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(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) The registered provider was the person in charge and a named person was available to deputise, as required.
 - (b) Both the person in charge and the deputy were working in the service when the inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The staff roster indicated that both the person in charge and the deputy were available, in the service, while the early years children were present.
 - (c) There was a management structure on display on the notice board in the hallway. In conversation, the adults in the service were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) One adult had commenced employment since the previous inspection on 11/10/2024, this was evidenced on the staff roster and in conversation with the registered provider, therefore this file was reviewed.
- (a) There were two validated references on file from past employers.
 - (c) A garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau was available for the new adult.
 - (d) Documentation on file evidenced that the new adult employed had not lived outside of the state for six months or longer as adults, therefore no international police vetting was required.
- (4) A certificate was available to evidence that the new adult employed, to work directly with the children, held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working with the children while they were on the premises.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met.
- There were 7 adults working directly with 47 children in the morning and 6 adults working with 27 children in the afternoon.
- (8) (a) The staff roster indicated that the registered provider ensured that there was a minimum of two adults on the premises during the operating hours of the service.

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

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Compliance Information

Basic needs:

- Children were observed eating healthy, nutritious, food at regular intervals throughout the day. The registered provider stated breakfast cereals were available, if required, for children who arrived from 08.30 onwards and these foods were observed in the kitchen. The parents/guardians supplied the mid-morning snack. Examples of food observed included cheese filled sandwiches, crackers and bite sized pieces of fruit.
- Hot lunches provided by the parents/guardians were served at 13:15, in the Yellow classroom, these were observed to consist of cottage pie, spaghetti bolognese and chicken, broccoli and pasta. Staff stated that snacks of fruit and bread along with the remainder of the snacks sent in by parents/guardians were available later in the afternoon for children who were hungry.
- Water was freely available from individual water bottles which were readily accessible from trays stationed nearby. The children had access to age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery.
- Children who required additional time to finish their food were facilitated and those who had finished sat in the rest/quiet area listening to a story.
- Children were escorted to the toilet by staff who remained nearby to help with handwashing, if required. Step-ups were available for those who required additional help and to promote independence.
- Quiet rest areas were positioned in each classroom with soft furnishings including wooden seats, cushions and rugs underfoot. Books were stored nearby and children and adults were observed reading these during the day.
- Four stackable beds were available should a child need to rest or sleep.

Supporting children's relationships:

- Adults in the classrooms and in the outdoor areas were observed sitting with the children and engaging in social conversation during mealtimes, tabletop activities and during play throughout the day. They were noted to listen attentively to each child and use strategies such as open questioning, feedback and explanations to extend the children's thinking and learning. Examples included the adults asking questions and repeating back when the children were building a high tower in the outdoor play area.
- A key person approach was stated as being in place in the care rooms with staff assigned responsibility for the observations of a designated group of children.
- The adults stated that informal meetings take place daily and that a staff meeting had recently taken place with management. Examples of topics included allocation of children, schedules and curriculum planning.

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- The adults stated that various methods of communicating with parents/guardians were in use including a communications platform in which photographs were shared with parents/guardians of their child/children and information including their child's daily activities, food intake and general information were exchanged.
- Adults in the classrooms were heard supporting children to engage positively with each other in activities which required turn taking and sharing.

Physical and material environment:

- The secure outdoor play areas provided alternative environments for the children to play. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in each area including ride-ons and balance bikes for practicing gross motor skills of co-ordination and balance, black boards and white boards for working on fine skills, construction materials including hexagons, plastic-coloured bricks and blocks for cognitive development along with a playhouse, farm and animals for imaginary play. Sensory materials including stones were readily accessible for open ended play.
- Picnic tables were available in the outdoor play area providing seating for children who wished to sit while playing in the outdoor play area.
- The classrooms were laid out in clearly defined areas with associated materials and resources in areas such as practical life skills, mathematics, language, sensorial and cultural.
- Floor mats were available for each child to use enabling the children to define their individual workspace on the floor.
- Equipment was stored on low-level shelving which enabled the children to make choices and promoted independence.
- The classrooms were bright, clean and laid out to facilitate children working individually or in groups with wooden tables and chairs which were age and stage appropriate for the children attending the service.
- Walls were decorated and labelled with information about each child creating a sense of identity and belonging. Examples included birthday balloons with each child's name and details, family walls and individual art and crafts/laminated place mats with children's photographs and names were observed in use at mealtimes.

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Programme of activities:

- The adults in the classrooms stated that ongoing observations, linked to both national frameworks, were documented which helped to create a complete and holistic picture of each individual child. These observations inform the planning for the curriculum along with the plans which were furnished to the inspector for the first term back after the summer holidays. Notebooks were used daily to document the children's voices and ideas which were then woven into the curriculum.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one, group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed in the classrooms. Examples included children heard singing "Good morning" welcome song and "There are seven days in the week".
- Children were observed to have the opportunity to express their views, take the lead and exercise choice in relation to their engagement in activities. Examples included children helping with giving out a snack. An adult in the Green classroom explained that children take turns at being the helper each day.

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 main entrance to the service was secured on arrival. The door was answered by an adult preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service and children leaving unsupervised.
- Internal doors including the kitchen and adult bathroom were secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- All toys and play equipment appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelves which were inaccessible to the children.
- Beams supporting the covered shelter in the outdoor play area were covered in padded foam to protect children from the impact of a bang or collision.
- Ground surfaces were covered with safety tiles providing shock absorption in the event of a fall.
- The adults ensured the safety of the children at the end of the session by bringing the children out one at a time to a waiting adult.

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- The perimeter of the secure outdoor area at the rear of the service was secured with high stone walls and secure gates.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, 41.2°C, dispensing soap and paper towels. Pedal operated bins were in use for the disposal of paper waste.
- Pictorial reminders with instructions of required health practices were displayed in the sanitary areas of each classroom and in the atrium sanitary areas.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the fridge, preventing the food from spoiling.
- Tissues were readily available helping to prevent the spread of germs, if required.
- Windows were open in the classrooms allowing for the circulation of fresh air.
- Children's belongings including coats and bags were stored on labelled hooks off the floor area.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was stored in its original container and placed out of reach of the children in the kitchen. The date of expiry was noted as 09/28.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping in the service.
- Sleep templates were available to record 10-minute physical sleep checks, if required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire extinguishers were secured on brackets on the walls of the service.
- Fire exit doors were unobstructed and operated with thumb twist cylinders ensuring the safe evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- The fire assembly point was located at the front of the service, a safe distance from the building.

Outing:

- Staff stated the children go on local outings and these were covered as documented on the insurance policy.

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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) Certificates were on file which evidenced that two adults trained as First Aid Responders (FAR) were available while the early years children were on the premises.
- (2)
- (a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was easily accessible to the adults and stored in a cupboard in the kitchen, out of reach of the children.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (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.*

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record was available of the fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 16 June 2026 before the service closed for the summer holidays.
- (b) A written record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The date recorded for the maintenance of the firefighting equipment was documented as November 2025 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated June 2026.
- (2) (c) The records referred above in paragraph (1) were open to inspection on the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the walls of the classrooms.