Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report
Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK103
Name of Service:	Learning for Life Montessori School
Address of Service:	211 Meelick Rd Caherdavin Limerick
Eircode:	V94 RD37
Name of Registered Provider:	Helena Nolan
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	17/09/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	No.

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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

This early years preschool opened in 1994 and offers a Montessori play based curriculum. The service provides sessional education and care to preschool children aged 3 to 5 years of age from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs. A school aged service is also provided. It is located in a domestic dwelling used solely for the purpose of providing the early years service. There are 4 rooms in operation namely, the montessori room, the discovery room, the art room and the rest/relaxation room. The service has an outdoor play area located at the rear of the premises where children have access to outdoor play equipment.

Staffing

Two staff working directly with the children have childcare qualifications. The registered provider works on site every day and has an administrative role.

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, premises and facilities. 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(2) - Staffing levels.

Regulation 15(1)(a)-(i)– Record of pre-school child.

Regulation 19(1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 24 (1)(3)(a)(b) - Checking in and out and record of attendance.

Regulation 25(1)(2)(a)(b)- First aid.

Regulation 26(1)(a)(b)(4)- Fire safety measures.

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

Regulation 29(a)(b)(c)(d)(e) – Premises.

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

(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy was available on the premises at all times.

(2) Three staff files were reviewed.

(a) Four written and validated references were available from past employers for staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) Two validated references were submitted by staff from sources other than past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff documented on the staff roster. The re-vetting timeframes of every three years as outlined in the early years inspectorate regulatory notice were in place for the required staff.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any of the staff members who may have resided outside of the jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) The two staff working directly with the preschool children held an appropriate qualification in early childhood care and education or an equivalent such qualification.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

Compliance Information

(2) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

The minimum adult/child ratio of 1:11 was maintained as there were 10 children in attendance being supervised by 2 staff.

An additional staff member who worked in a management role was present on the day of the inspection.

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

(1) A sample of 8 records for preschool children was examined and each record contained all the required information (a) – (i).

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

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS

Parents provided snacks for the children who attended in line with the healthy eating policy of the service, these included fruit, sandwiches, crackers and yogurts. The service is in the process of supplying all snacks for the group which will be healthy and nutritious and placed on a trolley giving children more choice and supporting them to self-serve.

Children toileted independently with assistance given where it was required.

Children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times during the session such as after toileting and before eating. Hygienic hand washing took place using hot water, liquid soap and paper towels.

The children could rest as desired throughout the morning on the child sized couch in the library area and enjoyed freedom of movement within the room. Children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a wide level of choice of activities.

The adult modelled positive behaviour for the children and they were praised for their good behaviour.

The group played outdoors in the fresh air for an hour on the day of the inspection.

Relationships and Interactions around children:

Staff were observed to be kind, caring, calm in all her interactions with the children and used positive language.

The service supported children in engaging in positive peer interactions. Staff facilitated cooperative play and participated in group activities. Staff were observed involved in children's play, initiating games and joining activities. If children showed signs of tiredness or upset, staff nurtured and comforted the children. They used soft tones, addressed children by name, sat at their eye level, and maintained direct eye contact during communication.

Staff were observed to interact very well with all the children in their care, speaking in low tones of voice, responding to the children and allowing them plenty of choice relating to playing games and outdoor activities.

The service facilitated good communication with parents/guardians and shared updates on significant events and activities.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Each preschool child who attended the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3*)* (a) Staff ensured that no person other than the following were allowed entry to the service without approval.

(i) A pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A daily record in writing was kept of the entry to the premises of all persons.

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) One staff member held current certification in first aid responder for children. (2)(a) A first aid box was stored in the playroom. (b)The first aid box was available at all times if required by a child.

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) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place in September 2026. (b)The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis. The maintenance record demonstrated that the firefighting equipment were last service in December 2025 and the smoke alarm system was serviced in February 2026. (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children who attended and had an expiry date of 27/03/2027.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(a) of sound and stable structure,

(b) safe and secure,

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

The premises

(a) Visually the premises was found to be of sound and stable structure.

(b) The entrance door was secured and the side gate to the service was secured.

(c) The lighting, heating and ventilation was appropriate.

(d) All rooms were cleaned, maintained as required.

(e) Suitable sanitary facilities were available both upstairs and downstairs.