

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS039
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Name of Service:	Ballycullen Montessori
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Address of Service:	69 Hunter's Walk, Ballycullen, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 X9KV
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine McAllister
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Level 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R Phillips
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

Ballycullen Montessori is registered to provide sessional childcare for 2–6-year-olds. The service operates from the ground floor of a residential dwelling, from 09:00-12:30 Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. There are two care rooms in the service, Montessori 1 caters for 2–3-year-olds and Montessori 2 caters for children from 3-5 years. The children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are four permanent staff who work in the service including the registered provider. On the day of the inspection one staff member was on leave and a staff member from the registered provider's other service was working there for the day. The registered provider was present on the day of inspection and also went to the other service for a short time.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

- 9 (1)(2)(4) Management and recruitment,
- 11(1)(3) Staffing levels,

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19 (1) (b) Health Welfare and Development of the child,
23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,
25 First Aid and
28. Insurance.

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.

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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 was a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The deputy person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced for the inspection. The person in charge or deputy or both were present throughout the inspection.
 - (c) The staff demonstrated an awareness of the lines of authority and accountability within the service.
- (2) Recruitment records were examined in full for two staff who were new to the service since the last inspection.

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- (a) Both files each had two validated references from previous employers.
- (b) n/a.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International Police vetting was not required for the two staff who's files were reviewed in full.
- (3) The recruitment processes referred to in paragraph two above were carried out prior to the adult's commencing employment in the service as required.
- (4) The recruitment records indicated that the adults employed to work with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

11(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

11(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 26 children being cared for directly by three adults throughout the inspection. The person in charge was also present managing the service.

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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) Each child was observed being welcomed into the service in a friendly manner. The children brought their lunch from home and had their own water bottles available to them throughout the inspection.

The service had a healthy eating policy. The staff sat with the children and engaged with them in conversation in a relaxed manner. There is a key worker system in place and the children's needs and preferences were well known by the permanent staff present. Staff managed transitions between activities well by letting the children know what to expect. The children appeared to be familiar with the routine, which was also on the wall. Activities were child led and children briefly opted out of group activities and rejoined when they chose to.

Children's independence was encouraged with managing their own belongings at lunch time and when using the toilets. All the children were provided with the opportunity to play outside and dressed appropriately for the weather. They engaged in energetic play outside, and all engaged in circle time which supported their language development.

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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

The following are examples of the measures undertaken by the registered provider and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service.

General Safety:

The entrance doors and outdoor area were appropriately secured preventing children from exiting the premises unsupervised and prevented unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

The play equipment and toys observed in use on the day of inspection were in good working order.

Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

There was warm water, liquid soap and paper towels available for children and adults for handwashing. The children were observed washing their hands after messy play, after returning from outside after using the toilet and before eating their lunch. The staff and children were observed using pedal operated bins throughout the service.

Administration of Medication:

There were no children requiring regular medicine or who may require medicine in an emergency for allergies registered in the service this year. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe medicine administration and there were medicine administration forms and signed consent for temperature reducing medicine should a child require it. There was medicine in its original packaging, in date and stored out of reach of children.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were signposted and unobstructed throughout the service.

There were fire evacuation procedures and fire exit maps on the walls throughout the service.

Outing:

The service brings the children on an annual outing to a farm. The service had a policy for outings which outlined appropriate supervision and planned for an emergency, such as an accident or injury or a missing child. The policy outlined that a designated person with first aid training would be identified and that the staff would bring the services mobile phone with emergency contacts and a risk assessment of the venue would be carried out prior to the outing.

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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) It was confirmed by review of staff files, and discussion with the registered provider that two staff held in date First Aid Responder (FAR) training certificates. The roster evidenced that one or both were available to the children at all times of opening.

(1)(a) Adequately equipped first aid boxes were stored in conspicuous locations that were easily accessible throughout the service.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to the children in the service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate dated 25 March 2026 was available which shows there is insurance cover in place for up to 28 children for sessional day care.