

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY130
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Name of Service:	Marthas Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Castle Heights, Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E32 VP49
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martha O'Shea
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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 sessional service is located in an urban area in Carrick-on Suir on the ground floor of a two-storey building and is owned by a multiple provider. The service caters for children from 2 to 6 years of age between the hours of 9:15 to 12:45, 38 weeks per year. The service consists of an early years classroom, sanitary accommodation, a cloak room and entrance area. The outdoor area is directly accessible from the classroom to the rear of the premises. At the time of inspection, the service was in the process of changing registered providers.

Staffing

There is a total of four adults employed by the service including the registered provider and two Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support workers. On the day of inspection, the four staff were working directly with the children.

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 Regulation 9: Management and recruitment, Regulation 11: Staffing levels, Regulation 19: Health, welfare and development of a preschool child, Regulation 23:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, Regulation 24: Checking in and out and records of attendance, Regulation 25: First Aid, Regulation 26: Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 29: Premises however on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 16: Records in relation to a pre-school service. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 children, registered provider, person in charge 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,*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named deputy, who could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times, during the hours of operation.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to four adults attached to the service were the subject of the inspection.
 - (a) Of the eight required references, one was from a previous employer, with required records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the eight required references, seven were from sources other than previous employers, with required records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff. However, 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. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Translated police vetting records were available on file for one adult, who had lived outside the State as an adult for a period of six consecutive months or longer.
- (4) Records demonstrated that four adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(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) At the time of inspection, there were the adequate number of adults required, responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.

(3) The service exceeded the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The 20 children attending the service were supervised directly by 4 adults.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

Non-Compliance Information

One adult employed in the service did not have a written record of their qualifications and experience available. Not having this record does not allow for adequate assessment for the suitability for the role.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Evidence of staff files are now with the proposed new registered provider. Quarterly checks will be completed on staff files and a check list will be completed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has stated to have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 (1). This will be reviewed on 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-

(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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the adults and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- Snacks were provided by the parents and guardians, and they were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed eating filled sandwiches, rolls, crackers, cheese, yogurts and a variety of fruits.
- Adults interacted with the children during snack time and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary.
- The children's individual water bottles were accessible to them throughout the day.
- While outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately with coats.
- Children's independence was promoted by adults in the care room. Examples of this were when they put on their own coats and tidied up after play.
- Children were observed accessing the toilet under the supervision of the staff who were available to assist if needed.

Supporting relationships:

- The adults sat with the children at the tables and on the floor at the children's level partaking in their play, building jigsaws, playing with toy cars, reading books and discussing topics of interest.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The adults were observed to be kind and caring towards the needs of the children in their care. This was observed throughout the inspection. An upset child was observed to seek out an adult who responded and comforted the child positively.
- Individual plans of care were in place for children that required them.

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 windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children with concrete walls, timber fence and metal railing. The gates were made of timber and metal. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The toys and play equipment assessed in the indoor and outdoor area were in good condition.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes observed to be accessible to the children on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

- Children's coats and bags were stored on hooks off the ground.
- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed washing their hands before snack time and after using the toilets.
- The tables were observed to be cleaned before snack time.

Fire safety:

- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for four staff members. However, one vetting disclosure was 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. The pedal operated waste bin in the care room was broken and children were observed handling the lid of the bin to open it. This poses a risk of cross infection to the children.

3. On the day of inspection, children's perishable snacks were observed to be stored in their bags on hooks on the wall. On discussion with a staff member, snacks are not refrigerated in the service. This posed a risk of food spoilage.

Fire safety:

4. The inspector noted that one of the fire exit doors was partially obstructed by plastic chairs indoors and a timber sandbox outdoors. This increased the risk of children not being able to make a timely exit in the event of a fire.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The staff member is no longer employed in the service. Staff files will be checked quarterly and a checklist kept.

Infection control:

2. The bin was removed and the proposed new registered provider has been made aware of the need to purchase a pedal operated bin.

3. A large fridge is to be purchased by the proposed new registered provider.

Fire safety:

4. The sand pit has been removed from the outdoor area. The proposed new registered provider has been advised where to place new equipment.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

4. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Infection control:

2. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

3. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Fire safety:

4. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has stated to have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 (1), 23(2) and 23(4) and has advised the proposed new registered provider to address 23(3) prior to opening. This non-compliance remains outstanding. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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-

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

Compliance Information

(1) Records confirmed that each child was checked in on arrival at the service and checked out on departure by the adults in the service.

(3)

(b) The inspector was requested to sign in on arrival and out on departure from the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

(2)

(a) There was one first aid box which was sufficiently stocked and available in the service. This was safely stored out of reach of children.

(b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) No adult employed in the service held up to date First Aid Response (FAR) certification. This posed a risk to the children in the service in the event of a child requiring emergency medical treatment. It is acknowledged that two adults held paediatric first aid.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The proposed new registered provider has been advised of the need for FAR trained staff. Staff folders will be checked quarterly.

Supporting documentation submitted

The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has advised the proposed new registered provider to address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25(1) prior to opening. This non-compliance remains outstanding. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.
- (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)
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment which was dated 31 December 2025.
- (4) The fire procedures were displayed on notice board on the wall.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Fire drills were not practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drill was completed 17 March 2026. This posed a safety risk to both staff and children in the event of an emergency.
- (1)
- (b) The service had no records available of maintenance carried out on the smoke alarm systems since 17 December 2024. This was also not available on the last inspection, 22 February 2024. The corrective and preventative action submitted failed to address the non-compliance. This poses a risk of safety to the children and adults in the service in the event of fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service has been undertaking twice monthly fire drills. Fire drills will be practiced monthly going forward.
2. A new company will take over the maintenance of the smoke alarms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

1. The response from the registered provider has been accepted.
2. The response from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has stated to have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1)(a) and has advised the proposed new registered provider to address the non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1)(b). This non-compliance remains outstanding. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

- (b) The entrance to the service was secure, this restricted unauthorised access to the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- (d) A cleaning schedule was evident on the wall of the service. The indoor and outdoor area was clean on the day of inspection.