Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report
Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW257

Name of Service:	Bláth na hÓige Montessori

Address of Service:	St. Kevin's Community Centre, Blessington, Co. Wicklow

Eircode:	W91 A524

Name of Registered Provider:	Sheena Armstrong

Service type:	Sessional

Date of Inspection:	11/05/2026
Date of Regulatory Compliance Meeting:	21/07/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	26

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien
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

Bláth na hÓige Montessori is a privately owned sessional service which provides care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate two morning sessions from 09:00 to 12:00 and 09:15 to 12:15 and one afternoon session from 12:15 to 15:15, Monday to Friday.

On the day of inspection, the service was operating the morning sessions from 08:45 to 11:45 and 09:00 to 12:00 and the afternoon session from 12:00 to 15:00.

The service operates from two rooms on the first floor of St Kevin's Community centre in Blessington, Co Wicklow. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area with shock absorbent surfacing at the front of the community centre. Children also have use of the community centre hall.

Staffing

The service currently employs six staff including the registered provider. There were five staff including the registered provider working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

A sixth adult who is not employed by the registered provider was also working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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/ records/ 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 the following regulations:
9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,
11 (1),(3) – Staffing levels,
15 (1) – Record of a pre-school child,
19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
25 (1),(2) –First aid.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under regulations 16(1)(a),(3) – Record in relation to pre-school service and 33 – Furnishing of information to the Agency.

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.

Additional Information
Following the submission of the second CAPA, a regulatory compliance meeting was held on 21 July 2026 with the registered provider and the person in charge to discuss unresolved non-compliance. Following this, the registered provider was given an additional opportunity to submit evidence to support the corrective and preventive actions previously submitted.
Acknowledgments
The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices		
Notice	**Date Served**	**Detail**
Immediate Action Notice IAN0821	11/05/2026	There was no Garda vetting in place for one adult who was working directly with the children on the day of inspection.
Status	The registered provider submitted corrective and preventive actions which addressed the Statutory Notice and were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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* *(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection. (2) The inspection focused on the full recruitment records for two adults employed since the last inspection on 19 September 2023 and one adult who was working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed in respect of all adults who work in the service.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows.

(a)(b)

Of the six validated, written references that were required, three were available from a past employer and one was available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the six adults employed to work in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications was on file for two staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b)

A review of documentation and discussion with staff evidenced the following.

- Two written references were not available in respect of one adult who was working directly with children on the day of inspection.
- There was no evidence available to demonstrate that three written references in respect of two staff members had been validated by the registered provider.

(c)

See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN0821 served.

(3)

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to some adults commencing employment in the service, as detailed above under regulation 9(2) and as follows:

- The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all adults were suitable to work in an early years service prior to their commencement. Garda vetting available for one adult was dated after the adult commenced employment. The adult commenced employment on 08 April 2024 and Garda vetting was obtained on 03 May 2024.

(4)

There was no evidence available to show that one adult who was working directly with the children in the service held a relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

We have obtained 2 written references for one adult, and all written references are now validated. All references shall be validated before staff commence working with Bláth na hÓige and filed accordingly.

(3)

Garda Vetting was obtained for adult on 3rd of May 2024. Garda Vetting shall be in date going forward for all Staff Members.

(4)

We shall check with the National Framework of Qualifications to obtain a relevant Certificate which can be relevant in Ireland. All future staff shall hold a Major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or equivalent.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

(3)

No supporting documentation submitted.

(4)

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

(2)(a)(b)

(3)

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

(4)

Evidence of the required qualification remains outstanding for one adult. The non-compliance has not been addressed. The registered provider must ensure that all staff who work directly with children hold the minimum required qualification. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were not working directly with the children attending the service during the inspection as the minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained at all times as outlined below.

(3)

The registered provider did not ensure that the minimum required ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times. From the inspector's arrival at 09:50 to 11:00 there were 3 employees allocated to care for 42 children aged 2 to 5 years attending on a sessional care basis.

The minimum adult to child ratio for children in this age range is 1:11. Four qualified adults were required at this time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(3)

Due to Staff illness and hospital appointments, there was not an adequate number of adults working directly with children. All measures were taken to obtain relief staff but as it had happened a few hours before preschool commenced it was not possible unfortunately.

We are in the process of obtaining qualified relief staff on file to ensure that this will not happen again.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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 10 records were available and were reviewed which demonstrated that a record was available in writing which contained the information required in (a) to (i) above.

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* *(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*
Non-Compliance Information
(1)(a) There was no record available detailing the experience of one employee. There was no record of the name, position, qualifications and experience of one other adult who was working directly with the children on the day of inspection. (3) Records were not open to inspection as detailed under (1)(a) above.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider
Corrective and Preventive Action (1)(a)(3) All Certificates/References for all employees have been obtained and placed on file. All employee information/qualifications shall be on file going forward. **Supporting documentation submitted** No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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

(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)(a)(b)

Staff reported that children bring their lunch in from home and lunch took place at 10:00. Lunch time was observed to be a relaxed, sociable occasion with children given time to finish their meal. Water was available and accessible to the children at all times, and all children were given water with their meal.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. The inspector observed children cleaning up after their lunches, putting on their own coats and using the toilet independently. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff were observed to use gentle tones and praise when interacting with the children. Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

The care rooms were bright and were arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included home corners, small world toys, construction toys, sensory play, art areas, rest areas and libraries. The rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was available at the front of the community centre. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided. All children accessed the outdoor area on the day of inspection and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

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 to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet.
- Children's lunches were stored in the refrigerator.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the Daisy room, the cupboard beneath the sink was not safely secured and cleaning agents were accessible posing a safety risk if accessed by a child.

Infection Control:

2. There were no lids on the pedal operated bins in the Sunflower room and in the sanitary area of the Daisy room posing a risk of the transmission of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

<u>Corrective & Preventive Action</u>

General Safety:

1. Cupboard has been cleared of all cleaning agents. Cleaning agents shall be kept in the staff room.

Infection Control:

2. New Bins with lids and pedals have been placed in all rooms. All bins going forward shall have lids and pedals.

<u>Supporting documentation submitted</u>

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

There was no member of staff available at all times with up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training. FAR certification had expired for three staff on 09 September 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

Staff have renewed their FAR Training Course and Certificates shall be issued in 3-4 weeks. FAR Certificates shall be in date going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not furnish the inspector with information required to enforce the Regulations. On the inspector's arrival the registered provider detailed the names of the six employees of the service. Information relating to the identity of two adults present on inspection was withheld as follows.

1. One adult (Person A) was observed working directly with the children on the inspector's arrival. When the identity of this adult was requested, the registered provider and this adult incorrectly identified the adult as a named employee of the service (Person B).
2. Person B subsequently arrived at the service at 11:00. When their identity was requested, they incorrectly identified themselves as a different employee who was not present on the day of inspection (Person C).
3. On review of personal identification documentation in the staff files, it was evident that the person claiming to be Person B had misrepresented themselves. This information was presented to the registered provider who confirmed the correct identity of Person B and confirmed that Person A was not an employee of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff have had a meeting discussing Regulation 33. Staff have had a meeting to ensure this does not happen again.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.