

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC171
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Grainne's Montessori School
-------------------------	-----------------------------

Address of Service:	Western Road, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
----------------------------	------------------------------------

Eircode:	P85 NN26
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Gráinne O'Donovan
-------------------------------------	-------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	02/03/2026
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	n/a
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----


Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

	Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 QMS Ref: EYI-RRT12.1 V2.0 03/03/2023 Service ID: TU2015CC171	1 of 11
---	--	----------------

Grainne's Montessori School is an established early years sessional service registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years. At time of inspection the service was catering for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years including the children partaking in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Daily opening hours are from 08:30 to 11:30 hours each day Monday to Friday. While the service is registered to operate an afternoon service, there is no afternoon session taking place this year. The service operates from a one storey building that was purposely built as a childcare setting and is situated close to other amenities in the town of Clonakilty, Co. Cork. The premise consists of a double height care room, adequate toilet facilities and an enclosed outdoor play area.

Staffing

There were 4 persons associated with the service, this included the named registered provider who is service based. There was a transition year student from the local secondary school currently on placement in the service. The 3 staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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/ 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*

(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) There was a named person in charge and a named deputy to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present on the premises on day of the inspection.

(2) Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 4 persons, 3 staff and 1 transition year student associated with the service. The following records were available:

(a) Of the required 8 references, 4 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.

(b) The remaining 4 references were from another source other than a previous employer with the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 4 adults. A Garda vetting record was not required for the transition year student as she was under 18 years. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting records were available on file for the 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 3 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be 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

(1)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the playroom on day of the inspection.

(3)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

There were 12 children present in the sessional service with 2 adults in attendance at all times
The adult child ratio was correct.

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) to (i)

A sample of 12 of the children's registration forms were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.

(k) There was a hard copy Accident and Incident record book in the service. The Accident and Incident template included once signed, a duplicate copy of each accident and incident record for the parent /guardian.

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

Basic Needs

- The children were provided with opportunities to play outside daily and were assisted by the adults in dressing themselves in their coats and hats prior to going outside.

- The adults sat with the children as they ate their food creating a relaxed and social environment. It was noted that the children chatted, laughed, and interacted socially with each other and the adults during this break.
- Children's coats and bags were stored on child height hooks in the playroom so as to encourage independent dressing.
- The daily routine was observed to be both adult and child led, mainly child led after lunch where the children had the choice of playing indoors or outdoors under the close supervision of staff.
- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting. Staff helped children to recognise and understand sharing and working together as a group as seen on day of inspection when children were involved in various activities. One such activity was a group of children in the outdoor play area imaginary playing as working on repairing public roads. The staff stated this emerging interest began following recent road repair works beside the preschool premise. The children were observed waiting their turn and sharing the experience. The activities fostered the children's confidence in language development through listening and speech. One staff member was discussing with the children what they saw, what tools were needed to repair roads. The children were wearing visibility vests, hard hats, brushing paths with water, digging and laying down tarmacadam.
- During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.
- The person in charge stated the service operated in partnership with parents, regular updates and information were furnished to parents and guardians via the services electronic system and at drop off and collection times. Parent/ teacher meetings were currently being held with parents.

Physical and Material Environment

- The playroom was airy and bright with dual aspect openable windows to allow for natural ventilation and light.
- The spacious care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as colouring and drawing, imaginary play, book reading and tabletop activities.
- The playroom had open shelving units to display the play materials and equipment in an accessible way to the children.

- The playroom was furnished in one area with low couches, matting and a selection of books for the children's comfort. The room was furnished with sufficient child sized tables and chairs for the number of children in attendance.
- The children were observed playing outdoors when the inspector arrived on the premises on day of inspection and again the children had a choice of playing outdoors again after the mid-morning snack time. The outdoor play area was located to the rear and side of the premise. There were a variety of surfaces ranging from bark mulch, all weather and hard surface. The hard surface area allowed the children to practice gross motor skills on the numerous ride on toys. There was a climbing frame with a slide, walking wall and swings. There was a covered sand unit with accompanying play equipment for sensory and imaginative play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Lunches observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack included sandwiches, rolls and wraps, yogurts, dips and a selection of chopped fruit and diced vegetables.
- Any child that was thirsty throughout the morning or required additional fluids could easily access a drink of water as their individual water bottles were stored on a low shelf in the care room.
- Perishable items were stored in the service fridge.

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 was adequately secured and was maintained secure when not in use during the inspection process.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets were 29°C on day of inspection.
- Openable windows were not accessible to the children in the playroom and children's toilet area.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the toilets. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place. Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack. after toileting and outdoor play.
- There were adequate sanitary facilities with two children's toilets and one staff toilet.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised before and after snack time.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that one staff member held current up to date training.

(2)

- (a) The first aid box was stored out of children’s reach in the service. The first aid box were stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises
- (b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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)
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 24 February 2026.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced on the 01 February 2026 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 01 December 2025.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 22 children at any one time until 27/03/2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.