

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC415
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Name of Service:	The New Beginnings Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Ballyspillane, Midleton, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P25 W020
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gráinne Healy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	25/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	J Dennehy & Í Cronin
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Title:	Inspection Registration Manager and National Inspection Manager
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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
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Description of service

The New Beginnings Montessori School is a privately owned sessional service that has been in operation since 1983. The premises is in a rural area of Midleton in east Cork and consists of a single storey building, with one care room and adjacent sanitary facilities. Two outdoor play spaces are available for the children's use, one of which includes a sheltered area. The service is registered to accommodate children aged two to six years. The service operates from 9.00am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year and provides the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The service employs two adults, both of whom work directly with the children. This includes the registered provider. The two adults each hold a relevant award 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 the child/ and safety. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, registered provider and staff 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*
- (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.

(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 and there was a named person who was able to deputise if needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and the named person were on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service and all staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) The staff files for two adults who were employed in the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the four required references, none were from a previous employer due to the length of service of each staff member.
 - (b) Of the four required references, four were from another reputable source with records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The inspector determined that police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months.
- (4) Records demonstrated that the two adults had achieved at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults present within the service working directly with the children.
- (3) The service met the minimum ratio requirement of 1 to 11. There were 2 adults present in the service with 17 children.

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 child records were reviewed as part of this inspection. The required information, as detailed under parts (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f) (g) (h) and (i) of this regulation, were maintained in writing in respect of each of the 10 children.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The records required to be held by the service as detailed above were available for review on inspection.
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of employees were recorded in the staff files.
 - (b) The details of the class of service and age profile of children was recorded in the services policies and procedures document.
 - (c) The adult child ratios were documented in the services policies and procedures document.
 - (d) The type of care programme provided was outlined in the services policies and procedure document.
 - (e) The facilities available within the service were outlined within the policies and procedures document.
 - (f) The opening hours and fees were displayed within the service.
 - (g) The service maintained all of the policies, procedures and statements as required.
 - (i) Details of staff rosters were available within the service.
 - (j) Templates were available within the service to document the details of any medication administered to a child.
The registered provider explained that no records were available as children had not required medication.
 - (k) Templates were available to record any accident, injury or incident involving a child attending the service. The registered provider again explained that no records were available as there had been no accident or incident within the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (h) One child that was attending the service for a trial period was not recorded on the daily attendance records. Daily attendance records are required to be kept for all children attending the service to ensure their safety in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service will ensure that all children in attendance will be listed in the attendance records for the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16(1)(h) has been adequately addressed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service shared all information as referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1). The service shared information with the parents through the sharing of their policy and procedure document.

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 had plenty of space to freely move around the care room and engage in their chosen activities. On the day of inspection, the weather conditions were good so the children could move between the indoor and a section of the outdoor area.
- The service implemented a healthy eating policy and snacks were provided by the parents of the children. During snack time children had the choice of water or milk. The snacks observed were healthy and nutritious.
- A cosy area was provided for any child who may wish to rest and relax during the sessional service.
- Children's toilets were accessible from the care room, this allowed the children to use the toilet as they needed and seek assistance if required.
- The care routines were well established within the service which supported children to navigate the different transitions throughout the day. For example, clean up prior to snack time and preparing for snack time.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff members demonstrated fondness and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. The staff were responsive to the needs of the children and spoke to them in soft tones and at their level.
- During snack time staff engaged the children in conversation and supported them as required. Snack time was relaxing and gave children enough time to enjoy their food. During this time, there was an emphasis on the children's involvement in the preparation of snack time such as washing cups.
- The service also had two dogs, Coco and Lottie and the children were observed to enjoy the company of the dogs and would engage with them regularly during the session. The staff supported the children to engage with the dogs in a calm and gentle manner.

Physical and material environment:

- The room was well resourced with toys, materials, and furniture suitable to the age and stage of development of the children.
- The room had a wide range of Montessori materials such as the pink tower, cylinder blocks and spindles and a number of defined interest areas such as a home corner and a car mat for pretend play.
- The service had a large outdoor environment some of which was sheltered. This was a natural outdoor area that provided children with opportunities to engage in physical play. There was a covered sand area, climbing frames, a tunnel and a large boat.

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 external door of the hallway entrance was closed after the children arrived. This helped to prevent unauthorised access.
- The outdoor area was secured with a high gate and fencing. The gate was closed once all of the children had been dropped off.
- Cleaning agents were safely stored out of reach of the children.

- The toys in the care room were maintained in good condition.

Infection control:

- Cleaning schedules were available and completed as required within the service.
- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels. Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after outdoor play.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the sanitary area and care room.
- A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

Fire safety:

- Firefighting equipment was accessible within the service.
- The fire exits were free from obstruction on the day of inspection.

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) Evidence was available to demonstrated that two of the adults held current first aid responder (FAR) certification and these two adults were available to the children during the hours of operation.

(2)

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

(b) During the inspection the first aid supplies were available to the adults to use for the children if needed.

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 vent of a fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had records of the monthly fire drills that took place within the service. The last drill took place on the 03 March 2025.
 - (b) The certification of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated this was carried out in August 2024. The certification of testing for the smoke alarms was dated the 13 March 2025.
- (4) The services fire evacuation procedure was displayed within the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date certificate was in place to demonstrate that the service was insured to provide sessional care for the number of children the service is registered to accommodate. The certificate was valid until the 12 March 2026.