

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 of Inspection:	16/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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
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Description of service

The New Beginnings Montessori School is a privately owned service, that provides sessional care and education to early years children. While the service is registered to accommodate children aged two to six years, it currently caters for children aged two and a half to five and a half years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.30 pm, each Monday through to Friday, over 38 weeks annually.

Montessori pedagogy is implemented.

The premises is located 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.

Staffing

At present, the service employs two adults, both of whom work directly with the children who attend. This includes the registered provider. The two adults each hold a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education. An emergency contact person is also available, if required.

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/ 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, staff member 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) The designated person in charge of operating the service was the registered provider. A named deputy had also been appointed to deputise, as needed.
- (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider and the deputy were on duty at the service and remained to facilitate the duration of the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in respect of the three adults attached to the early years setting were assessed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) Four written past employer references were available, with recorded validations for each.
- (b) Two of the written and validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Completed Garda vetting documentation was on file for the three adults.
- (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two of the adults and the relevant certificates were maintained.
- (4) Copies of recognised qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education were available in respect of the two adults, who worked directly with the children.

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) An adequate number of adults were observed to be available to the children throughout the inspection.
- (3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratio met the requirement of 1 adult to 11 children. There were 17 children, aged 2 years and 10 months to 4 ½ years in attendance, with 2 adults present.

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

A total of 19 children were enrolled at the service. A sample of 11 child record forms were reviewed and deemed satisfactory in meeting the requirements listed from (a) to (i).

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

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) Written records were held in relation to the adults who worked at the early years setting. The available information included each adult's name, role, qualifications and curriculum vitae.
- (h) Child attendance records were presented for review and were observed to be up to date.
- (i) Weekly staff rosters were available.

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

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- Shortly after 10.30am, the mid-morning snack was accommodated. During this time, there was an emphasis on the children's involvement, as helper jobs were allocated, such as washing the cups. A relaxed atmosphere was also noted, with conversation encouraged.
- Well established care routines were apparent in the early years setting. For example, the children lined up to wash their hands before the mid-morning snack and were observed to tidy up when they had finished working with various materials.
- The children were observed to independently access and utilise the sanitary facilities, which were located adjoining the care room.
- A cosy area was provided for any child who may wish to rest and relax during the sessional service.
- The ample space available in the care room allowed children to easily initiate their chosen tasks and activities. During free play, the children also had the option of moving between the care room and the partially covered outdoor play area.

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:

- From the exterior, the main entrance door was keypad operated, which reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access. The entrance gate was secured to minimise the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- There were visibility strips in place on the low-level glass panel doors in the care room.
- Water at the wash hand basins was thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C.
- All of the examined play resources were maintained in good working order and free from pinch points.

Infection Control:

- Facilities were in place to support effective handwashing practice; warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basins. The children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play and before the mid-morning snack was facilitated. This practice was supervised by one of the adults.
- Storage was provided for the children's bags.
- The care room and sanitary facilities appeared clean and well-maintained. Cleaning records were also maintained.
- Adequate ventilation of the care room was ensured through an open door.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed at the time of inspection. In addition, the registered provider informed the inspector that none of the children were in receipt of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were observed to sleep during the sessional service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were maintained free from obstruction.

Outings:

- Not applicable, as the inspector was advised that outings were not conducted.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Both of the adults who worked at the service had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The available certificates demonstrated that this training was valid until 30 September 2024.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) A record of the monthly fire drills carried out at the service, was available on file. The most recently documented fire drill was dated 12 September 2023.
- (b) Servicing records and information regarding the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm was accessible. It was noted that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 7 September 2023 and the wired smoke alarm was recently tested on 6 October 2023.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The available insurance certificate demonstrated that adequate cover was in place for up to 22 children to attend the sessional service. The policy was valid until 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
 (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(e) Appropriate sanitary facilities were easily accessible for both staff and children at the early years service. The children had the use of two toilets and two wash hand basins and a third toilet and wash hand basin were in place for adults' use.