

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE066
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Name of Service:	Realtai Beaga Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Kilmurry, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 T9P6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ruth Hogan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	15/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla, Station Road Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Founded in 2008, Réaltaí Beaga Montessori School is located in a rural setting, adjacent to the registered providers home, close to the village of Kilmurry in Co. Clare. It operates from a single story, purpose built preschool room with children getting to spend most of their time in an extensive well designed outdoor play area. It provides a sessional early years' service with a maximum capacity of 11 preschool children. The service caters to children aged 2 to 6 years. Its operating hours are Monday through Friday, featuring a morning session (08:30–11:30) and an afternoon session (11:45–14:45).

Staffing

The facility is managed by the registered provider who is the owner-manager of the service. She is accompanied by a second qualified staff who delivers direct care and instruction to the children. Both adults have accredited qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. To further strengthen the inclusive practice of the service, a staff member is currently undertaking the specialised Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme. This advanced qualification enhances the services ability to implement targeted inclusive strategies, ensuring comprehensive, high-quality support for children with diverse learning and developmental needs

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

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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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of operating the service and was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available to deputise in her absence if needed.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or her deputy were available on the premises each day.
- (2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for the registered provider and the second staff member employed to work at the service.
- (b) Where references from past employers were not available, references from reputable sources were on file.

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(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for both adults working at the facility. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not required for any person working at the school.

(4) All adults working at the service held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at the service.

(3) On the day of the inspection there were 8 preschool children present with 2 adults during the morning session. In the afternoon there were 10 preschool children present with 2 adults. The adult child ratio was correct throughout the duration of the service.

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 service ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and the second staff member working at the facility.
- (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility was 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) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. A record of this was also provided to parents when children were enrolled.

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- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (i) Details of staff rosters on a daily basis.
- (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

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 service followed a healthy eating policy, encouraging parents to provide nutritious snacks for lunchtime each day. A variety of sandwiches and fruits were observed in the children's lunches. Drinks were removed from children's bags and made accessible throughout the session. The afternoon session featured a rolling lunch schedule to accommodate the children's varied eating routines prior to arrival. This flexible approach successfully met the individual nutritional and care needs of each child.

Toilets were easily accessible next to the preschool room, with handwashing facilities that included hot water, soap, and paper towels. A change of clothes and protective clothing for outdoor play in wet weather were available if required. Tissues, wipes, and proper waste disposal were provided. The library corner offered soft furnishings for relaxation. Children spend long periods of each day in the outdoor area where they had access to a well-equipped garden for active play. A sheltered play area was also accessible outside to ensure children could get outdoors in all weather conditions.

Physical and Material Environment:

The service operated in a large, child-friendly preschool room with child-sized furniture to promote independence. The rooms featured low-level tables for meals and activities, with various educational materials organised by category on low level open shelving. Carefully laid out and presented, the playroom featured equipment and

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materials grouped into specific interest areas, such as a home corner, a library, a dress-up area, a jigsaw area, and an arts and crafts section. The walls were adorned with educational posters and children's artwork.

An expansive, secure outdoor play area was situated adjacent to the premises, featuring a combination of lawn, tarmacadam, and paving surfaces to facilitate all-weather utilisation. The outdoor space was equipped with a sand and water table, a designated messy play area, natural log seating, child-constructed dens, playhouses, and dedicated zones for planting and gardening. A sheltered, covered structure accommodates a diverse range of outdoor play opportunities ensuring children get outside every day. During favourable weather conditions, the outdoor area serves as a dining space, and children were eager to picnic outside on the day of the inspection. The entire exterior environment was purposefully designed to function as a seamless extension of the indoor learning space and curriculum.

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) There were a staff member working at the service that had the required first aid responder training completed.

A second staff was scheduled to undertake the same course.

(2)(a) A first aid box stocked with all the necessary materials was stored in an easily accessible location in the preschool.

(b) The first aid box was at all times available to the children at the service when both inside and outdoors.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for a maximum of 22 preschool children to attend the service for a sessional preschool service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure. No identification of any building defects were observed on inspection.
- (b) The entrance to the service was secured and all visitor access was managed appropriately. The outdoor areas were safe and secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from the area.
- (c) Protective covers were provided on light fittings where required.
- (d) The premises throughout appeared clean with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the premises.
- (e) Adequate and suitable sanitary accommodations were provided in an easily accessible location next to the preschool rooms.