

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE100
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Name of Service:	Miss Grainnes Holy Family Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Holy Family National School, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 YR79
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Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Kelly
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Service type:	Part-time
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Inspection Day 1:	23/10/2023
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Inspection Day 2:	24/10/2023
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No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	42	PM	22
No of pre-school children: Day 2	AM	49	PM	14

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
Inspection undertaken by:	Á. McCarthy
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

Not applicable

Description of service

Miss Grainne's Holy Family Montessori School was established in 2006, on the grounds of the Holy Family National School, in Ennis town centre. The service is registered as operating as a part time and sessional service Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 15:00 for children aged between two to six years.

Four care rooms are located in the two prefabricated structures with two separate entrances. The first prefabricated structure accommodates one open plan room called preschool one, this included a kitchen, a staff toilet and two children's toilets. A small outdoor area is attached to the rear of this structure which is used by the children attending the three rooms. Preschool rooms two and three were used in the second prefabricated structure during the inspection. The rooms included three sanitary facilities and one kitchen.

Staffing

The registered provider is currently operating the service with the assistance of nine members of staff. The staff were present on the two inspection days.

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 focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 19(1)(a), (4), 22, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 10 and 15.

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:

The inspection was determined by feedback and concerns information submitted to Tusla Feedback and Concerns department.

On the 24th of October 2023 an Immediate Action Notice was issued under Regulation 9(2)(c), a mandatory vetting disclosure was not available for one adult working in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. Information was requested regarding the measures taken by the service. A response was received on the 25th of October 2023. The manager confirmed that the staff member would not be working in the service until a Garda Vetting disclosure had been received and assessed.

Acknowledgments:

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named staff member was available to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the registered provider and the person who is assigned as deputy were available throughout the inspection.

Ten files were available and reviewed for the adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Eight written references were available from past employers and validated where required.

- (b)
Ten written references were available from a source other than a past employer and validated where required.
- (c)
Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed in respect of nine adults.
- (4)
The adults employed by the service held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)
Two verified, past employer references were not available in respect of two adults working in the service.
- (c)
On the 24th of October 2023 an Immediate Action Notice was issued under Regulation 9(2)(c), a mandatory Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one adult working in the service contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. Information was requested regarding the measures taken by the service.
- (d)
International police vetting was not available in respect of one adult working in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

- (2)(a)(c)(d)
Corrective and Preventive Action
- (2)
(a)(b)
The references are now available and have been verified. In future a staff file to include references will be available prior to a staff member commencing in a service.
- (c)
A response in relation to the immediate action notice was submitted on the 25th of October 2023 from the registered provider. The manager confirmed that the staff member is not working in the service until a Garda Vetting disclosure had been received and assessed. On the response received on the 20th of November 2023 the registered provider stated that the staff member is no longer working in the service and that this staff members garda vetting disclosure will be submitted upon receipt to the inspectorate.
- (d)

International police vetting was applied for the adult and a copy of the application submission was issued to the inspectorate. A copy of the police vetting will be issued to the inspectorate once received by the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the verified references.
- A copy of the garda vetting application.
- A copy of the international police vetting application.

Summary Comment

Based on the information submitted the areas of non-compliance are met under Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b)(c).

The area of non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(d) will be met upon receipt of the international police vetting, an application for international police vetting was submitted to the inspectorate by the service after the inspection. The registered provider shall submit a copy of the international police vetting upon receipt. The areas of non-compliance will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the required policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were available. The inspector reviewed the following policies:

- (b) Complaints Policy;
- (c) Policy on Administration of Medication;
- (d) Policy on Infection Control;
- (e) Policy on Managing Behaviour;
- (h) Inclusion Policy;
- (i) Outings policy
- (l) Policy on Healthy Eating
- (p) policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices.

The sample of policies reviewed by the inspector adequately met the requirements.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)
On the 23rd and 24th October 2023 an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.

(2)
During the inspection the ratio of adults supervising the children was maintained at all times. On the 23rd of October 2023 ten adults cared for forty-two children in the morning and six adults cared for twenty-two children in the afternoon. On the 24th of October 2023 nine adults cared for forty-nine children in the morning and eight adults cared for twelve children in the afternoon

(8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available at all times during the operation of the service.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)
Sixty-nine forms were available for the number of children enrolled in the service. A sample of ten forms were reviewed by the inspector, the forms included the particulars outlined from (a) to (i).

(3)(a)(b)(c)

Enrolment records for the children currently in attendance were available upon request for inspection.

(4)

The registered provider ensured that written records were available for all the children currently attending the service. It was confirmed by the registered provider that records are retained for a period of two years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend 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

(4)

A registered provider shall ensure that a pre-school child shall not be-

(a) permitted access to the internet,

(b) photographed, or

(c) recorded

while attending the pre-school service other than in accordance with the terms of the consent of a parent or guardian given in the form specified in the service's policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The staff cared for the children in a kind and caring manner. The staff sat with the children, spoke to the children at their level, listened to their requests and responded to their cues to be held and comforted. Positive behavioural strategies were used by staff during interactions. The children were supported as they played individually and as part of a group and prior to a change of activity the children were notified in advance. All children were included in the play-based activities and alternative options were offered in accordance with the children's preferences. During mealtimes the staff and children sat together and conversed amicably. The staff communicated effectively with each other during the facilitation of the programme of care and learning. During the children's arrival and departure to the entrance to the service, the staff communicated with their parents.

Learning journals were available for the children with photographs and paintings demonstrating some of the activities that the children had engaged in and given to the child and their parents when the children leave the service.

Physical and Material Environment:

The children accessed the indoor and outdoor environment during the inspection. Three care rooms were in use during the inspection. The registered provider confirmed that the fourth care room is only used occasionally if a child requires one to one care or for relaxation purposes. The rooms were bright and spacious and laid out with defined areas of interest and adequately resourced for the age range and development level of children in attendance. The materials and equipment were placed in low level shelving units and were accessible to the children. The children were observed to be fully engaged in play-based activities in each room; the activities observed included: pretend play, sensory play, manipulative play and engaged in storytelling, singing and rhyming games. The care room walls displayed the children's individual creative work that included the autumnal, Halloween and road safety themes and family wall.

(4)

The registered provider ensured that the children in attendance had consent from parents or guardians to be photographed which was detailed on the sample of children's enrolment forms reviewed. The registered provider and the staff were aware of the service's policy on the use of the internet, photographic and recording devices. The registered provider and members of staff confirmed that photographs are taken using the "managers" phone in accordance with the service's policy.

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 registered provider confirmed that the service’s healthy eating policy was shared with the parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year. The parents provide the children’s food daily and additional food is available should a child require more food. The children attending on a part-time basis were provided with an opportunity to have beverages and two meals and the children attending on a sessional basis were provided with one meal and beverages. The food observed included: wraps, sandwiches, brioche, rice cakes, yoghurt, cheese and a variety of fruit.

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 and internal entrances were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access to the service.
- A book was available documenting the arrival and departure of any visitors to the service.
- The children’s arrival and departure times were detailed on the service’s record book.
- The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the safe storage of materials and equipment.

Infection Control:

- The indoor and outdoor environment was maintained in a clean condition.
- Hot running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded, pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary facilities and the care rooms.
- Child friendly illustrations were displayed in the sanitary facilities promoting good hand washing techniques.

- The children's and adult's hands were washed at appropriate intervals that included after toileting and messy play and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider confirmed that medication is not routinely given by the service. A service policy and documentation is available in the event that medication is required.

Safe Sleep:

- A designated area was available in each room for use by the children to rest and relax. The area was appropriately resourced with soft furnishings and a unit was available next to this area with a large range of reading materials.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable in the premises.

Outing:

- The registered provider confirmed that outings are currently not undertaken by the service. A service policy is available in the event that an outing should take place.

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)
Five members of staff had up to date First Aid Responder training for children available.
- (2)(a)
The first aid box was stored out of the reach of children, in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the office.
- (b)
A first aid box is available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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 that have taken place was available in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 22nd of September 2023.

(b)

A record for the number, type and maintenance service of firefighting equipment was available in the premises. The most recent service for the firefighting equipment took place on the 26th of September 2023.

(4)

Fire action notices were displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

An up-to-date record for the number, type and maintenance service of the smoke alarm system was not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

An up-to-date record for the number, type and maintenance service of the smoke alarm system is now available.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the smoke alarm system maintenance service certificate.

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence submitted by the registered provider to the inspectorate, the non-compliance is now addressed. The practice will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for sixty-six pre-school children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.