

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL105
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Green Gables Montessori/Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	160 Ardilaun, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D13 X773
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ann Muldoon
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/11/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM	0
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Taaffe
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Green Gables Pre-school has been operating from this premises as a private sessional early years service since the 1990s, with the registered provider taking over the operation and ownership of the service from a family member in 2013. Green Gables Montessori Playschool facilitates a maximum of 18 eligible pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme operates from 9.00am to 12.00midday and 9.15am to 12.15pm each weekday for 38 weeks each year. A number of children who attend this service also attend a separate early years service in the locality on a full day care basis and are dropped off to and/or collected from Green Gables Montessori Pre-school by a staff member from the other service, in order to avail of the ECCE programme in this setting. School aged children are not accommodated in the service. The service is conducted from two adjoining rooms on the ground floor of a residential property in Portmarnock. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider and one staff member work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis. The registered provider and the staff member each hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). A further adult is employed in a relief capacity when necessary to cover staff absences. Periodically, including on the day of inspection, students undertaking early years training courses are facilitated to engage in work experience placements in the service, working with the children under supervision in a supernumerary capacity.

### 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. 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, student 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and the staff member was the named person appointed to deputise in the absence of the registered provider if required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service on the day of inspection, as occurs on a daily basis. The staff member was available to deputise in the absence of the registered provider if required.

The staff files for the registered provider, the core staff member, the relief staff member and the student were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written references available for the registered provider and 2 written, validated references available for the core staff member, the relief staff member and the student.

(a) Six of the 8 written references available were from past employers.

(b) Two of the 8 written references available were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and for the core staff member, the relief staff member and for the student.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff files there was no evidence that international police vetting was required for the registered provider or any adult in the service.

(4) The registered provider, the core staff member and the staff member employed in a relief capacity each held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service during the inspection with the registered provider and the core staff member working directly with the 17 children present, aged from 2 years 11 months to 4 years 9 months, all of whom were attending on a sessional basis.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as there were at least 2 staff members working in the service on a daily basis. In addition, a student undertaking an online Level 5 early years training course was present in the service on the day of inspection, being facilitated to work under supervision in a supernumerary capacity, as part of a work experience placement.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The records maintained for all 18 pre-school children attending the service were inspected and all were found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3)(a)(b)(c) The children's records were open to inspection as requested by the inspector as an authorised person.

### 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) The following examples demonstrate how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

##### Basic needs:

- There was a warm, welcoming and child centred atmosphere in the service as evidenced in the kind and respectful interactions observed taking place between the adults (namely the registered provider, the core staff member and the student) and the children.
- Healthy snacks and drinks were provided by the parents for the children to have in the service. The children firstly ate their fruit snack and had a drink at 10.00am and later, after outdoor play, the children ate their sandwiches or other snack foods including olives, hummus, salami, rice cakes, crackers, yogurts and cheese at 11.30am. The adults sat with the children at snack time encouraging conversations and extending interactions. Drinking water was freely available to the children at snack time and throughout the session.
- The adults were observed to be responsive to the children's cues, should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance when required.
- Children who wished to were facilitated to rest and relax on a floor cushion in the library area until they were ready to resume play and activity.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- The adults were observed to be caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's individual needs, likes and preferences. The adults spoke positively and warmly to and about the children during the inspection and frequently initiated conversations with the children, responded meaningfully to their verbal and non-verbal cues and regularly provided praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.

- The adults played alongside the children providing space and opportunity for children to lead and direct play, listening carefully to their stories and questions and responding to the children in an interested and warm manner. The children were readily supported in their choice of activities with moments of joint laughter and shows of affection frequently observed during the inspection.
- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other. The adults praised the children for kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you.
- The adults played alongside the children providing space and opportunity for children to lead and direct play, listening carefully to their stories and questions and responding to the children in an interested and warm manner. The children were readily supported in their choice of activities with moments of joint laughter and shows of affection frequently observed during the inspection.
- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other. The adults praised the children for kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you.

### Physical and material environment:

- All pre-school children in the service were provided with low level chairs and tables, to eat their snacks from and to play at when engaging in table-top activities. Toys, play materials and equipment were stored appropriately. Low level open-fronted shelving ensured that the equipment in both rooms was visible and within easy reach of the children at their height, thereby facilitating child-led play.
- The children were divided into two separate groups when indoors and were facilitated to spend a period time in both rooms each day, with each group swapping rooms during the morning on a daily basis.
- Although the two care rooms were narrow in shape, the registered provider had innovatively created defined interest areas to make both spaces appealing to children, all of which were suitably resourced to facilitate the children to engage in play and activities and support their learning and development. The interest areas in the front room included a well-resourced home corner, a construction zone and a reading and relaxation area. A broad range of books were provided and the children's language development was facilitated during the inspection through conversations heard, story-telling and singing. Samples of the children's art work, including paintings and craft work were on display in relation to the book of the week. A range of specialist Montessori equipment, a broad range of arts and crafts supplies, jigsaws and play equipment to support children's fine motor development were included in the play materials provided in the back room.

- The local community was reflected in the service with photographs of the local beach, schools, shops and sports facilities on display at the children’s eye level.
- The outdoor play area to the rear of the premises was resourced with an extensive quantity of play materials and equipment to provide an array of meaningful play experiences for the children in attendance. The surface consisted of sections covered with paving, artificial grass and composite decking. A large well-resourced outdoor kitchen, ride-on self-propel cars, a rigid plastic tunnel, balance beams and a plastic playhouse were provided. A wooden shed was used for storage of further play materials when the service was not in operation. Play materials taken out from the shed for the children to play with during the inspection included a tray top activity table with construction toys, cars, trucks, boats, aeroplanes, a number of garages, large plastic construction blocks, dolls, buggies, and dolls houses with furniture and figurines. A range of dress-up costumes, play stables and horses, additional cars, trucks, dolls and blocks were also available to the children in the storage shed. All children were facilitated to engage in outdoor play on the day of inspection, dressed appropriately wearing their coats and hats.

### 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 main entrance door leading directly into the front care room was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and for the duration of the inspection. The outdoor play area was fully enclosed by the service walls and boundary fencing.
- The residential accommodation was inaccessible to the children during the inspection, with a locked door in place between both spaces. The inspector was informed that in the event that a child would require to use the second toilet located off the front hall of the residential accommodation, the child would be accompanied at all times by the registered provider or staff member. No child was observed using this toilet during the inspection.

- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance. The inspector was informed that the warm water supply was thermostatically controlled.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Blind cords were appropriately secured.
- The play materials and equipment in both care rooms were stored on stable low level shelving which reduced the risk of the furniture from toppling over and causing injury.

### Infection Control:

- There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels provided for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service. The children in the service were encouraged by the adults to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after outdoor and messy play.
- A refrigerator was available and used to store lunch boxes provided by the parents for the children's snacks. This reduced the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.
- The premises play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition. There was a process in place for the cleaning of toys and equipment.
- The outdoor sand pits were fitted with a secure lid to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

### Administration of Medication:

- There were administration of medication forms available to record the details of any medication administered in the service, should the need arise. No pre-school child attending the service required any medication to be administered to date.

## 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 was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis with the most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 20/10/2023.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

## Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There was no up-to-date official maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

### Corrective Actions:

(1)(b) Fire safety company completed a maintenance check of all smoke and heat alarms on 12/12/2023.  
Fire safety company has completed a maintenance check of the fire extinguishers on 10/01/2024.

### Preventive Actions:

(1)(b) The registered provider will ensure the required maintenance checks are completed on an annual basis.

### Supporting documentation submitted

- A maintenance certificate dated 12/12/2023 for the smoke alarms in the service.
- A maintenance certificate dated 10/01/2024 for the fire extinguishers in the service.

## Summary Comment

The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 26(1)(b) has been adequately addressed.