

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY010
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Name of Service:	Amy's Montessori and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	66 Mc Donald Court, Renmore Road, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 P0E2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Amy Clarke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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

Amy's Montessori and Afterschool is a private sessional service in operation since 2013. Opening hours are from 09:00 to 12:30 and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is available within these hours, Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year. It is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years old and a school age care service is available in the afternoon from 13:30 to 17:30.

It is located in Renmore on the outskirts of Galway city and operates from the ground floor of a row of buildings. There is one long care room from which the service has access, along a pathway at the rear of the building, to the outdoor play area. There are adult and children's sanitary facilities and a kitchen off the main care room.

Staffing

There are four adults employed in the service including an adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), an administrator and the registered provider.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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, deputy, staff 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.*

(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,*
- (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.*

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(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 second adult was available to deputise, if required.
- (b) The deputy was present with an additional adult when the inspector arrived. The registered provider arrived at 09:20. Both the registered provider and the deputy remained for the duration of the sessional service.
- (2) Recruitment files for all four adults were reviewed.
- (a) All eight required written and validated references were from past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four adults demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was on file for one adult for whom it was required who had resided outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.
- (4) Certificates on file were available to evidence that three adults working directly with pre-school children attending the service held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. The fourth adult did not require a childcare qualification.

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) Observation of staff on the day and the staff roster evidenced that there was an adequate number of adults available while the pre-school children were present in the service.
- (3) The adult/child ratios were met.

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There were 13 children aged between 2 and 5 years old in attendance with 2 adults.

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

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider, deputy manager and staff were observed to be kept in the staff recruitment files on the premises.
- (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service was registered to provide were available on the Tusla Registration Certificate displayed on the notice board in the service.
- (c) The details of the adult child ratios were available in the parent letter.
- (d) (e) (f) The type of care programme available was detailed in the parent letter along with the facilities available, opening hours and fees.
- (g) The services policies and procedures, required for Regulation 10, were kept in soft form on the premises.
- (h) Attendance records for each child were available and stored on an attendance sheet. These were noted to include entry and exit times of the children which were observed to be within the operating hours of the service from 09:00 to 12:30.

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- (i) The staff roster was noted to have been completed daily with each adult's hours of work recorded.
- (j) While an administration of medication recording book was available the last date recorded was documented as 10/08/2013. The registered provider stated that no medication had been administered since that date.
- (k) There were three accident/incident reports recorded. These were found to contain all the particulars required.

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:

- Snacks, which were provided by parents/guardians and stored in the fridge, were observed being eaten at 10:40. They were noted to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included crackers, cheese, raisins, fruit, yogurt and seeds. Children eating their snack were given time to finish without being hurried.
- Individual water bottles were easily accessible from a nearby shelf.
- A rest/quiet area was provided with soft furnishings where the children were observed sitting away from noisy activities. A selection of age and stage appropriate books were located on a bookcase nearby.
- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were supplied with dispensing soap and dispensing paper towels. Pedal operated bins were in use for the disposal of paper waste.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area off the care room independently. Staff were available nearby to provide prompts about hygienic hand washing and to facilitate and model the disposal of paper towels into the pedal bin in the area.

Physical and material environment:

- The care room was laid out to provide playful opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas. Examples included a home corner, arts and crafts area, puzzles, construction area, imaginary play materials including train sets, dolls house with furniture and fine skills equipment including threading and buttons. A range of Montessori equipment including knobbed cylinders, spindles and rods helping children to develop a concrete understanding of numbers and a visual understanding of quantity.

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- Equipment and resources were easily accessible from low shelving. These were labelled providing visual cues for children.
- Tables and chairs were positioned to facilitate group and solitary activities with a wide variety of resources stationed nearby.
- Displays including children's artwork, birthday and family walls were visually appealing and included relevant titles and captions.
- The secure outdoor play area provided an alternative play environment for the children. Cognitive development was facilitated with a wooden pirate boat and a wooden hut providing opportunities for imaginative and role play, while balance stones and ride-ons offered chances for co-ordination and gross motor skills. The surface was made up of safety tiling aiding in the prevention of a serious fall and there was a hopscotch game painted onto an area of tiling providing structured play opportunities.

Supporting children's relationships:

- During snack and tabletop activities staff members sat with the children and engaged in social conversation. They were heard supporting children to engage positively with one another with activities which required turn taking and sharing.
- Learning journals, which had been put together by staff, were labelled with each child's name and were available to view in the care room. Staff stated they document each child's individual interests and emergent curriculum throughout their time in the service. Observations linked to both national frameworks of quality and curriculum were documented and furnished to the inspector.
- Communication with parents, through a digital application, was furnished to the inspector with photographs sent home every few days of the children involved in activities in the service. In addition, staff were observed providing a summary of the child's day to parents/guardians at pick up time at the main entrance.

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.

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Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance door was secured on arrival preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service and children leaving the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors including the kitchen and storage areas were secured to prevent the children from gaining access to unsafe areas.
- Window handles on windows at the front of the service were not accessible by the children preventing children from exiting or falling from them.
- Heavy equipment and furniture was anchored to prevent them from tipping or falling onto a child.
- Cables and flexes were stored out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a locked storage unit which was inaccessible by the children.
- The outdoor play area was secured by wooden picket fencing and high hedging and was not accessible by unauthorised adults.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food was stored in the service fridge preventing the food from spoiling.
- Children's coats and bags were hung on labelled hooks off the floor area.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were fitted with thumb twist cylinders facilitating the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- In date fire extinguishers were secured by brackets at the fire exit door ensuring they will operate reliably during an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following posed a safety risk to the children;

1. Metal spokes, sticking out of the top of radiator cover in the rest/quiet area, were accessible to the children.
2. A nail was visible and accessible on a yellow panel which had become loose on the outdoor perimeter fencing.
3. Weather beaten hula hoops with loose conjoining pieces were accessible on the floor of the wooden house in the outdoor play area.

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Infection Control:

- The corners of two vinyl sofas and one square pouffe had exposed foam where the seams had become undone making them difficult to clean effectively.
- Three outfits on a dressing up trolley were visibly unclean, posing a risk of cross infection. In conversation, the registered provider stated that they were washed every two weeks however, no cleaning record was available on the day. It was acknowledged that a cleaning record was submitted on 20/05/2026, the day after inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

General Safety:

- The radiator cover was removed and has been replaced. Staff will check on a daily basis to ensure that it is in good working order and report any issues which will be dealt with by the registered provider.
- The yellow panel containing the nail has been repaired in the outdoor perimeter fencing. A daily risk assessment will be carried out to identify any risk and these will be actioned by the registered provider.
- The hula hoops in the outdoor play area were removed. Staff will ensure that a daily assessment is carried out of all the outdoor equipment to identify and remedy any faulty equipment.

Infection Control:

- The two vinyl sofas were removed from the area along with the square pouffe and replaced with new soft furnishings.
- The dressing up outfits will be washed regularly and this will be recorded on the cleaning schedule. All staff will ensure that they are hung up after use.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentation, copy of certificate and photographs were received in the office of the inspectorate;

General Safety:

- A photograph of the new radiator cover.
- A photograph of the repaired panel on the fencing in the outdoor area.
- The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Infection Control:

- A photograph of the new soft furnishings in the rest/quiet area.
- A cleaning schedule detailing the washing dates of the for dressing up clothes.

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Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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

(2)

(a) The first aid box was easily accessible and stored within reach of the adults in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There was no person on the premises with a current First Aid Responder (FAR) certificate. The certificate on file for the adult on the premises was dated 07/07/2024.

(2)

(b) The following supplies in the first aid box were out of date, posing a risk of ineffective cleaning of wounds;

- Three vials of saline solution with expiry dates of 10/2018.
- Alcohol wipes with expiry dates of 2014 and 2019.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider;

(1) Two adults in the service have completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training. Management will ensure that there is an adult with FAR training available while the early years children are present in the service.

(2)

(b) The out of date first aid supplies have been replaced. Management will check supplies on a monthly basis and replace any out of date or missing items.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographs and certificates were received in the office of the inspectorate;

(1) A copy of both FAR certificates with expiry dates documented as 10/06/2028.

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(2)

(b) Photograph of the new first aid supplies.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 25 (1) and (2) (b).

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(b) an employee, and

(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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service. The date recorded of the most recent fire drill was 20/04/2026.

(b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment. The certificate was dated 28/11/2025.

(2)

(c) The fire drills, firefighting equipment certificate and the smoke alarm certificates were open to review on the day of inspection in the service.

(4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of evacuation was located on the wall of the care room beside the fire exit door to the rear of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b) There was no smoke alarm certificate available on the day of inspection. It was acknowledged that a smoke alarm certificate dated 20/05/2026, the day after inspection, was received in office of the inspectorate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

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Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

(1)

(b) The smoke alarm was serviced and a new certificate was issued on 20/05/2026. A new company has been employed and they will be conducting and documenting regular servicing of the smoke alarm to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)

(b) A copy of the smoke alarm certificate was received in the office of the inspectorate on 20/05/2026.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 26 (1) (b).

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation was available to evidence that the service was insured for the number of children registered and the type of service being carried out.