

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

#TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY130
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Name of Service:	Little All Stars Montessori & Crèche
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Address of Service:	Tir An Choir, Vicarschorsland, Tuam, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H54 E927
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Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Holleran
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	21/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	56	PM	53
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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, Galway.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Kelly, F Duffy.
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Title:	Early Years Inspector, Inspection Registration Manager.
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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
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Description of service

The service operates as a privately owned childcare service and opened in 2007. It offers a full day care, part-time and sessional care provision from 07:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday. This purpose-built premises is located in the town of Tuam, county Galway. The service has eight playrooms, a staff room and an administration office space. The premises has its own kitchen; where children's meals and snacks are prepared and cooked on site. The 2 designated sleep rooms with a total of 13 cots were both on the main corridor on the ground floor. Stackable beds are available for the sleep provision of pre-school children aged over two years of age, when required.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the premises on a daily basis. There are 38 staff including the registered provider working in the premises. Twenty-one staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The service has an adult who work in the kitchen as the designated chef. Additionally, there is a driver, two auxiliary staff, one adult who is designated to administration duties and eight staff who work with the school aged children s afterschool programme.

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 may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11, 19 and 23; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 19 and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, 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,
- (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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was present at the service and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection. Documentary evidence in the form of staff rotas indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered it was confirmed that there were seven new staff members employed in the service since the last inspection. It was noted on the day that there were three students on work placement.
- These 10 staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

- (2)(a) There were 12 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer for the adults working in the service.
- (b) There were eight written and appropriately validated references available from a source other than the most recent employer for the adults working in the service.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults for whom they were required, demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that 6 of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting.
- (4) Ten staff working directly with the children had evidence of *Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)* Level 5 to Level 7, 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.*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service. On the morning of the inspection, there were 54 pre-school children, attending the morning session and 53 pre-school children attending the service in the afternoon.
- (2) At approx. 10.15pm on the day of inspection, the following playrooms were in operation.
- Seomra Dara, there were 3 adults and 1 student on work placement caring for 7 children aged over 2 years of age
 - Seomra Scott, there were 2 adults and 1 student on work placement caring for 8 children aged over 2 years of age.
 - Seomra Mac Dara, there were 2 adults caring for 10 children aged 2 years of age.
 - Seomra Oisin, there were 3 adults caring for 10 children aged 4 years of age.
 - Seomra Aisling, there were 3 adults caring for 11 children aged over 2 ½ years of age.

- Seomra Ryan, there were 3 adults and 1 student on work placement caring for 10 children aged between 12 months and 2 years.

There were staff members that moved from room to room covering staff breaks on the day of inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(19)(1)(a)

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service, children's cultural and dietary requirements were met.
- Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times. The main hot meal of the day was broccoli, cauliflower, sweetcorn, mashed potato with gravy and an alternative was available.
- A water station was available in the playrooms for children to help themselves as required.
- The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- Adults in Seomra Mac Dara, Seomra Oisin, Seomra Dara, Seomra Scott and Seomra Ryan used a soft tone of voice, the child's individual name, and were observed getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The outdoor play area was segregated by fencing. There was an astro turf area part of which was covered. There were tyres which formed various obstacles which children were running around and jumping up on. There were swings which children were playing on in the covered area. There was a soft earth and wood chip covered area, part of which was covered where children were playing football. There was a tarmac area, with three and four wheeled ride-on karts.
- There was a toilet adjacent to the play area which children used.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs

1. During circle time in Seomra Aisling at 10.35, a staff member was observed speaking in a loud tone to the children to get them to engage in the planned activity. This authoritarian approach was ineffective as children we observed moving around and moving away from the circle to play with toys. Not following the behaviour management policy could potentially negatively impact the children in the service.
2. The table and chairs in Seomra Scott were not suitable for the children's ages and stage of development. At 11.20 one child was observed to be reaching above shoulder level to participate in an activity. This was tiring for the child and bad for their posture.
3. Seomra Ryan was sectioned into two separate areas using a gated fence. The children were unable to open the gates. The structure restricted the free movement of children around the room limiting their ability to opt out of activities or engage in activities of individual interest to them.
4. One child in Seomra Ryan was observed to be falling asleep in a highchair at 11.55. The staff did not pick up on the cues the child wanted to sleep. When it was pointed out to staff the child was sleepy, staff said nap time was after lunch and engaged the child in an activity. Children's individual sleep needs were not being met due to the structured rest times.
5. The play kitchens in Seomra Aisling, Seomra Oisín, Seomra Dara and Seomra Scott didn't have any equipment or utensils for the children to use. This inhibited the children's ability to play and learn to use such items.
6. The role play costumes in Seomra Oisín were torn and tattered presenting a risk to children if putting them on. The role play costumes in Seomra Scott were stored in a box, so they were not visible to the children. The costumes were not age appropriate as they were too big for the children in the room and presented a hazard if the children put them on.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Staff to use other techniques other than raised voices to captivate the children's attention. Staff will remind each other if the noise volume in the room increases and will work smaller groups such as key worker approach more frequently.
2. A new table was purchased that was more suitable for the age group in that playroom. We will be diligent in checking the size of the furniture in the playrooms.
3. The gated fence was removed and children no longer have restricted access to play environment .

4. Staff are more aware of the children cues of tiredness and this will ensure children can sleep before they become over tired.
5. New toys and resources were purchased for all the playrooms.
6. Weekly checks will ensure that all areas are restocked with toys and dress up as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the playrooms and receipts for newly purchased toys and equipment were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted . The non-compliances identified under regulation 19 have been adequately addressed.

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 entrance door into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing, walls and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The doors into the kitchen, office and adult only sanitary room had a system of security.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- There was a designated nappy changing area with two hand basins, steps up to the unit, a clean intact nappy changing mat. There was a foot pedalled nappy changing bin.
- The children's belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled.
- The children's barrier creams were clearly labelled and stored within their designated nappy changing area.

- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room which had ten cots for children under two years of age. Additionally, there were sleep mats available for older children to sleep on.
- A thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature.
- There were evacuation cots and a door to an outside area for the evacuation of children in the sleep room in the event of fire.
- All mattresses in use in the sleep room were wipeable to ensure cleanliness.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were not sufficient soft flooring materials in Seomra Ryan to assist and protect children learning to stand and walk. At 12.06 one child was observed falling after using a bench to stand up and banged their head off the hard ground when they fell. There was a risk of injury to the children at that stage of their development.
2. Children's toys were not in good condition.

Infection Control:

3. One child in Seomra Ryan was observed to have a soiled nappy when taken out of a highchair at 11.49. The child's outer clothing was noticeably soiled. A childcare worker made a call for a relief staff member to come to the room. The child walked around the room and sat on soft furniture for ten minutes. A relief staff member arrived in Seomra Ryan at 11.58 and the child was brought to the nappy changing room at 11.59. There was a risk of skin damage and infection to the child being left in a soiled nappy and a risk of cross infection to other children by the child sitting on furniture with soiled outer clothing.
4. The children's hands were not washed before having their lunch in Seomra Ryan. A wipe was used on their hands that was not designed to clean hands. Not washing children's hands before meals had a potential risk of infections to the children.
5. Soft furnishings were worn in Seomra Aisling, Seomra MacDara and Seaoma Oisin. These surfaces could not be cleaned properly due to their worn state presenting a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. More soft matting and cushioned flooring materials were installed in all areas where children were learning to walk. This room will be regularly assessed to ensure that furniture and materials are safe for the children attending.
2. New materials and equipment have been purchased and toys in poor condition have been removed. A system was put in place that regular a check of toys and equipment takes place.

Infection Control:

3. The management and staff work together to strengthen hygiene practice and protocols to ensure that the children's needs are adequately met.
4. A strict handwashing protocol was implemented, the use of wipes not designed for hand washing will no longer be used.
5. New sofas were purchased to replace the worn sofas in the playrooms. A new check list was implemented to ensure compliance in this area.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the playrooms and receipts for newly purchased toys and equipment were submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified under regulation have been adequately addressed.