

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 of Inspection:	09/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	55
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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.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Kelly, S Meehan.
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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

The service operates as a privately-owned purpose-built premises and opened in 2007. It is located in the town of Tuam, Co Galway. It offers a full day care, part time and sessional care provision from 07:00 to 18:30, from Monday to Friday. The service has eight playrooms, its own kitchen- where children's meals and snacks are prepared and cooked on site, a staff room and an office space. 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 2 years of age, when required.

Staffing

The registered provider works on the premises daily. There were 40 staff working in the service, which included the registered provider, 22 early years educators, 4 kitchen staff, 1 bus driver, an administrator, 2 supervisors, 2 cleaners, a student on placement and 6 adults who worked with the school aged children.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) The registered provider was the person in charge and a manager was available to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The roster indicated that there was a designated person in charge and a deputy in charge while the pre-school children were on the premises.
- (2) Since the last inspection on the 20 February 2025 there were 13 new adults employed in the service and 1 student on placement and an adult requiring garda vetting renewal within 3 years. These files were reviewed:
- (a) Twenty-two of the required 28 written and validated references were from past employers.
 - (b) The remaining 6 of the required 28 written and validated references were from sources other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 14 new adults and 1 adult requiring a renewal of garda vetting within 3 years. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (d) International police vetting was available for nine adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4) There was evidence that nine of the new adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 to a level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent.

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 57 pre-school children, attending the morning session and 55 pre-school children attending the service in the afternoon.
- (2) At 10.35 on the day of inspection, the following playrooms were in operation.
- Seomra Dara- there were 2 adults caring for 10 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age
 - Seomra Scott- there were 2 adults caring for 10 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.
 - Seomra Oisin- there were 3 adults and one student on work placement caring for 10 children between 4 and 5 years of age.
 - Seomra Aisling- there were 4 adults caring for 10 children aged between 3 and 4 years of age.
 - Seomra Ryan- there were 3 adults caring for 8 children aged between 12 months and 2 years.
 - Seomra Grace- there were 2 adults and 1 student on work placement caring for 9 children aged between 4 and 5 years of age.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

- The table and chairs in Seomra Scott and the other playrooms were suitable for the children's ages and stage of development. Children were observed sitting at tables that were at their waist and mid-chest level and their feet were able to rest firmly on the ground.
- Seomra Ryan was redesigned to consider the age of the children attending this room (1 and 2 years of age). A large brightly coloured soft rug was positioned in the space to protect against falls, adjacent to the soft ball cushioned area, which was very popular with the Toddlers using this space. Floor space was free of obstacles to ensure that the children could safely walk and crawl around the space. Secured low chairs replaced highchairs in this room for the children that were not yet able to sit unsecured in chairs. These chairs were able to be positioned at the child sized table thus ensuring that all the children felt included in all the tabletop activities, which ranged from eating to arts and craft activities to puzzles and other activities.
- The play kitchens in Seomra Aisling, Seomra Oisin, Seomra Dara and Seomra Scott were stocked with play equipment and utensils for the children to use. This allowed the children the ability to play and learn to use such items.
- The role play costumes in Seomra Oisin were presented to children on hooks, with accessories also available to enhance the experience for the children when they dressed up.
- Wellington boots and outdoor gear were available to the children. On the day of inspection, the outdoor area was used on numerous occasions throughout the day. Different sections were used by different age groups. There was a large area covered that could be used in bad weather.
- Hand washing was observed at various times throughout the inspection; the children were observed washing their hands prior to lunch time and their snack times.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The play environment was flexible and was responsive to the emerging needs of the children attending. The staff members used recycled materials when making resources. The use of homemade play resources fostered creativity and sensory exploration. The children attending the Seomra Oisín playroom were involved in a local art exhibition. Their artwork focusing on culture, creativity and self-expression was displayed in a local library. The children's interpretations of "The Starry Night" painting by Van Gogh was on display for a number of weeks.
- The registered provider supported children to form and sustain positive relationships with the staff. The key worker approach was operating in all the playrooms, which was designed to record observations and support the care of each child. Positive and warm interactions were observed between the staff and the children. During the inspection, there appeared to be a positive team spirit among the staff and management. The staff were observed constantly talking and linking with each other and were able to ask for assistance when needed, like during nappy changing, during mealtimes and sleep times.
- The staff in Seomra Grace playroom had planted seeds and over a number of weeks the children were able to care for the seeds either at home or in the service. The project was called "Tiny seeds – Big Flowers". Each child had a personalised book with photographs of the various stages involved, which outlined how they cared for the plant; they got to understand and observe the various stages of growth.