

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK013
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ardagh Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Main Street, Ardagh, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V42 VN26
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Martina McGrath
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	23/01/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	26	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Offices, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Riordan
<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

Ardagh Montessori school is a sessional pre-school service, located in a village of Ardagh in Co. Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 12.00pm. The facility can cater for a maximum of 33 preschool children at any one time. On the day of inspection there were 26 preschool children registered to attend the service. The school operates from 2 playrooms indoors and from an outdoor play area to the front and at the rear of the premises. A service for school aged children is provided each afternoon.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge at the service. There are 3 additional staff employed to work in the pre-school. All staff have the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.

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 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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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. She was available on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) There were written validated references, available in respect of each staff working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not provided, references from alternative reputable sources were given.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff as none had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

## 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 following policies were reviewed.

#### **Recruitment Policy**

This Recruitment policy set out the procedures and effective systems to be followed when hiring employees, including details of the required probationary period involved in the process. It clearly set out the vetting requirements. It detailed how the records related to the recruitment process for each individual were stored and for how long these records were retained. There was evidence available on the day of the inspection to show the procedures in the policy were adhered to when new staff were employed at the service over the previous 12 months.

#### **Policy on the use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices**

The policy described the procedures for when staff could photograph or record a child or children in the service. It set out how photographic or recording devices were used and permitted in the service, including when a person could have access to them, in what circumstances and for what purpose. A designated work phone only was allowed to be used in the service for taking photographs. All parents had given signed consent to have their child's photograph taken.

#### **Staff Training Policy**

The staff training policy set out how staff training needs were identified in the service and addressed. It set out what resources were provided for training by the service management. It outlined the details of induction training, and it set out the availability of ongoing training and professional development for all staff working at the service.

#### **Supervision of Staff Policy**

The policy stated that employees were appropriately supervised and supported in the service at all times in relation to their work practices. It outlined the format, duration and frequency of supervision, including induction and ongoing management. It set out what records were kept for supervision, where these records were stored and for how long the records were kept for.

All of the above policies were reviewed every two years, and a summary of the policies were outlined in each staff members handbook.

### 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) The service operates a morning sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00md. On the day of the inspection there were 26 pre-school children present with 3 staff members. There were 18 children present in the large preschool room with 2 staff members. There were 8 preschool children present in Room 2 with 1 staff member. The adult child ratio was compliant with the requirements of Regulation 11.

(3) At all times the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in 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*

#### Compliance Information

##### BASIC NEEDS

There was a Healthy eating policy in the service and parents provided a nutritious snack for the children to have each day at lunch time. Children were encouraged to take regular drinks, and their water bottles were easily accessible to them throughout the day, when playing both indoors and outside.

Sanitary accommodation was located close to the preschool room and children were observed independently using the toilet facilities. Hot water, liquid soap and paper handtowels were provided to ensure hygienic hand

washing. All waste was safely disposed of, in foot pedal operated lidded bins. Protective clothing was available for children to use during messy play activities. Clearly labelled individual spaces for each child's belongings were available to support organised access and independence for all children attending the service. Rest areas with comfortable seating, cushions and blankets were accessible in both rooms.

The children had regular change of environment. Children spend long periods of time in the outdoor playground at the rear of the premises. Outdoor rain gear and wellingtons were also available to ensure children got to play outside in all weather conditions.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

Preschool room 1 was a large well-resourced room which was clearly laid out to accommodate the needs of the children. Low level tables and chairs were available in the centre of the room for tabletop activities and for dining at lunch time. A library area with a range of reading material next to soft furnishings provided a relaxation/rest space. Art and craft facilities were available with lots of painting and drawing equipment easily accessible. Lots of children's artwork and items of interest were displayed at children's eye level.

Preschool room 2 was a smaller space and accommodated a maximum of 8 children and 1 staff at any one time. Play materials and equipment was rotated between both rooms depending on the changing themes for learning and children's interests and stages of development.

Children spend time outdoors where they had lots of space for active play time. Children had access to ride on toys, bikes and trikes in the front yard of the premises. Lots of opportunities for gardening, planting and messy play were available in the area to the rear of the premises. A sheltered area was provided in the back garden to ensure children got outdoors in all weather conditions.

The indoor and the outdoor areas was continuously reviewed, changed, and enhanced to suit the children's ever-changing interests, capabilities and preferences, lesson themes, and curriculum plans.

### 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) There were 2 staff members working at the service that had the required first aid responder training completed. Both certificates were in date up to May 2026 and October 2027.

(2)(a) A first aid box stocked with all the necessary materials was stored in an easily accessible location in the preschool.

(b) The first aid box was at all times available to the children both when indoors and outdoors at the service.

### 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.*

*(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) Fire drills were carried out monthly. According to the documented record of drills the most recent drill took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2025.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises, with the most recent service of fire extinguisher completed in January 2026. The fire alarm system was last checked on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2026.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the front hallway of the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 30 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 and expired on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2026.