

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK017
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Name of Service:	Ballykennedy Montessori
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Address of Service:	Ballykennedy South, Ballingarry, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 ERV0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aine O'Connor
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Offices, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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
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Description of service

Ballykenedy Montessori school provides a sessional preschool service each morning from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Monday to Friday. The service operates from a well-designed, purpose-built preschool room adjacent to the registered provider's home. An outdoor play facility is available to the rear of the premises. The facility can accommodate a maximum of 22 preschool children each day.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and the manager of the preschool service. There are two additional staff employed to work each morning at the preschool. All staff hold the required qualifications in Early Years Care and Education. On the day of the inspection a 3rd level student completing a college placement was present in the service.

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.

(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 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 references, from past employers, available in respect of each staff and student working at the service.

(b) All references were sourced from previous employers or reputable sources such as schools or colleges.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of each staff and student present or working at the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) No police vetting was required as none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction.

(4) Each staff working at the service held a major award 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.

(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 programme from 9.30am to 12.30pm. On the day of the inspection there were 18 pre-school children present with 2 staff and 1 student for the morning sessional service. One staff member was on leave. 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 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.

Compliance Information

(1) The enrolment forms for 10 preschool children registered to attend the service were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of the children.

(a) The name and date of birth of each child.

(b) The date on which each child first attended the service was recorded.

(c) Provision to record the date on which each child ceased to attend the service was available on all forms.

(d) The name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian of the child could be contacted during the hours of operation of the service.

(e) Authorisation for the collection of each child.

(f) Details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of additional care or attention.

(g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.

(h) Record of immunisations received by the child.

(i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of each child in the event of an emergency.

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

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility.
 - (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility was registered to provide services. This was included in each child's enrolment pack.
 - (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) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. A record of this was also provided to parents when children were enrolled.
 - (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
 - (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
 - (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending 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:

A healthy eating policy was implemented within the service. Parents supplied nutritious snacks for their children's lunch each day. During break times, children consumed a selection of sandwiches, fruits, crackers, yogurts, and cheese. All perishable items were appropriately refrigerated until needed each morning. Children were not rushed at mealtimes and were allowed extra time dining when needed.

Children were granted unrestricted access to sanitary accommodation facilities adjacent to the pre-school room. The amenities included low-level sinks, hot water, liquid soap, and hand towels, all designed to encourage proper hygiene practices. Foot pedal-operated, lidded bins were available for secure waste disposal.

A large, soft couch situated in the library area offered children a comfortable place to rest when tired or to sit while reading.

Children engaged in extended outdoor activities daily in a well-equipped play area at the rear of the premises. A sheltered section enabled continued outdoor play during inclement weather.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The sessional service operated from a spacious, well-appointed preschool room. Low-level, open shelving units displayed an array of suitable toys and educational materials. Numerous posters throughout the room promoted learning opportunities. Children's artwork was exhibited at suitable levels on many walls. Labelled coat hooks and pigeonholes allowed for organised storage of personal belongings, supporting independence among the children.

The outdoor play area located at the rear of the premises was a secure, well-resourced space. A sizable cement yard accommodated ride-on toys, tricycles, and balance bikes, while a grass section facilitated ball games. A large slide was positioned in the sheltered area, and a sizable shed ensured safe storage of outdoor play equipment. Children were supervised at all times during outdoor activities. Both indoor and outdoor environments were

continually evaluated and enhanced to align with the evolving interests, capabilities, preferences, themes, and curriculum plans of the service.

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 external entrance door was locked and safely secured. Exit routes from the outdoor play areas were safely secured.
- Safe storage well out of children's reach was available for the cleaning agents and cleaning equipment used in the service.
- The person in charge ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children and adults present in the service.
- Fire doors leading from the preschool were clear and unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- A high standard of operational hygiene was observed in all areas of the premises both internally and externally.
- All tabletops were adequately cleaned before and after mealtimes.
- Staff were observed supervising and encouraging children to wash their hands after using sanitary facilities and following messy play activities.

Administration of Medication:

- A policy was in place at the service to ensure safety with the administration of all medicines at the preschool. A template document was available to record all details of consent and administration.

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) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out monthly. The most recent fire drill took place on the 26th of January 2026.
- (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 having been completed in August 2025 and February 2026.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.