

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO041
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Name of Service:	Magic Moments
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Address of Service:	Abbey Drive, Ballisodare, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 AEKI
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Name of Registered Provider:	Grace O Boyle
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	01/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Killeen and Y. Coyne
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Magic Moments Montessori School is a privately run service in a community building which is located in a residential area on the outskirts of Sligo town. The service is privately operated by the registered provider who is also the person in charge. The registered provider is providing a preschool service. The service caters for children in the age range of 2 years and 8 months to 5 years. The service operates between the hours of 9.30am and 12.30 pm. They are also registered for a breakfast Club and after school service.

Staffing

There are three staff employed by the service. One is the registered provider and one staff member providing direct care. A third staff member who works in the school age service also provides relief in the pre-school when required.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25 and 29. 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, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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) (b)

There was a person in charge and a person to deputise as required. On the day of inspection, the person in charge and deputy in charge were on site working directly with the children.

(c) After speaking with the staff, it was clear that there was a clear governance structure in place and adults were aware of their roles and responsibilities. The registered provider and staff member spoke and evidenced roles and responsibilities to the inspector.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of the three adults employed in the service were reviewed on the day of inspection.

There were five written and verified past employer references.

One reference from another source in the absence of a past employer,

were available in respect of one adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for three staff working directly with the children. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of the state for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Three adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 registered provider ensured that there were adequate adults available to care for the number of children attending the service. There was a total of 2 adults working directly with 20 children on the day of the inspection.

(3)

There were twenty children in total attending the service being supervised by two staff members. The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times throughout the 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, 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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

- The indoor environment was thoughtfully designed to be comfortable, pleasant, and well-organized to meet the needs of the children attending the service. It featured distinct interest areas equipped with a wide variety of play materials and equipment, effectively stimulating various aspects of a child's development.
- The children had access to a comprehensive selection of equipment, including threading exercises, pegging and sorting activities, small cars, and construction blocks, all of which supported cognitive and fine motor development. Additionally, there was a dedicated sensory area where children were observed playing with kinetic sand, a reading/rest area stocked with a variety of books, and a dress-up area.

- The environment included a kitchen/home area furnished with child-sized furniture, dolls and accessories, food items, and kitchen accessories. There was also a play shop equipped with food items and cash registers, a child-sized ice-cream dispenser, a construction area with various blocks, a small world area, and a farm set complete with a selection of farm animals.
- Children were observed playing together with blocks and cars and completing more focused activities like painting. The staff were observed sitting with the children and offering assistance as the children looked for it.
- Children artwork was displayed on the walls and each child had a folder with all their artwork that they had completed.
- The relaxation area consisted of carpeted floor and large cushions, to facilitate rest throughout the day if required. Children were seen on the day of inspection after snack time lying down and resting on the cushions.
- There was ample room in the large playroom for children to move freely and be active in their play. The children were also seen utilising the hall inside the front door where they were seen using the space for yoga poses and breathing techniques.
- The service promoted healthy eating and food, and snacks were provided from home. On the morning of inspection, children were observed enjoying a range of healthy snacks such as yogurt, sandwiches, apples, strawberries and cucumber. There were whole grapes in one lunch box however once staff member observed the lunch box, they removed the grapes and cut them.
- There was drinking water provided in individual bottles that were left at the door of the playroom for easy access for the preschool children throughout the session.
- The tables and chairs were appropriate for the stage and development of the children. Children were observed being encouraged to get their own food from their lunch boxes and feed themselves independently. Staff members were observed speaking with the children during snack time and using it as an opportunity to enhance social interaction. Snack time was not rushed, and each child was given the time they needed to finish their snack.
- Children were observed using the toilet independently with both adults in the room available to support if required. Appropriate hand washing practise were encouraged throughout the session before snack and after messy play.
- Staff were observed on the day of inspection responding to the children's needs appropriately by getting down to their level using soft tones and making eye contact with them when they were speaking. Staff

were observed to be responsive to the interactions of the children during play helping three children who were having a disagreement over a toy listen to each other and spoke about the importance of taking turns and sharing resources.

- Children were eased into different transitions of the day through, clean up songs and verbal prompts from the adults. It was evident from the children’s behaviour that they were familiar with the normal routine of the day.
- Ongoing observation and assessment were documented for each child on an electric devise which the parents could access through their phones at any time. Each child had their own profile, and information was inputted into this on a daily weekly basis which helped create a complete well-rounded picture of each child’s experience in the preschool. There was a planning wall with short term and long-term plans for the children.
- Staff informed the inspector that outdoor play forms an integral part of the daily routine and children spend time each day engaged in physical play outdoors. The outdoor play area is a community playground located to the side of the pre-school. The play area was well equipped to include an artificial shock absorbent material, two large climbing frames with a slide, 3 balancing beams, rotating seat, sea saw, benches, zip lines and a football pitch.

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 main entrance to the service was secured by a locked door the door was locked from the inside with a key which was out of reach of the children. Staff were vigilant when opening and closing the door to prevent a child from exiting the premises unsupervised. Visitor access was controlled by the main door being kept locked during the time of the service and could only be opened from the inside.
- The outside play area was secured by wire fence perimeter and gated. And children were actively supervised by adults while outside.

- Toys and play equipment and materials were developmentally appropriate, kept in good repair and did not pose an injury risk to children.
- The designated emergency exit doors were observed to be clear and unobstructed.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water was available for use by the children to facilitate safe and hygienic hand washing.
- Blind cords were secure to prevent risk of injury.
- Waste disposal facilities were inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were no trailing flexes in the service.
- The person in charge clearly identified to the early years' inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children and on the day of inspection drop off and pickup was observed by the inspectors.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, and after toileting. Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The sanitary accommodations had foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school room was well ventilated with the windows open at times throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break. Children were seen being encouraged to clean up after snack.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and maintained, staff were observed cleaning the bathroom after the children had finished snack.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection, however on discussion with staff member they were knowledgeable about the service medication policy and the safe steps they would take if a child became unwell.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes were free from obstruction monthly fire drills had been conducted last one completed 20th March 2025. The fire exits were easily recognisable and not obstructed

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The cleaning products which included Methylated spirit, paint was not securely stored away, and the pre-school children could get access to them as the press that they were stored in was unlocked.

- Garda vetting was available for three staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

- It was noted on the day of inspection that the cleaning in some areas of the pre-school had not been completed. For example, one of the foot pedal operated bins was rusty and there was a large build-up of dirt and cobwebs on the window in the bathroom used by the preschool children. In addition, there was no paper towels for drying hands or step up for children to access the toilet.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The press containing hazardous items has been secured with a padlock. Access to the press is restricted to staff personnel only. The key to the padlock is stored in a locked filing cabinet, which is accessible exclusively by staff members.
- An application for renewal of garda vetting for one vetting disclosure that was greater than three years old had been submitted to the garda vetting bureau. Garda vetting will be renewed every three years adherence with regulations.

Infection Control:

- The bathroom was given a deep clean and a new foot operated pedal bin was purchased. The paper towels have been replenished. The second bathroom has now been added to the cleaning schedule with specific tasks to be completed daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence has been submitted
- Photographic evidence has been submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the register provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection and this regulation is now compliant.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was always immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. One adult had up to date first aid for children up until 5th of July 2026.

(2) (a) (b)

The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location on the premises, was accessible to the staff at all times in the event it would be required.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(a) of sound and stable structure,

(b) safe and secure,

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

- (a) On a visible check there were no evidence of defects. The registered provider confirmed that the building was of sound and stable structure.
- (b) On the inspector's arrival, the front door was locked ensuring there was no unauthorised access or unsupervised exit of the premises.
- (c) The service was adequately heated. windows could be opened to circulate fresh air and provide natural light and ventilation in the main playroom. Mechanical ventilation vent was in use in one sanitary area.
- (d) The service appeared to be kept clean and well maintained, there was a cleaning schedule in place for the service.
- (e) There were sufficient toilets and wash hand basins available to the children. There was adequate toilet for staff.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The adult toilet for staff was not accessible for use. There were items of storage blocking the access and therefore was not in use on the day. It is acknowledged that the registered provider informed the inspector on the day that they would address same.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. There are plans for adding an additional toilet. In the interim the storeroom has been cleared out and is now accessible to staff. The toilet has been given a deep clean and restocked. It is now accessible and in use for staff. We have contacted an architect to draw up plans for reconstructing part of the afterschool. These plans will include a new staff toilet. The building work is due to commence in August 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Architectural plans submitted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the register provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection and this regulation is now compliant.