

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015SO050

**Name of Service:** Saints & Scholars Creche & Montessori School

**Address of Service:** Unit 4 Airport Business Park, Strandhill, Sligo, Co. Sligo

**Eircode:** F91 K728

**Name of Registered Provider:** Colette Carter

**Service type:** Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 29/10/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<b>AM</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>79</b>

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello & K Folan
<b>Title:</b>	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

### Description of service

Saints & Scholars Creche & Montessori School is a privately owned service in Strandhill, Co Sligo. The service is registered to provide full day care, parttime and sessional services to children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. The registered opening hours are from 08:00-18:00 hours. The service is based in business units in an industrial park. There are three separate entrances at the front of the units and seven playrooms are provided for the preschool service. One unit contains the Montessori 3 and Montessori Junior playrooms located at ground floor level. A second unit contains the Toddler, Toddler 1 and Toddler playrooms on the first floor and a third unit contains the Montessori Senior and Toddler 3 playrooms. Sanitary facilities, a kitchen, staff room and offices are provided on the premises. A large enclosed outdoor area is available at the side of the unit.

### Staffing

Twenty-two adults are employed in the service, this includes the registered provider, a bus driver, an administrative assistant, kitchen staff and seventeen adults working directly with the preschool 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 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 9,11,15,16,22,23,24,25 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

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.

### Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued on the day of inspection as two adults did not have the required garda vetting in place prior to working directly with preschool children. A response was received on the 30 October 2025. Please refer to Regulation 9 in this report.

### 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, 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.*

*(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)(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that six new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection, and one student had commenced in the service.

Nine written and validated references from a past employer and one written and verified reference were available for the seven adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for twenty staff. 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)

Four adults had the required international police vetting as these four adults had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4)

Documentary evidence was presented to demonstrate that six of the newly employed adults had obtained 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (c)

An immediate action notice was issued on the day as two adults working directly with the preschool children did not have the required garda vetting disclosure in place prior to having access to preschool children.

(d)

International police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4) There was no qualification on file for one adult. On discussion with the registered provider, it was established that one adult, working directly with the preschool children did not have the required qualification.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(2) (c)

Garda vetting disclosures have been received and submitted to the inspectorate. A list has been compiled of all staff, date vetted and date of expiry. Management will issue vetting invitation 3 months prior to month of expiry.

(d)

International police vetting has been received and submitted.

(4)

This adult no longer works with the preschool children. Any adult who does not have a qualification will not work directly with the preschool children.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- Garda vetting submitted.
- International police vetting submitted.

## Summary Comment

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

### 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)  
There were 20 adults working directly with 81 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of attendance records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation. One adult student was also present in the care rooms.

(2)  
The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

On the morning of the inspection:

- In the Montessori Junior room, 3 adults cared for 14 children aged between 2-3 years of age.
- In the Montessori 3 room, 3 adults cared for 14 children aged between 3-4 years of age.
- In the Toddler room, 1 adult cared for 3 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Toddler 2 room, 3 adults cared for 15 children aged 2 years.
- In the Toddler 1 room, 3 adults cared for 8 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Toddler 3 room, 4 adults cared for 14 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Montessori Senior room, 3 adults cared for 13 children aged 4 years.

In the afternoon:

- In the Montessori Junior room, 3 adults cared for 13 children aged between 2-3 years of age.
- In the Montessori 3 room, 3 adults cared for 14 children aged between 3-4 years of age.
- In the Toddler room, 1 adult cared for 3 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Toddler 2 room, 3 adults cared for 15 children aged 2 years.

- In the Toddler 1 room, 3 adults cared for 8 children aged 1-2 years.
  - In the Toddler 3 room, 4 adults cared for 13 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Montessori Senior room, 3 adults cared for 13 children aged 4 years

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (c) an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a-i)

Fifteen records of the children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (c)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early year's inspector.

- (4)  
The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

### 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.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

- (a) all documents and records relating to references and Garda and police vetting obtained under Regulation 9(2) are retained for a period of 5 years from the date on which the person to whom the document or record relates commences working in the service, and*
- (b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

*(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (a-k)

The registered provider demonstrated compliance in ensuring that details of the service including the type of care provided, ratios, the facilities available, opening hours and fees were clearly displayed on the services noticeboard. A record of children's and staff attendance were recorded on a software application in each of the care rooms.

Medication administration records and accident and incident records were available in record books in each of the care rooms.

(2) (b)

The registered provider is aware of the statutory requirement to retain these records for a period of two years.

(4)

These records were made available to the parent /guardian as evidenced by parents' signatures.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

### Compliance Information

The service has a healthy eating policy in place. Children in full day care bring two snacks per day from home, with the service providing a hot meal at midday and a snack in the afternoon. On the day of the inspection the hot meal was chickpea curry with carrots and rice. The afternoon snack was scones or brown soda bread.

A weekly menu was available in the service which was observed to be nutritious with a varied menu.

Drinking water was available throughout the day with children having access to water bottles in each care room.

## 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:

- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.
- Stairgates were fitted at the top and bottom of each staircase.
- Snacks brought from the children's homes were safely stored in the refrigerator.
- Cleaning products in the care rooms were stored out of reach of preschool children.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm water liquid soap and paper towels were provided for the hygienic hand washing.
- Aprons and gloves were used during nappy changing time and adults and children demonstrated correct handwashing procedures.

##### Administration of Medication:

- On discussion with the staff, they were familiar with the correct procedures to safely administer medication when required.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Children under the age of two years slept in a cot with a waterproof mattress and the required linen.
- Children over the age of two slept on low level stackable beds.
- Sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes and recorded on the software application. The position of the child, their colour and breathing pattern was recorded correctly.
- Adults remained with children who slept on low level beds providing support, comfort and supervision.
- The sleep room temperature in the toddler 1 sleep room was 18.8°C during the designated sleep time which is in line with the required safe sleep temperatures.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The room temperature in Montessori junior room was 16.9°C which is below the required temperature of 18-22°C.
2. The material on a small sofa in the Toddler room had faded and torn and could not be effectively cleaned.
3. In Toddler 2, blind cords on two blinds were not secured to the wall. It is acknowledged that the cords were out of the reach of children on the day of inspection.
4. In Toddler 1, two of the highchairs were not fitted with a five-point safety harness or footrest.
5. In Montessori room 3, an unlocked door lead to a storage room with chemicals and access to bait box which if remains unlocked poses a risk of safety to the preschool child.
6. A leak in the handwash sink in the toddler room pose a risk of slip to the children or adults working in the service and required to be fixed. It is acknowledged that staff present had tried to prevent slips by using a towel to dry the wet floor.

#### Infection Control:

7. In the Toddler 1 room at mealtime, bibs were not used to protect children's clothing.

#### Safe Sleep:

8. The Toddler room sleep temperature was recorded at 14.9°C which is below the required temperature

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

In a written response the Registered provider stated:

1. The staff have been re-educated and reminded about the importance of checking the room temperatures . Signs have been displayed in the rooms. All air cons and mechanical heating is in good working order and the extra oil electric heater in small sleep room is in use in case of a very cold day where the room has not reached the desired temperature.
2. The sofa has been removed. Staff will report tears or rips in the future.
3. Blind chords have been secured. Staff have been reminded to report such safety issues.

4. The highchairs have been removed from the toddler room in question, which had the waist band harness and replaced by low level chairs for feeding purposes only with 5 point safety harness .
5. A new handle has been purchased and fixed to the door out of reach of the preschool children. Staff informed about ensuring this door is closed at all times. This will be included in the daily risk assessment checklist.
6. Leek has been fixed and staff members have been informed to report all maintenance issues to management.

### Infection Control:

7. Clothes protectors are available in the service. Staff informed to use these clothes protectors for mealtimes.

### Safe Sleep:

8. The staff have been re-educated and reminded about the importance of checking the room temperatures . Signs have been displayed in the rooms. All air cons and mechanical heating is in good working order and the extra oil electric heater in small sleep room is in use in case of a very cold day where the room has not reached the desired temperature

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. No evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.
4. Photographic evidence submitted.
5. Photographic evidence submitted.
6. Photographic evidence submitted.

#### Infection Control:

7. No evidence submitted.

#### Safe Sleep:

8. Photographic evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

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

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

Records demonstrated that each child was checked in and out of the service by staff in each room on a daily basis.

(3)(a)(b)

A visitors' book was provided in the main hallway of the service. Visitors to the service were required to sign in on arrival to the service.

(4)

Records were retained for the required time period of one year.

## 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)

Two staff in the service were trained in first aid for children. At least one trained member of staff was available to the children at all times.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box available in each care room in the service. Each first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the preschool children attending the service were adequately supervised.

In the care rooms good communication was observed between the staff team, who communicated with each other in relation to the children's movement in the service, such as a child taking a rest in another area or returning indoors after outdoor time.

Head counts were observed to be completed at numerous times throughout the day. Written signs were displayed on the walls of each care room, reminding the supervising staff to take a headcount throughout the day.

In the outdoors the staff members positioned themselves to ensure all children were in view while playing outdoors. At mealtimes the staff members sat alongside the children offering support if required.

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During sleep time in the toddler room 2, staff members sat supervising the children as they slept. In the toddler 1 sleep room, sleep supervision was completed by physical checks every ten minutes.