

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LS002
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Name of Service:	Quinagh Creche and Montessori School
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Address of Service:	34 Heatherhill, Graiguecullen, Carlow, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R93 AW64
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Ralph, Linda Fennelly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy
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

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years of age. The service is open between the hours of 08:00 and 17:30 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is operated by independent providers. The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey purpose-built premises. Four pre-school rooms (room one, room two, ECCE room and the Montessori room), a kitchen, a dining area, a reception area, a staff room, a cot room and a sleep room are provided. Room two is closed currently. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Carlow in Graiguecullen, County Laois.

Staffing

The registered providers employ three staff members. Both registered providers and two staff members were present during the inspection.

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:

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- Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1)(2)(4)
- Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1)(2)(8)(a)
- Regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child (1)
- Regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a)
- Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play
- Regulation 22 Food and Drink
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance
- Regulation 25 First Aid
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures
- Regulation 28 Insurance

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 providers, 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*

(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)

Both registered providers were available in the service.

(b)

Both registered providers were present for the duration of the inspection.

Five files were reviewed including both registered providers and three staff members. The following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members and the registered providers.

(b)

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The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members and the registered providers.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the five files reviewed. 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 available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff members held a major award at level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

Compliance Information

(1)

The ratio of adults to children was maintained in the morning in the ECCE room. The ratio of adults to children was maintained in the afternoon in room 1, the ECCE room and the Montessori room.

(2)

There were twenty-nine children attending the service in the morning supervised directly by four adults.

There were eighteen children attending the service in the afternoon supervised directly by four adults.

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(8)(a)

The staff records indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

1. In the morning the minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained during the inspection in room one where two adults were required to care for the seven children in attendance.
2. In the morning the minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained during the inspection in the Montessori room where two adults were required to care for the twelve children in attendance.

See table below.

Pre-School Rooms

Pre-School Rooms	Number of staff present	Number of staff required	Number of Children - 29
Room 1	1	2	7 children: 5 aged 1-2 years attending on a PT/FDC basis. 2 aged 2-3 years attending on a PT/FDC basis.
Montessori room	1	2	12 children: 7 aged 3-6 years attending on a PT/FDC basis. 5 aged 3-6 years attending on a sessional basis.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained at all times during the inspection. There were twenty-nine children attending the service in the morning being supervised directly by one of the two registered providers and two other adults.

The second registered provider present in the service was unable to act as a required staff member to meet the adult : child ratios in the service as she carried out roles relating to the preparation and serving of all meals and snacks, room cover for nappy changing, answering the front door and telephone, supervision of children using the toilet independently, carrying out physical checks on sleeping children and nappy changing for all other rooms.

These non-compliances were observed on a previous inspection 02 August 2023. The preventive action following this inspection failed to prevent recurrence of these non-compliances.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

The registered providers stated in the response that on the day of inspection they did not have cover so divided the groups so all children would be supervised. We were over our adult: child ratio and we will ensure this does

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not happen again. We have two new qualified staff members who commenced employment in May 2026. We will seek extra cover to prevent this non-compliance reoccurring in the future and if we do not have adequate numbers of staff to child ratio, we will close off that room for the day to avoid this happening again.

(Staff roster, breakdown of adult: child ratio and cover included).

(2)

The registered providers stated in the response that two new qualified staff members have commenced employment in May 2026 to ensure that the adult: child ratio is maintained. (Staff roster, breakdown of adult: child ratio and cover included).

Additionally, the service is committed to investigate the employment of a cook/floating member of staff should the service lose staff as at least both registered providers can work directly with the children instead of one of them acting as a floating member of staff.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.*

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Compliance Information

(1)

In a review of twelve child records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children 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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Staff were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used and eye contact used when speaking with the children. Children were content with their carers and staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children.

Children went to the toilet independently and washed their hands prior to snacks and meals. Nappy changing was carried out on a scheduled and individual needs basis.

Meals and snacks were prepared fresh on site by one of the registered providers. Staff supported children at mealtimes as they encouraged conversations and interactions between the children.

Children were observed to enjoy free play, tabletop activities, physical exercises and choosing their own activity to participate in. Low level tables and chairs were in place. A stock of equipment and play materials were in place including tabletop activities, toy kitchens, art easels, rest areas with books and construction toys. In the pre-school rooms children's seasonal artwork was displayed.

Each child had an individual scrapbook with play and work activities recorded. The registered providers and staff members stated that the scrapbooks are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The registered providers stated information sharing between the service and parents or guardians is via a text message system (SMS). Verbal handovers from staff to parents collecting children in the afternoon were noted.

A social media platform is used to communicate any special event activities or art and craft displays created by the children to parents and updated periodically.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A separate cot room for children under the age of two and equipped with eight standard cots was available in the service. A separate sleep room equipped with six low level beds were available in the service for any child over the age of two years who required rest or sleep.

(3) (a)

Outdoor play areas were available to the rear of the service. Concrete and artificial grass areas were in place equipped with a crawl tunnel and a selection of playhouses to support physical and imaginative play.

Two child sized sheltered areas were located to the rear of the service and equipped with benches, low level slides, rockers and a selection of bikes and trikes. A high-level concrete wall secured the rear of the outdoor area. Since the last inspection on 5 September 2024 the outdoor area has been segregated to provide separate age and stage appropriate play areas for the younger and older groups of children.

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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

A three-week menu plan was in place depicting the snacks and meals provided to children each day. The service provides all snacks and meals to children attending on a full day care basis. Meals and snacks are prepared fresh on site. The morning snack consisted of toast with butter, bananas and apples. The main meal consisted of a chicken and vegetable stew with mashed potato. Homemade soup and bread were on the menu for the evening tea. Milk was served with the main meal and water was available throughout the day. Parents provide the morning snack for children attending the ECCE session. Refrigerated storage facilities were available in the kitchen.

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 door was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. The toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm running water, liquid soap, electric hand dryers or hand towel dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing area. The nappy changing practice observed was carried out as per the service procedure. Openable windows for ventilation and foot operated pedal bins for the hygienic disposal of waste were provided in the pre-school rooms and associated sanitary accommodation. Mechanical ventilation was provided in the nappy changing area.

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Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in a secure location in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. Sleeping children were physically checked every ten minutes by a staff member.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were unobstructed from the premises. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service.

Outing:

The registered providers stated that outings were not carried out from the service.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- A log was in place in the reception area noting the name of the staff member who facilitated the entry and departure of each child as well as their arrival and departure times.
- (3)(a)
- All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) must be approved by a staff member.
- (b)
- A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.
- (4)
- The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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)
- Four staff members were qualified in First Aid Response (FAR) and were rostered to be available on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
- First aid boxes were identifiable and readily available in the service.
- (b)
- A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the children in the pre-school service.

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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)

Written records for completed fire drills were available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 16 February 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in February 2026. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in March 2026.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in conspicuous positions throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.