

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022LK003
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Name of Service:	St Anne's Montessori
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Address of Service:	St Anne's Primary School, Thomas Street, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 YY15
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nichola Meade
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	06/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	9
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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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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Located within St. Anne's Primary School in Rathkeale, Co. Limerick, St. Anne's Preschool offers a morning sessional programme from 9:15 am to 12:15 pm, and an afternoon sessional programme from 1.30 pm to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service features a large, fully equipped playroom with convenient access to sanitary facilities and a spacious outdoor playground for daily exercise. There are 20 preschool children registered to attend the morning class and 11 preschool children on the register for the afternoon class.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner of the service and the designated person in charge of operating the facility. An additional two staff are employed to work each day at the service. All staff members have the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. A second level student was also present on a work experience placement on the day of 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 of operating the service and was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that a person in charge was working at all times.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) All references were from either past employers or from other reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges attended.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for each staff member and from the student who was present on the day of the inspection. 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 member.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that there were at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 13 preschool children, and 3 adults present for the morning class. There were 9 preschool children and 1 adult present for the afternoon class. The adult child ratio was correct.

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:

The preschool service promoted a healthy eating policy, with parents providing the children with nutritious and varied snacks of yogurts, fruits, cheese, and sandwiches. Children's drinks remained easily accessible all day on low-level, open shelving. Sanitary accommodation was located close to the room with hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels easily accessible to ensure hygienic washing of hands. Foot-pedal operated, lidded bins were provided to ensure the safe disposal of all waste.

To support all types of activities, protective aprons and spare clothes were available for messy play, and every morning began with outdoor time in the large playground.

Individual records were carefully maintained for all children to track progress, goals, and plan specific interventions.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Located in a spacious primary school classroom, the service featured lots of purpose-built interest areas, including construction area, home and imaginative play, and reading corners. These were regularly adapted and rearranged to meet children's evolving needs and interests. Accessibility was a key focus, with child-sized furniture and low-level shelving allowing children to engage independently with all play materials.

To ensure a predictable and supportive environment and smooth transitions, a visual picture timetable was used to help children navigate the daily routine with confidence. Literacy and vocabulary were actively promoted through a daily mix of stories, songs, and interactive conversations. Children enjoyed daily active play in the school playground, which included a covered area to ensure outdoor time continued even in wet weather. A large outdoor storage shed was provided to facilitate the safe storage of all outdoor play equipment.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 internal and external doors to the premises were secured at all times. Staff allowed access to all who entered the facility. All outdoor play areas were enclosed with high walls and gates, ensuring children could not leave this area of the service unsupervised. All toys and play equipment were noted to be in good condition and free from pinch and crush points. All hazardous cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children

Infection Control:

The service was cleaned on a regular basis with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the building. A detailed cleaning programme was in place. All tabletop surfaces were cleaned prior to and after mealtimes.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Perishable lunch items provided by parents were not kept in a refrigerator. Storing these foods outside of the required temperature-controlled environment posed a potential food safety risk and could expose children to illness.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

In accordance with the food safety best practice, all perishable items for children's lunches are kept in the facility refrigerator until required each day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

The response to the inspection report outlining updated protocols for food management at the service.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.*

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 13th 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 November 2025 and February 2026.

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) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises indoors and outdoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door ensured all who entered the premises were checked in by an authorised person.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.

(d) All areas inside and outside were well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets, and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults present each day. A disability access toilet was available if required.