

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC248
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Lorraine's Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Cobh (Great Island) Community Centre, Cobh, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P24 WP82
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lorraine Peterson
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	14/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM	11
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork T23 X440
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast & J Dennehy
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector & Inspection and Registration Manager

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Lorraine's Montessori School is a privately owned full day care service. Children aged 2 to 6 years are accommodated and can avail of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme from 8.45am to 11.45am, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year. Registered daily opening hours are from 7.45am to 3.30pm, however, the setting currently operates from 8.45am to 2.30pm each Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 8.45am to 12.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Situated in the town of Cobh, the service operates from a single storey premises, on the grounds of Cobh (Great Island) Community Centre. It comprises one operational care room, with adjoining sanitary facilities, a sensory room and a kitchen/office area. From the care room, the children have direct access to an enclosed outdoor play environment, at the rear of the building.

### Staffing

At present, there are five adults attached to the childcare facility, including the registered provider, one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme and a relief staff member. Each of the five adults are involved in the direct care of the children and all have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. A student was also undertaking work experience.

### 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.

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 person in charge, deputy, 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 had ensured that both a designated person in charge and a deputy were assigned to the setting.

(b) The deputy person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived. The person in charge arrived within 20 minutes and remained to facilitate the remainder of the inspection. It was demonstrated through review of the staff roster that either the person in charge or the deputy was present during the service's hours of operation.

(2) Recruitment records in relation to the five adults employed at the setting were assessed, along with those of the student. The following information was obtained:

(a) There were seven written past employer references available and validations were on file for five of these references.

- (b) Two of the references were from sources other than previous employers and a record of validation was available for one of these references.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. A Garda vetting disclosure was not required in respect of the student.
- (d) Not applicable. Following a review of the staff files, there was no evidence that international police vetting was required.
- (4) There was evidence that the five staff members had each attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Three records of validation were unavailable for the written references in respect of two adults. A second written and validated reference was not available for one of these adults. There were no written or validated references on file for the student.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The written reply from the registered provider outlined that the referees have been contacted in relation to the references. As a preventive measure, staff files will be checked monthly.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Three validation records, a second written and validated reference in respect of one of the adults and two written and validated references, in respect of the student.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider is accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.

### 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) During the period of inspection, it was noted that a sufficient number of adults were working with the children who attended the service.
- (2) The required adult to child ratios were ensured. Upon the inspectors' arrival, there were 18 children aged 2½ to 5 years in attendance, with 2 adults present. A third adult was available from 9.50am. In the afternoon, 3 adults were responsible for the direct care of 11 children, who were aged 2½ to 5 years.
- (8)
- (a) At least two adults were present throughout the inspection period and the staff roster also demonstrated that a minimum of two adults were consistently present at the service, throughout the hours of operation.

### 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

A sample of 12 registration forms of the children enrolled at the service were reviewed, as part of the inspection process.

(1) The required information, as detailed under parts (a) (c) (d) (e) (g) and (i) of this regulation, were maintained in writing in respect of each child attending the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b) The information available regarding when a child first attended the service was not available on five of the forms reviewed.

(f) The details of an illness and required care provision was not available in relation to one of the children. This posed a possible safety risk to the child, in the event of an incident or an emergency.

(h) Information regarding the child's immunisation status was unavailable on 8 of the 12 forms reviewed.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(b) The response from the registered provider stated that the start dates have been added to the five forms and that going forward, forms will be checked at the start of every month.

(f) A staff meeting was held to discuss an action plan for the child, which is now in place. Staff then met with the child's parents to discuss the action plan, which was subsequently signed by the child's mother. Going forward, it will be ensured that a plan is put in place for any children attending the service, who may require same.

(h) The immunisation records have been received for seven of the children. The eighth child no longer attends the service. The forms will be checked monthly by a nominated staff member.

### Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (b) Evidence to demonstrate that the start dates have been added to the five registration forms.
- (f) An emergency care plan in respect of the child.
- (h) Immunisation records in respect of seven of the children.

### Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 15.

## 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

(1)(a)

#### Supporting relationships:

- The adults demonstrated kindness and positive regard for the children in their care. For example, upcoming activities were communicated to the children in advance of being initiated and the children were appropriately assisted with routine tasks.
- The children had opportunities to engage in a variety of activities throughout the morning, such as story time, art and crafts, yoga and St. Patrick's Day celebrations.
- In working in partnership with parents, the deputy advised that the service had an open door policy and that in-person meetings with parents were facilitated as needed. A messaging application was regularly used to share photographs of the children, information regarding curriculum themes and reminders in relation to upcoming events. Examples of such communication were presented for review.
- The inspectors were informed by the person in charge and the deputy that frequent staff meetings were held. During these meetings, staff came together to plan themed activities, discuss training requirements and to note any concerns arising.

- Staff supported children who were preparing to go to primary school, through creating individual records, referred to as transition flowers. These information sharing tools reflected children’s likes, achievements and developmental milestones, which could subsequently be passed onto the relevant primary school.

### 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-*

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) A supply of linen and three stackable beds were held in storage, to accommodate children who may require sleep while in attendance.

There was a soft seating area included within the main care room, for any child who wished to opt out of scheduled activities or required time to relax. This space was furnished with a vinyl sofa and a stack of vinyl cushions. A selection of books was accessible from an adjacent bookshelf.

### 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:

- Unauthorised entry to the childcare facility was prevented through the use of a key pad mechanism, which was installed beside the main entrance door. On the interior, the door release button was positioned at a high level, which reduced the risk of a child exiting the building unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was securely enclosed by high-level fencing and a secured gate.
- Children’s access to cleaning agents was prevented through ensuring that such items were stored out of their reach.
- Safety clips were in place to secure blind cords.
- Wall mounted storage was provided for firefighting equipment.

- All of the examined play resources and equipment were found to be in good working order.
- Electrical flexes were inaccessible to children.

### Infection control:

- Wash hand basins were equipped with liquid soap and paper towels for hygienic handwashing and drying.
- Disposable aprons and gloves were readily accessible for nappy changing.
- Children's coats were stored on individual wall hooks and a shelving unit was provided for their bags.
- Open windows in the care room allowed for natural ventilation throughout the morning.

### Administration of medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered over the course of the inspection.
- The medication held at the setting was observed to be stored out of the children's reach, had been clearly labelled and was in-date.

### Fire safety:

- Fire exits were found to be free from obstruction.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General safety:

1. The water temperatures recorded at the children's wash hand basins exceeded 43°C, which increased the risk of scalding. Temperatures of 48.2°C and 48.8°C were recorded.

#### Infection control:

2. The nappy changing mat in the staff sanitary facility was not maintained in a clean condition. Dirt particles were evident in the corners and crevices of the mat and on the underside of the mat. This increased the risk of cross infection.
3. The children's perishables snacks, which included cheese and yogurts, were not refrigerated at the service, prior to the mid-morning meal break. This increased the risk of food spoilage. The children were observed to retrieve their snacks from their bags, which were stored in the care room. The person in charge advised that the labelled container, which had been used to store the perishables in the refrigerator, was damaged. However, this issue was also found at the previous inspection on 24 April 2023. The CAPA response at the time stated that all perishable snacks were refrigerated, however, this was not found in practice.
4. Spare clothing for the children was stored uncovered in the staff sanitary facility. This increased the risk of cross infection.

5. Foot pedal operated bins were unavailable in the children's sanitary facilities for the hygienic disposal of used paper towels. Swing lidded bins were in use, which posed a risk of cross infection.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General safety:

1. The CAPA response stated that the water temperature issue has been addressed and that the temperature will be checked weekly, by a nominated staff member.

#### Infection control:

2. A new changing mat has been purchased and this will be checked on a weekly basis.
3. A new box will be used for storing perishables in the fridge. This will continue to be used going forward.
4. Spare clothes are now stored in zip lock bags.
5. Foot pedal operated bins are now in place.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General safety:

1. Video evidence in relation to the water temperature.

#### Infection control:

2. A photograph of the new changing mat.
3. Photographic evidence.
4. Photographs of the spare clothing stored in zip locked bags.
5. Photographs of the new pedal bins.

## Summary Comment

Following the corrective actions implemented by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

### 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

- (2)
- (a) Two first aid boxes were accessible to adults on a high-level shelf in the kitchen.
  - (b) Sufficient supplies were maintained and were available at all times.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) Neither of the two adults who held FAR certification were working at the service when the unannounced inspection commenced. It was acknowledged that the deputy, who was available, held a current paediatric first aid certificate and that a FAR trained adult arrived within 20 minutes. However, an adult with current FAR certification is required to be available to the children at all times.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The CAPA response stated that there has been a FAR qualified staff member available at the service each day. As a preventive measure, it will be ensured that there is a FAR trained staff member at the service each day.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Staff rosters, which demonstrate that a FAR trained adult is available to the children at all times.

#### Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-  
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

(e) For the children's use, there were two separate toilet facilities, each of which was equipped with one toilet and one wash hand basin. A wall mounted nappy changing unit was provided in the staff sanitary facility, which also included one toilet and one wash hand basin.