

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL058
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Name of Service:	Lakeview Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Lakeview House, Drumaboden, Ramelton, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F92 HY82
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Curran
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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

Lakeview Montessori School is a privately owned and operated preschool service located in a rural area between the villages of Ramelton and Kilmacrenan. The service provides sessional preschool care to children aged 2 to 6 years and operates a morning and afternoon session. The service is provided from the lower ground floor area of a split-level premises. The upper floor area is used as a domestic dwelling. There is one indoor playroom with adjacent sanitary facilities.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis alongside two staff members. All three staff members were working with the children on the day of 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. 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 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

(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

(2) At the time of inspection, the registered provider confirmed that there were three staff members who worked in the service. With reference to the above listed elements of Regulation 9, recruitment records in respect of the three staff members were reviewed and the following information was available:

- (a) (b) Two references from past employers, in particular the most recent past employer was on file for three staff members.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting from the relevant state was available for two staff members who required it.
- (4) Documentary evidence was presented to demonstrate that three staff members 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.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (2) The minimum adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. On the inspector's arrival at the service, 17 children were being cared for by two adults. An additional adult arrived at the service at 11.30am to cover lunch breaks and work in the afternoon session.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was a sufficient quantity of play materials for the number of children attending the service which was available on low level shelving and was observed to be easily accessible to the children. Additional resources and equipment were stored in various locations within the service to allow for toy rotation. The materials available were developmentally appropriate, challenging and provided opportunities for meaningful play experiences. Play items were observed to be made of durable, easy to clean material which was easy to maintain. Large items were secured to prevent the risk of injury by toppling over and there were no hazards observed on the equipment available to children both indoors and outdoors. The equipment was laid out and adequately resourced to allow children to play together in pairs or small groups. Comfortable adult seating was available in the room. There was an adequate quantity of tables and chairs provided in the service which were at a height suitable for the age of the children.

There was a designated outdoor play area on site which contained a range of equipment and resources that provided for the play, development and movement of children. There was adequate space for children engage in gross motor play and team games. The equipment was well maintained, developmentally appropriate and safe for use by the children attending 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.

Compliance Information

- (1) Children were signed in to the service on arrival and a review of previous attendance records demonstrated accurate arrival and departure times for each child.
- (3) (a) (b) The Inspector was asked to sign in to the service on arrival. A review of records demonstrated that all visitors to the service including parents, support workers and staff were signed in to the service on arrival.
- (4) Records for the previous year were available for inspection.

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) All three staff members held in date training in first aid for children as evidenced by certification.
- (2) (a) An adequately stocked first aid box was stored on a high-level shelf in the room.
- (b) The box was readily accessible to the staff if required.

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.
- (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) A written record of monthly fire drills was documented as having taken place in the service. The records were reviewed and noted that the last recorded fire drill carried out for the service was dated in June 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment located in the pre-school. Firefighting equipment was last serviced/inspected in August 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was prominently displayed at the exit door.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke detection system was not available. When queried by the inspector, it was established that the smoke detection equipment in the service was battery operated. Battery-powered smoke alarms are considered to be inadequate for use in pre-school services.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) Installed a Fire Detection and Alarm System (Mag 4 Fire Control Panel) which is now fully functional and operational to replace the non-compliant smoke detection equipment that was in place at time of inspection. We will incorporate a similar policy to our fire drills and fire fighting equipment when it comes to maintaining the number, type and maintenance of our Fire Detection and Alarm System with regular written and recorded checks in tandem with our fire drill procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

Images and documentation were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed and accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Certification was available to demonstrate that the service was insured for up to 22 children attending a sessional service with an expiry date in November 2025.