

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR008
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Name of Service:	Discoveries Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Olcovar, Shankill, Shankill, Dublin 18,
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Eircode:	D18 W2X2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lena O'Sullivan, Liz Mahon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland and S Quigley
Title:	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
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Description of service

Discoveries Creche and Montessori is a privately owned early years service located in a residential area of Shankill, South County Dublin. The service operates from a purpose-built premises on the ground floor of a residential apartment complex. Full day, part-time and sessional care and education are provided to children aged between six months and six years. The service consists of three care rooms, a sleep room and an outdoor area to the rear of the premises. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 7.30 am to 6.00 pm.

Staffing

There are currently 20 adults employed in the service, including 2 registered providers, the person in charge, a chef, a housekeeper and 16 adults employed to work directly with the children. On the day of the inspection, there were 15 adults present including one of the registered providers, the person in charge, the chef, 11 adults working directly with the children and an adult on a work placement program.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9, 11,16,19,23 and 27 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8 Notification of change in circumstances. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service.

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 registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider failed to notify the agency of a change in the person in charge which occurred in June 2025. The agency must be informed of any such change at least sixty days before the proposed change.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered providers stated that a notification of change in circumstance was submitted in June 2025 however; it was submitted to an incorrect address. A notification of change in circumstance for the person in charge has since been submitted and approved. A regulatory and notification policy and procedure have been introduced outlining required notifications and timelines and the responsibility has been assigned to management.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of email submitted dated June 2025

Copy of approval email for the change in person in charge

Regulatory and notification policy and procedure

Notification tracker record

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8 has been adequately addressed.

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.*

(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

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available during the inspection, and discussions with the person in charge, it was determined that seven new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection dated 6 April 2025. Additionally, on the day of the inspection, there was one student present on an educational work placement programme. A total of eight files were requested for review. Garda vetting for one staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal was also requested for review.

- (a) Fourteen records were available to evidence references from previous employers had been appropriately considered.
- (b) Two records were available to evidence references from reputable sources had been appropriately considered.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for nine adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Seven of the new employees required international police vetting, the required documentation was available for six of the adults.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the six adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE). One adult held a letter of eligibility to practise from the DCDE.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
 - (d) Police vetting was not available in relation to one adult who previously lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.
- (3) The registered providers did not ensure that appropriate checks were carried out prior to one adult working in the service as detailed above under (2) (d).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered providers have obtained Police vetting for the staff member. The service's recruitment policy has been updated to include the requirement for Police vetting from all jurisdictions in which an individual has lived for more than six months as an adult. In addition, an audit of all staff files has been completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting record

Updated recruitment policy

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 2 (d) and (3) has been adequately addressed.

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) On the day of the inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were 10 adults working directly with 44 children.
- (2) The minimum adult-to-child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection.

(8) The roster provided to the inspectors on the day of the inspection showed that a minimum of two adults were on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(k) The registered providers ensured that written records of accidents and incidents for children attending the service were maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements.

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

The registered providers ensured that children's learning, development and wellbeing were facilitated in the service through the provision of the following practices. Staff reported that the service provides all meals and snacks for the children. During the inspection, children were served macaroni and cheese for their dinner. The inspectors observed children feeding themselves independently, with staff remaining close by to provide support if required. During the meal, the staff engaged in conversation with the children, supporting the development of their communication and social skills. Drinks of water were available to children throughout the inspection, and children were offered water with their meals. Bibs were provided for young children to protect their clothing. Older children were provided with the opportunity to be helpers at mealtimes by handing out water to their peers.

Nappy changing was carried out on a schedule, and staff acted promptly when children required changing outside of the scheduled times. Staff were observed to use this time for warm one to one interaction with the children, supporting their sense of security. Children were provided with opportunities to develop their self-care skills, for

example, tidying up following play, using the toilet independently, and washing their hands routinely. Transitions to and from sleep were calm, with staff using soft tones to provide comfort and reassurance to children. Babies slept according to their individual routines, and children attending the Toddler room slept at a designated time after dinner. Staff reported that children could sleep outside of these times if required. Rest areas with soft matting and cushions were available in all care rooms, allowing children to take a break from activities if required. Transitions from one activity to the next were well managed, and children were given verbal indications of the change approaching. Staff reported that parents have the opportunity to discuss their child at drop off and collection, and the service uses a software application to provide information to parents in relation to updates on meals, nappy changes, sleep and daily activities.

Staff were affectionate and respectful in their interactions with the children. They used the children's names, provided praise and encouragement, and dropped to their level when engaging in conversations. Toys and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving, which facilitated choice and spontaneous play. These included home areas, libraries, construction materials, small world, puzzles, mark-making materials and Montessori equipment, which was available to older children. Child size tables and chairs were available to allow children to comfortably sit during mealtimes and while engaging in tabletop activities. The outdoor area provided an alternative environment for children which included, a kitchen, climbing frame, a playhouse, sand and water trays, seesaws, and a slide.

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:

- All toys and equipment observed on the day of the inspection were in good condition and free from pinch or crush points.
- The windows were secured and positioned out of children's reach.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely and were inaccessible to children.
- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering and to ensure children could not exit unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Pedal operated bins were in use in the bathrooms to support the safe disposal of waste.
- Liquid soap, warm water, and single use paper towels were available in the bathrooms. Children were supported to wash their hands following nappy changing, using the toilet and before lunch. Staff were also observed to follow appropriate hand hygiene practices.
- Bed linen was stored individually and laundered weekly.
- Children's soothers were labelled and stored in individual containers and sterilised daily.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes.
- Sleep logs were available for review, detailing the room temperature, breathing pattern, colour and position of each sleeping child.
- The temperatures in the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required level for safe sleep.

Fire Safety:

- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.
- The designated fire exits were clearly marked and free from obstruction on the day of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The administration of medication procedure in place in the Montessori room for a child with a serious allergy did not ensure a safe and informed response in the event of an emergency as follows:
 - One staff member providing direct care to the child was unaware of the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction.
 - Two staff members providing direct care to the child had not received training in the use of an auto adrenaline injector.
 - Two staff members providing direct care to the child were not aware of the medication required for a mild allergic reaction.
 - Although there was a care plan for the child it was not made available to the staff in the care room to guide their response in the event of an emergency.

The above practice could compromise the timely and appropriate care of a child in the event of an emergency and is at variance with the services administration of medication policy which states that staff will be trained on the condition and treatment if a child has a condition that requires emergency treatment. The policy also states that staff will be provided with written clear instructions.

Administration of Medication:

2. The administration of medication procedure in the service was at variance with the administration of medication policy as follows:
 - During discussions with the inspectors, staff stated that they do not obtain written parental consent prior to the administration of prescribed medication. Staff explained that they receive verbal instructions from parents regarding medication requirements and, based on this information, complete the medication administration record and request that parents sign it at the end of the day.
 - Nine administration of medication records were made available to the inspectors for review, and four had not been signed by the parents.

This practice can compromise continuity and accuracy of care for a child.

Safe Sleep:

3. Some of the safe sleep practices in the service did not align with current safe sleep guidance for children under the age of two. The inspectors found that two children under the age of two were sleeping on low level stackable beds. Additionally, there were no documented sleep plans available for the two children. Although the service had a safe sleep policy in place, the policy did not reflect the updated safe sleep guidance for children under the age of two.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Following the inspection, the service reviewed allergy management practices and the procedures for administering emergency medication in the Montessori room. The child's care plan was updated and placed in the room in a confidential but easily accessible location for staff. All staff working directly with the child received guidance on the procedures to follow in relation to the child's medical needs. Additionally, management will audit allergy care plans and training records as part of internal compliance monitoring.

Administration of Medication:

2. Staff were reminded that no prescribed medication can be given without written parental consent. A briefing and written guidance were issued to reinforce this requirement. All existing medication records were checked, and parents were contacted to complete any missing signatures. The service now accepts medication only when a fully completed consent form is provided, and a new medication acceptance check has been introduced to ensure medication is never administered without written consent.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep arrangements for children under 24 months have been amended to align with current safe sleep guidance. New floor beds have been purchased, and folding cots will be used until the floor beds arrive. The safe sleep policy has been reviewed and updated to clearly state that children under 24 months will only sleep in appropriate sleep equipment that complies with current safe sleep guidance. All staff have been informed of the updated policy and reminded of the specific sleep arrangements required for children under 2 years of age.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Auto adrenaline staff instruction record
Auto adrenaline guidance
Care Plan
Training images

Administration of Medication:

Administration of medication consent form
Administration of medication policy

Safe Sleep:

Image of folding cots
Safe sleep policy
Transition to floor bed procedure and checklist
Safe sleep risk assessment

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Compliance Information

The inspectors found that children were appropriately supervised at all times during the inspection, including during mealtime, play, activities, rest periods, nappy changing and using the toilet.