

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR008
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Discoveries Creche & Montessori
-------------------------	---------------------------------

Address of Service:	Olcovar, Shankill, Shankill, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	D18 W2X2
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Lena O'Sullivan, Liz Mahon
-------------------------------------	----------------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	16/04/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	42
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley & Helen Sutherland
Title:	Early Years Inspector(s)

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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Discoveries Creche and Montessori is a privately owned early years service located in a residential area of Shankill, South County Dublin. Full day, part-time and sessional care are provided to children aged between six months and six years, and the service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:15 and 18:15 hours. The service is a purpose-built premises operating from the ground floor of a residential apartment complex. Children are allocated to one of the three care rooms available in line with their age and stage of development. The children have access to an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs eighteen staff members, including the registered providers. On the day of inspection, sixteen adults were present in the service including one of the registered providers, the centre manager, and the area manager.

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/ information and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 16, 23, 27, and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 25. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 and regulation 23.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by the receipt of information which was furnished to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 7th April 2025.

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 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise if required.
- (b) The designated person in charge and the person appointed to deputise were on the premises at all times during the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service which was confirmed with staff members and the person in charge during discussions with the inspectors. In addition to a person in charge and an adult to deputise, each care room had a room leader in place. Job descriptions were available in all staff files which detailed roles and responsibilities including for the person in charge, room leaders, and staff working in care rooms.

(2)

Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that eight adults commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 25th April 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these eight adults as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for all eighteen adults employed to work in the service.

- (a) (b) There were two references each available for the eight adults which had been appropriately verified.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for each of the eighteen adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all adults employed to work in the service.
 - (d) Six of the new employees required international police vetting, the required documentation was available for three of the adults.
- (4) Six of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One adult did not require a qualification. One adult who did not have the required qualification had a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).
- (7) The registered provider demonstrated that they had taken reasonable measures to ensure that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with sufficient information and training to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with the regulations as follows;
- During discussions with the inspectors and observations during the inspection, staff members demonstrated an awareness of the policies and associated procedures in place in the service.
 - Documentation reviewed evidenced that regular team meetings and one on one support and supervision were in place with staff members. It was evident from the records maintained that training needs had been identified during these staff meetings and subsequent training had been implemented or planned to address staff needs as they arose. Staff members detailed during discussions with the inspectors that regular team meetings occur in the service which feature aspects of training on regulation and the service policies.
 - A review of documentation evidenced that formal induction training was provided and recorded for each staff member on commencement of employment. There were detailed records of induction training available, which included training on the policies, procedures and associated practices in place in the service. Evidence of re-training on aspects of the induction criteria was provided and documented where a staff member required it.

Non-Compliance Information

(9)

(2) (c)

Although a Garda vetting disclosure was available for one adult working in the service, the adult had ceased a work placement programme in the service in July 2024 and did not commence employment in the service until November 2024. An updated Garda vetting disclosure was not obtained for the adult prior to them re-commencing work in the service.

(d)

- Although documents were available for 3 of the adults which appeared to be international police vetting, the contents of the documents could not be verified by the inspectors as they were not written in the English language.
- International vetting was not available for one adult who required it from a second state.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to four of the adults commencing employment in the service, as detailed above under 9(2).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c)(d)(3)

- The service took immediate action and re-applied for Garda vetting for the staff member. The service has amended the Recruitment & Garda Vetting Policy to clearly reflect the need for a new vetting application when a staff member moves between services. The service reinforced the importance of compliance in this area.
- The service has instructed a certified translation company to begin the process of obtaining certified English translations for all international police vetting documents that were not originally issued in English. With regard to the adult for whom international police vetting had slipped out of the folder and has since been found.
- The service has updated the Recruitment and Garda Vetting Policy to clearly highlight the requirement for certified English translations of non-English police vetting documents, and to re-emphasise the requirement for full and complete international police vetting from all relevant states. This matter was also discussed in a management meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The inspection of regulation 10 was limited to a review of the following policies and procedures:

- Policy on Accidents and Incidents
- Policy on Outdoor Play
- Risk Management Policy

A review of documentation evidenced that the registered providers had the above named policies and procedures in place for the service.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were forty-seven children present in the service being supervised by eleven adults during the inspection. The person in charge provided relief cover to the care rooms when required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (c) A record of the adult to child ratios maintained for each age group were detailed in the service’s Statement of Purpose and Function which was available in the service.
 - (h) A record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection. A review of previous records evidenced that records of attendance are maintained daily in the service.
 - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection. Previous records of staff members rostered to work in the service were available on an online application where staff clocked in and out of the service on a digital timesheet.
 - (k) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample was reviewed on the day of inspection of forty accidents which had occurred in the service since the 16th February 2025.

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 entry and exit points were secured to prevent children from leaving the service unattended or unauthorised individuals from gaining access. Potentially hazardous materials such as cleaning products and medicines were safely stored out of children's reach.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A combined climbing unit with a slide was observed in the outdoor play area on the day of inspection. Staff members in the Playgroup and the Baby room stated that children in these care rooms use this play equipment during outdoor play. The manufacturers guidelines for the unit state that it is suitable for use for children aged two years and over, when fourteen children aged one year between the care rooms use the equipment. Although it is acknowledged that the service was completing daily risk assessments in the outdoor play area, this play equipment had not been risk assessed or identified as a risk. This posed a risk of harm to a child.
2. A number of bikes and scooters were present on the ground of the outdoor play area during the inspection. The bikes and scooters were specified as suitable for children aged three years and over and children aged one and two years were accessing the garden. Staff members reported that they assist children in using this equipment or distract them from using it. Although it is acknowledged that the service was completing daily risk assessments in the outdoor play area, this play equipment had not been risk assessed or identified as a risk. This posed a risk of harm to a child.
3. Thirteen accident and incident forms reviewed by the inspectors did not contain evidence that the parents had been informed that their child had an accident in the service. This may affect the correct continuity of care being provided to a child once they go home and pose a risk of harm to the child. This practice is at variance with the accident and incident policy in place in the service which states accident records must be signed by parents.

- A review of documentation and discussions with staff members evidenced that daily risk assessments were not occurring in the care rooms/indoor play environments. This was at variance with the risk management policy in place in the service and poses a potential risk of harm to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The service acknowledges that, although daily risk assessments were being carried out, the specific risk associated with this equipment had not been identified or recorded in relation to its manufacturer's age guidelines. The service takes this matter seriously and immediate action has been taken to mitigate any risk of harm. Immediate Actions Taken:
 - Use Suspended for Under-2s: Use of the climbing unit by children under 2 years of age has been suspended with immediate effect.
 - Staff Notification: All staff have been informed in our staff meeting—the minutes of which have been emailed to staff, and staff have signed off on these minutes.
 - Updated Risk Assessments: The daily and long-term outdoor risk assessments have been updated to include the climbing unit, clearly noting its age restrictions and associated risks.

The service has implemented steps and detailed procedures to ensure re-occurrence is prevented.
- Following the inspection, all bikes, trikes, and scooters have been removed from the general outdoor area and are now securely stored in the shed when not in use. These items are now only made available during scheduled outdoor play sessions for children aged 3 years and over, in accordance with the manufacturer's age recommendations. The outdoor play risk assessment has been updated to include these specific pieces of equipment, with clear guidance on their appropriate use based on age. In addition, we are actively reviewing the layout of our outdoor space with the aim of creating designated zones to safely accommodate different age groups during shared garden time.
- The service has implemented an updated procedure requiring all room supervisors to review and confirm, at the end of each day, that any accident or incident reports have been completed and made available for parent sign-off. Parents are notified through an app, where they can review the report and provide their signature electronically. The addition to the end of day checklist for supervisors regarding the sign off of accident and incident reports reinforces our commitment to aligning daily practice with our Accident and Incident Policy, which states that all accident records must be signed by parents

4. This matter was formally addressed during a staff meeting on 12th May, where it was included on the agenda. Supervisors have been instructed to ensure that risk assessments are completed each morning before children arrive and to check that all required documentation is filled in accurately and stored appropriately. Follow-up spot checks will be carried out by management to ensure continued compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
Although it is noted that an adult working in the service had paediatric first aid training on the day of inspection at all times, an adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was not available to the children from 7:30am to 09:00am as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has taken proactive steps to strengthen our compliance. An additional three staff members have now successfully completed their FAR training, bringing the total number of FAR-trained staff to four. This ensures that the service is well-positioned to meet and exceed the requirements going forward. This allows the service to maintain adequate cover at all times, including during early morning hours and unforeseen staff absences. The service has also reviewed our rostering procedures to prioritise.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

Forty records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service since the 16th February 2025 were reviewed by the inspectors. Of these accidents and incidents, twenty-four had occurred in the outdoor play area in the last three months. A number of these incidents involved children injuring themselves from running and falling, tripping, and incidents that involved other children, indicating that additional supervision strategies are required to ensure the likelihood of accidents and injuries is reduced.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service fully agree that maintaining consistent and appropriate supervision at all times is essential, and are happy to continue working with the team to ensure that vigilance remains a priority across both indoor and outdoor environments. The service are consistently within ratio both indoors and outdoors, and take the supervision responsibilities extremely seriously. As part of the service's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement, the service actively encourage staff to document and report all incidents, regardless of severity — including minor slips, trips, or peer interactions. This detailed recording reflects the safeguarding ethos, the service commitment to transparency and communication with families, and should not be interpreted as a failure in supervision.

In addition to existing measures, the service are implementing the following preventative steps to further strengthen supervision practices:

- **Outdoor Zoning:** Introducing clearly defined zones in the outdoor area to separate age groups during shared outdoor play. This will allow for more targeted and developmentally appropriate supervision in each zone.
- **Supervision Rotation Schedules:** Reviewing and tightening of the supervision rota system to ensure that staff roles and observation areas are clearly assigned during all outdoor sessions, reducing the risk of overlapping or missed supervision.
- **Daily Safety Briefings:** Room leaders will conduct short pre-outdoor play briefings to ensure staff are clear on their supervisory roles and any specific needs or behavioural considerations for the group that day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the service is adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children in attendance.