

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>watTUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR039
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Leopardstown Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	48 Leopardstown Avenue, Leopardstown, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A94 TY02
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Helen O'Neill
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	28	PM	28
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Quigley
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Leopardstown Montessori is a privately owned early years service which is located in a residential area of Leopardstown, South County Dublin. The early years service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme on a sessional and part-time basis to pre-school children aged 2-6 years. The programme of care is facilitated through a blend of a Montessori and a play-based curriculum. The early years service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 13:00 each weekday. The service operates from the ground floor a purposely adapted residential premises. The children have access to three separate interconnecting spaces and sanitary accommodation. An outdoor play area is available on the premises.

### Staffing

The service currently employs six staff members including the registered provider who works directly in the service. On the day of inspection three staff members were present, not including the registered provider.

### 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 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

*(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

Documentation was reviewed in full in respect of Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) for one adult who had commenced employment in the service since the last date of inspection on the 3 October 2022. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all adults working in the service. The following documents were available;

- (2)
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for the six 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were no references available for adult who had commenced employment in the service.
- (d) The requirement for international police vetting could not be ascertained as there was no record available detailing the experience or employment history of the adult.
- (3) The procedures specified under Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(d) had not been completed prior to the adult commencing employment in the service, as detailed above.
- (4) There was no evidence to show that the newly employed staff member held a recognised qualification. During discussions with the person in charge and a review of documentation, it was determined that one of the other adults working directly with the children during the inspection did not hold a recognised qualification as required.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)(d)(3)(4)

The necessary documents have now been provided for the staff member. Moving forward the service will ensure these documents are available from the time a staff member commences employment in the service.

#### 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 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were not working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection as the minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained at all times, as outlined below under Regulation 11(2).

(2)

The registered provider did not ensure that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service throughout the morning of inspection as follows:

- An insufficient number of adults were available to the children who were all attending on a part-time basis on the day of inspection. Three adults were caring for twenty-eight children, seven aged 2years and twelve and 3 to 5years, requiring a minimum of 4 adults. The required minimum adult to child ratio is 1:6 for children aged 2years, and 1:8 for children aged 3 to 6years.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

On the day of inspection one staff member was unwell and a second staff member had a personal emergency and had to leave the service. This is unprecedented and five members of staff are available to work in the service.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider.

#### Summary Comment

The response outlined by the registered provider does not contain a corrective or preventive action. However, as the registered provider stated this was an unprecedented incident and an adequate number of staff are available each day, the regulatory requirement has been met. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

## 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-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

The routine and play experiences in the service were observed to be mostly child-led, and children were visibly content and engaged in their play and Montessori-based activities throughout the inspection. All materials were made accessible to the children at a low level facilitating their choice in play. Birthday and family walls with photographs of the children were displayed on the walls alongside children's artwork.

Kindness and warmth were observed by the inspector during interactions between staff and the children, and adults availed of opportunities to engage in personal one on one conversations with the children throughout the inspection. Comfort was provided promptly to a child if they became upset. Staff remained engaged with the children throughout the inspection, sitting with them and using prompts to extend learning, play, and conversations. Staff encouraged the children to be independent in their environment by allocating tasks including cleaning up following meals and play. Children had coat hooks with their names and pictures attached to them and spaces with their photographs where they could independently store their artwork.

Drinks were accessible to the children throughout the inspection and soft furnishings were available to enable the children to take time out from the group and rest if desired. Staff sat with the children during lunch time chatting which created a sociable atmosphere. Older children accessed the toilets independently during the inspection.

### 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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard the children attending:

#### General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised.

#### Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

#### Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

#### Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. A low-level unlocked press was accessible to the children during the inspection which contained bottles of disinfectant solutions, sprays, and washing up liquid posing a risk of harm to a child. The inspector brought this to the person in charge's attention during the inspection and moved the accessible hazardous items.
2. A kettle and the electrical lead attached to it and an extension lead were situated on a countertop that was in reach of some of the children present during the inspection posing a potential risk of harm to a child.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1 & 2

The service have replaced the child lock which had become worn. Children are never allowed near this press. When the kettle is used adults never leave it unattended. The adults empty out the unused water and have now relocated the empty kettle to a press when not in use.

### Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider.

## 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.*
- (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)  
An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.
  - (b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of inspection.

### 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 was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place in November 2025.
  - (b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system had been serviced within the required timeframes.
- (4)  
The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidence that the service was adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children registered to attend.