

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR091
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Name of Service:	Lambkins Montessori
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Address of Service:	Sandyford Community Centre, Lambs Cross, Sandyford, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 E0A8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Falkner
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	S Quigley
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

Lambkins Montessori is an early years service which offers an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) on a sessional basis to pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years. The programme of care is facilitated through a blend of a Montessori and play based curriculum. The service operates Monday to Friday on a school calendar basis from 08:45 to 12:15.

The early years service is located within the Sandyford Community Centre in an urban area of Sandyford, south Co Dublin. The service is facilitated across two open plan rooms within the community centre. An outdoor area is available on the premises which has been divided into two separate play spaces.

Staffing

The service currently employs 9 staff members including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, 5 staff members were present. The registered provider arrived to the service to facilitate the 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, 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 6 adults who had commenced employment in the service since the last date of inspection on the 27 October 2022. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all nine adults employed. The following documents were available;

- (2)
- (a) (b)
- References were available from two sources for each of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for all adults employed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for three of the adults who required it.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had been completed prior to the adult's commencing employment in the service.
- (4) There was evidence to show that 5 adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications. One of the adults who did not have the required qualification were in possession of a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 32 pre-school children attending the service being supervised by 5 adults during the inspection.

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

Staff stated a healthy eating policy was available in the service, and lunch was provided by the parents of the children in attendance. The food observed was varied and nutritious. Mealtime was a relaxed and sociable occasion, and adults were observed sitting and eating with the children and engaging in conversation. A water station with drinking water was available to the children at all times during the inspection.

The personal care provided by the staff of the service met the needs of the children present. The service incorporated a designated area for the children with a mirror, pedal bin and tissues where the children were observed to clean their face and noses using the mirror and tissues. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent suitable to their age and stage of development including using the toilet independently, cleaning up following meal times and play, and self-dressing going to the garden.

The routine and play experiences in the service were observed to be child-led, and children were visibly calm, content, and engaged in their play throughout the session. The adults were observed to have a supportive role in the children's learning and play, involving themselves only when invited by a child.

There were suitable rest areas available to the children where children could avail of rest periods or quiet time away from the group as required. The adults were observed to offer praise and encouragement towards the children, prompting individual choices during morning activities. Adults used soft tones and gentle, respectful language during all interactions which reflected in the calm, relaxed atmosphere of the service. Good communication was observed by the adults who listened, made good eye-contact and spoke individually with the children during the inspection. The adults presented time for open-ended, exploratory conversations when prompted by the children and supported children at play in both individual and small group activities.

The children's behaviour was managed in a competent and positive manner, evidenced by adults encouraging problem solving, using suggestions to resolve conflicts and encouraging the children to share their feelings with others. Children were alerted in advance of transitions which ensued smoothly to new activities such as tidy up time and lunch time.

The classrooms were divided into areas of interest enabling freedom to play and explore. Examples included construction, Montessori materials, arts and crafts, tabletop activities. The interest areas provided a range of developmentally appropriate and valuable play experiences for the children attending the service. All of the

materials were observed to be easily accessible to the children on low level shelving, facilitating their choice of play. Child sized tables and chairs were provided in the service as appropriate to the children's ages and stages of development. Good personal hygiene practices were implemented. The children showed an awareness of when to hand wash and did so after activities, before lunch and after using the toilet. Low level sink units were available to the children for handwashing.

Each classroom had direct access to a large outdoor area at the rear of the building. Children moved freely from inside to outside. The outdoor areas were set up to be an extension of the indoor environment, and the doors from each classroom onto the garden remained open throughout the inspection.

Children's artwork was displayed on the walls including paintings and drawings relating to the themes the children were learning about. A family wall featuring pictures the children had brought in from home of themselves, and family members was displayed, creating a positive link from the service to the child's home.

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 the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps were taken to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door into the community centre and the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. There were no hazards identified in the classrooms or outdoor play areas.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Pedal-operated, lidded bins were in place to appropriately manage waste. Staff supported children to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff members outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of temperature reducing medication, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff members detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector. Individualised care plans were in place for children requiring emergency medications. Staff members detailed the requirements of these plans during discussions with the inspector.

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.

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.