

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY276
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Lansdowne Lodge Preschool Montessori
-------------------------	--------------------------------------

Address of Service:	6 Lansdowne Terrace, Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	DO4 VY67
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Smyth
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	07/04/2025
-------------------------------	------------

Date 2 of Inspection:	08/04/2025
------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	93	PM	91
Day 2	AM	94	PM	NA

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Brunel Building Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Mayock, R. Duff and G. Kavanagh
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Lansdowne Lodge Preschool Montessori provides full day care for children from 16 months to 5 years of age. The service operates from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a residential area of Dublin south city in an adapted domestic dwelling over three floors. Care is delivered across four care units. The Tiny Tots unit caters for children aged 1 year. The Transition unit caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Junior Montessori unit caters for children aged 2 years. The Senior Montessori 1 and Senior Montessori 2 units cater for children from 3 to 4 years of age. There is a separate purpose-built structure located in the outdoor area, called the Pavillion, which the children access for Montessori activities on a regular basis. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises

Staffing

The service currently employs 28 staff including the manager, an administrative assistant and a chef. There were 22 staff working directly with the children on the first day of inspection. On the second day of inspection there were 23 staff working directly with the children. The registered provider is not involved in the day-to-day operation of the service and was not present during 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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d), (2), (4) Management and recruitment,
- 11(1), (2) Staffing levels,
- 16(j) Record in relation to pre-school service,
- 19(1)(a)(b) Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
- 25 First aid,
- 26(1) Fire safety measures.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under the following regulations:

- 29(e) Premises

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations:

- 16(j) – Record in relation to pre-school service,
- 19(1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Tiny Tots, Transition, Junior Montessori and Senior Montessori 1 and 2 rooms.

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

An immediate action notice (IAN) was issued under Regulation 23 to the registered provider on the second day of inspection 8 April 2025 in relation to a safety risk identified. It is acknowledged that the registered provider immediately implemented actions on the day to mitigate the risk identified. Please see details in the body of the report.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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

(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.*

(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

(1)

(a)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager it was confirmed that eight adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 24 October 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these eight adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the sixteen written, validated references that were required, eleven were available from a past employer and five was available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the twenty-eight staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required for seven staff members and was available for the seven staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that seven staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. Two of these staff members held a qualification recognition letter from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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 children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were ninety-three children attending the service being supervised by twenty-two adults on the first day of inspection. There were ninety-four children attending the service being supervised by twenty-three adults on the second day of inspection.

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:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent.

Non-Compliance Information

A sample of ten medication administration records were reviewed and ten records were not signed by a second staff member as a witness to the administration of the medication contrary to the service's administration of medication policy. Failure to maintain accurate administration of medication records and to have medication administration witnessed poses a risk to the children. It is acknowledged that staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required to inspectors and that staff were observed taking appropriate

safety measures when administering medicine to a child in the Junior Montessori room on the first day of inspection in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was provided by the service:

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have now edited the form so that it requires a second signature in line with our medication policy, before it can be submitted. It means that all forms going forward will have the required signatures.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted as stated will address the non-compliance identified. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection of the service. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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

(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

1)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and all meals are prepared on site and provided by the service. The service had a weekly meal plan which detailed a range of nutritious meals and snacks served to children at regular intervals throughout the day. Dinner was served between 13:00 and 14:00. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meals. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance with their dinner. Additional servings of dinner were available and staff were observed asking children who had finished their meal if they wanted more. All children who requested more food were provided with an additional serving.

Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play. Older children were encouraged to use the toilet independently. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. An area was provided within the care rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. There was a designated nap time in the Transitions, Tiny Tots and Junior Montessori units.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff demonstrated kindness and affection during all interactions observed by the inspectors. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Children were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Materials available included small world toys, construction toys, musical instruments, home corners and library areas. The care rooms provided developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children. Family photos, children's artwork and children's photos were displayed in the care rooms.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for coats and bags. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the rear of the premises and had shock absorbent surfacing. The area was divided into two separate play spaces. All children accessed the outdoor area during the course of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

- While it is acknowledged the staff were attentive to the children from the Transitions room before and during mealtime in the dining room area the transition from the dining room after mealtime back to the classroom was not adequately managed by staff.

There were eighteen children present and three staff members. A number of children required a change of clothes due to wet and dirty tops. Two children slipped on food on the floor unnoticed by staff. One staff member took five children out to the Transitions room when they were cleaned and left two staff

with thirteen children in the dining room. While the two staff members were cleaning the children that were wet after the meal, the other remaining five children still eating were left unattended and began to eat each other's food, drinks of water and food that had spilled onto the floor.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was provided by the service:

Corrective and Preventive Action

New bibs have been purchased and are in use, minimising the need for children to be cleaned or changed after meals. This has supported the staff in the transition from mealtime. In addition, we have split the dinner time into two separate time slots so there are now only a maximum of 10 children during each dinner time. With the changes made, this has shown to prevent the staff from being overwhelmed with tasks related to the dining room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted as stated will address the non-compliance identified. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection of the service. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- All blind cords were secured.
- All radiators were fitted with protective covers.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to wash their hands in line with the infection control policy.

- Children’s nappies were changed in line with the service’s nappy changing policy to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for the children in the Tiny Tots and Transition units. Staff stated that all bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.

Safe Sleep:

- Children in the Tiny Tots, Transitions and Junior Montessori units were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes.
- An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- An immediate action notice was issued for the storage of medication accessible to children on the second day of inspection 8 April 2025. Two children’s emergency medication was stored in low presses with no locking mechanism or safety lock to prevent the children gaining access posing a significant risk to the children in both the Senior Montessori rooms one and two gaining access to the medication.
- The locking mechanism on the second stair gate was not working and posed a risk of a child gaining access to the stairs unattended.
- The water temperature in the children’s handwash sinks in the Montessori room sanitary areas was above the required maximum temperature of 43°C and posed a risk of scalding to a child. The water temperatures ranged from 53°C to 55°C. This non-compliance was observed on the last inspection on 24 October 2024. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
- Trailing cables from electronic devices were observed hanging from shelves, stored on the floors and windowsills in reach of the children in the Senior and Junior Montessori rooms posing a risk of injury. This non-compliance was observed on the last inspection on 24 October and 16 April 2024. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Infection Control:

- The handwashing practices observed were inconsistent during the first day of inspection and at variance with the policy in place in the service. While it was observed some of the children in the Senior Montessori room washed their hands before dinner some also did not on. Inconsistent handwashing

practices were observed on the last inspection on 24 October and 16 April 2024. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

- In the Junior Montessori room, the children’s beds were stacked up against each other with their bed linen touching off one another. This poses a significant risk of cross contamination.

Safe Sleep:

- The temperature of the room used for nap time in the Junior Montessori unit was not taken prior to or during sleep time. It is acknowledged that there was an electronic thermometer in this room however, the temperature recorded at the time of sleep was 25.5°C. This posed a risk to the children’s safety and was at variance with the safe sleep policy in place. This non-compliance was observed on the last inspection on 24 October 2024. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was provided by the service:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The two emergency medications referred to in the report have been permanently moved to a high shelf, labelled and the children have no access to this area.
2. A new lock has been fitted on the gates and is functioning correctly.
3. The water temperatures were corrected after the day of the inspection and were below 43 degrees on day two.
4. All trailing cables have been secured, and the risk assessment checklist has been edited to specify that cables need to be checked each day.

Infection Control:

1. We have now assigned a staff member to supervise the handwashing before mealtimes to ensure that all children wash their hands properly and effectively.
2. Beds are now being stored without linen on them – linen is now being stored in separate bags and laundered each week.

Safe Sleep:

1. We have purchased a new room thermometer alongside the egg to ensure accurate room temperature readings. We are now recording the temperature in the sleep rooms, 30 minutes prior to sleep time.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted as stated will address the non-compliances identified. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection of the service. 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.

Compliance Information

(1) Four staff members have first aid responder certification (FAR) training and were immediately available to the children attending the pre-school 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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

A record of monthly fire drills was available the last recorded fire drill was on the 14 March 2025.

(b) A record was maintained of when the fire detection system and smoke alarms was serviced on 8 May 2024.

Firefighting equipment records were available demonstrating that these were last serviced on 8 May 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)
On the first day of inspection in the Transitions room it was observed that eighteen children were present, and all required a nappy change with only one changing mat in use on the day. This is not suitable to the number of children requiring a nappy change.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was provided by the service:

Corrective and Preventive Action

There is now sufficient storage space for all nappies to ensure that the second changing mat will not be used for storing nappies.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.