

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY276
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Name of Service:	Lansdowne Lodge Preschool Montessori
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Address of Service:	6 Lansdowne Terrace, Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D04 VY67
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Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Smyth
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	09/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	81	PM	82
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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 & H Sutherland
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).

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Description of service

Lansdowne Lodge Preschool Montessori provides full day care for children from 1 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 period style domestic dwelling over three floors. Care is delivered across six care rooms, all of which were in operation during the inspection. There is a separate purpose-built structure located in the outdoor area called the Pavillion, which the children access for Montessori activities in groups on a regular basis. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 30 staff members including the centre manager, an administrator and a cook. There were 20 staff working directly with the children on the day inspection. 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/ information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service and Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Tiny Tots Room, the Transition Unit, the Junior Montessori, and the Little Moons 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, centre manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN 0143	09/04/2026	Two children aged three years were observed accessing the first-floor landing of the service to use the children's toilets unsupervised. An unlocked fire escape door was accessible adjacent to the bathroom which led to a steep metal stairwell and out into an internal courtyard.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider following service of the notice. The service submitted a written response which detailed corrective and preventive actions undertaken which were accepted by the inspectorate.	

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Improvement Notice IN 0144	09/04/2026	There was no certified translation available for the international police vetting on file for one staff member present on inspection from an EU member state who had been Garda vetted after the implementation of the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS).
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider following service of the notice. The service submitted a written response which detailed corrective and preventive actions undertaken which were accepted by the inspectorate.	

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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 discussion with the centre manager and a review of records, it was confirmed that 14 adults commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 8 April 2025. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of the 14 adults as detailed below. In addition, Garda vetting for two adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review as part of the inspection.

(a) (b) There were two references each available for the adults which had been appropriately verified.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all adults employed.

(d) International police vetting with a certified translation was available for 13 of the 14 adults who required it that had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) Documentation reviewed evidenced that four of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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Four of the adults did not require a qualification. Six of the adults who did not hold a recognised qualification held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

(9)(2)(d)

See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice 0144 served.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified in paragraph (2)(d) had not been carried out prior to one of the adults commencing employment in the service, see statutory notice.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 81 pre-school children attending the service being supervised by 20 adults during the 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;

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Non-Compliance Information

(1) (j)

A sample of medication administration records were reviewed by the inspectors. Two of the records were not signed by a second staff member as a witness to the administration of the medication. One of the records contained no evidence that the child's parent/guardian had been informed that their child had received medication in the service. This was at variance with the medication administration policy in place in the service and posed a risk of harm to a child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

All Staff have been informed of the non-compliance in person and through our Monthly Staff Memo in order for them to be reminded of the importance. Medication forms have been reviewed, and forms will be reviewed regularly by Admin to ensure compliance is upheld. Staff have re-read the Medication Management Policy and all staff have signed off on this. In addition, further enhancements to the medication form now includes a pre-consent signature for parents that they must sign before the child is administered medication (where possible). (This does not apply to anti-febrile medication that is needed unexpectedly but applies to known medications being brought to the service on arrival in the morning)

Supporting documentation submitted

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

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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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 inspectors observed that the children's learning, development and well-being was supported during the inspection. The indoor areas were laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were visible and accessible to the children on open, low-level shelves. Areas with soft seating were available for children to rest or take a break from activities.

The older children were supported to be independent with their personal care. They used the toilet as needed with staff reminding them to wash their hands afterwards, they were encouraged to clean their faces after eating, and tidy up following meals and play. Younger children had their nappies changed at regular intervals and as required. Regular meals and snacks were offered to the children, including a hot dinner, which were provided by the service daily. Adults sat with the children when they were eating and engaged in conversation creating a homely sociable environment. Drinks of water were available in the care rooms. The inspectors observed the staff interacting warmly with the children throughout the inspection and engaging with them positively.

Staff were observed responding promptly to younger children's cues for care and provided comfort to children who became upset. Younger children were provided with the opportunity to sleep at a designated time and staff stated they could sleep outside this time if required. Children were made comfortable for sleep, with staff removing their shoes and outer clothing and providing soothers and comforters to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep. Staff sat with the children, speaking quietly and soothing them as needed.

Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and family photograph walls. Staff reported they use an interactive messaging application to communicate with the children's parents daily sharing information on diet, sleep, and activities in addition to engaging with them at drop-off/collection.

Non-Compliance Information

Some practices observed did not meet the care needs of some children present which may negatively impact their health and wellbeing as follows;

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Three children aged three years were observed asleep on the floor of the Little Moons care room during the inspection, two on a floor rug with a pillow and one on a wooden floor with a pillow. During discussions with the inspector, staff detailed there were no beds available upstairs for the older children to sleep.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The number of children that would have a tendency to fall asleep during relaxation time in all Senior units has been assessed and a suitable number of beds are now available and easily accessible to these children. It has been recognised that although no formal nap is offered for this age group, a few children tend to fall asleep during relaxation time and so proper provisions have been made for this.

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 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 inspectors 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 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. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

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. Staff were observed to have good hand hygiene and supported children to wash their hands at appropriate times.

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Cleaning schedules were in place and the care rooms were observed to be clean. Staff followed infection control procedures to prevent cross contamination during nappy changing, in line with the service policy.

Administration of Medication:

Care plans were in place for children who required regular or emergency medication, and staff were familiar with these plans.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and placed younger children on their backs to sleep. Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated sleep rooms and the younger care rooms, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep in younger rooms and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

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:

See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice 0143 served.

1. An electrical cable was hanging in reach of the children in the Junior Montessori room from a shelf to a low-level socket posing a risk of harm to a child.

Infection Control:

2. Four of the shared cot mattresses in use did not have a waterproof covering in place to prevent cross contamination.
3. Children were offered fabric pillows for sleep time in the Junior Montessori room. Staff stated the pillows were shared, not designated to one child, and washed at the end of the week. This poses a risk of cross contamination.
4. Children's nappy supplies were stored in the sanitary area of the Junior Montessori room down the side of the children's toilet which staff members stated is in use daily posing a risk of cross contamination.

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- The paper towels used for hand drying in the Junior Montessori room were not stored in a dispenser as required. Staff members and children were observed handling the large roll to tear pieces off to hand dry posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The cable has been secured correctly using Velcro/adhesive cable ties to ensure the cable cannot become loose again. Risk assessment checklists have been amended so there is now a section that staff need to check to ensure that all cables in care rooms are secured in the morning before children enter the care room.

Infection Control:

- Further waterproof covers for mattresses have been purchased to ensure that all mattresses in the service are now waterproof. Unit heads of all units with children under 24 months have read the updated guidance on sleep policy to ensure staff are fully aware of safe sleep needs and prevention of cross contamination and sanitation.
- Children are now assigned designated pillows which means there is no risk of cross contamination. The designated pillows use a numbered system to ensure that it is clear and organised, and each child uses the same pillow every week.
- These nappies have been moved and are no longer stored in this area to eliminate the risk of cross contamination. Nappies are now being stored in covered boxes away from the sanitary area. These nappies are only spare nappies that can be re-stocked to the shelf above the toilet for easy access when changing nappies.
- Blue Roll Dispensers have been fitted in all units and are being always used correctly – inside the dispensers. All staff have been reminded of the importance of keeping all disposable paper towels and blue roll in the dispensers at all times. This has been documented in the Staff Memo.

Supporting documentation submitted

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

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.