

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY379		
Name of Service:	Hope Montessori & Autism Care Centre		
Address of Service:	Unit 6 Goldenbridge Industrial Estate, Tyrconnell Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8,		
Eircode:	D08 NVOA		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sherene Powell		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	03/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM 37
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin		
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill, Helen 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).			
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable		

Description of service

Hope Montessori & Autism Care Centre is one of a multiple of five services operated across Ireland by the registered provider. The early years service is registered to provide full day care including part-time and sessional care and education for children aged from one to six years. The service operates from 8am until 6pm Monday to Friday.

The early years service is based in a purposely adapted premises which is located within an industrial estate in the centre of Inchicore village. Five care rooms were available for pre-school children on the first floor of the premises. Two of the five pre-school classes exclusively provide care for autistic children and offer a morning session from 9am until 1pm and an afternoon session from 2pm until 6pm. A designated sleep room was provided for children under two years. An outdoor play area for the children is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

On the day of inspection 14 childcare staff worked directly with the children. The person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to relieve staff for their breaks and provide additional support as required. A cook and a domestic worker were also present. The director of education arrived during the inspection and remained for the feedback meeting.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 record in relation to pre-school service. The scope of the inspection included the Lillies, Iris, Rosebud and Lotus 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, director of education, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or the named deputy to be present at all times of opening.
 - (c) The management structure was clearly documented. Staff demonstrated an awareness of their individual roles and the lines of authority.

(2) The inspection focused on a review of files for new staff who were employed to work directly with the preschool children since the last inspection dated the 20 February 2025. In total 8 staff files were reviewed as detailed below.

(a) & (b) Records were available to evidence references had been appropriately considered for each adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 8 staff. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was required and available for 8 staff.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out by the registered provider prior to any staff being allowed contact with the pre-school children.

(4) Records were available evidencing the adults who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

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 39 children attending the service being supervised by 14 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff members on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two staff to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) Details of children’s attendance was accurately recorded in each care room.

(i) A staff roster was available.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) In Lillie’s room, staff reported that one child in attendance had been prescribed an antibiotic for a medical condition. Upon review of the medication records, the inspector observed that the parental consent form required for the administration of this medication had not been signed by the child’s parents. This was not in line with the services medication administration policy. It is acknowledged, when this was brought to the attention of management, the medication was withheld and the parents were contacted immediately to obtain the required signed consent.

(k) A sample of eleven accident and incident forms were reviewed. Six forms were not signed by parents to confirm they had been informed. This was not in line with the accident and incident policy and posed a safety risk to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(j) The parent was contacted immediately, and after receiving written consent, the medication was administered.

(K) The registered provider confirmed the service will continue to implement and maintain the existing communication procedures for incidents, including electronic notifications via email, verbal communication, text messages through the school management platform, and the incident logbook with parental acknowledgment.

These measures will be regularly monitored by the person in charge to ensure ongoing compliance with the Accident and Incident Policy and to guarantee that all parents are promptly informed of any incidents.

Summary Comment

Evidence was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. The children moved freely within their allocated rooms, engaging in free play and activities. Staff interactions with children were observed to be warm, kind and respectful. Staff members sat with children and engaged positively with them during a range of activities, including playdough play. Staff were observed chatting with children, encouraging role play and mimicking everyday experiences such as eating and drinking. One child was observed playing contentedly on his own, demonstrating respect for children's individual play preferences.

Transitions between activities were well managed with staff explaining to children what was going to happen next and used songs to support transitions. Children demonstrated they were familiar with the songs and routine. Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals and staff sat with children during this time. During mealtime, a child with additional needs chose not to eat. Staff sensitively responded by offering an alternative activity aligned with the child's interests. The child was offered painting, an activity staff knew he enjoyed. He remained seated at the table and was supported by staff to select and squeeze the paint independently. Staff offered children additional servings of food and children who did not like the main meal were offered an alternative. Water stations were available in each care room and drinking water was offered at snack and mealtime. Staff

recorded children's individual information including food, nappy changes, sleep and activities on an app which they said is used for two-way communication with parents/guardians.

The physical and material environment in each room was well organised and thoughtfully laid out to support children's learning and development. Open shelving was used to ensure that a range of developmentally appropriate resources, including puzzles, musical toys, small world animals, blocks, and Montessori materials, were easily accessible to children and promoted independent choice.

Designated areas of interest were clearly defined and included a construction area, a home corner and a dress-up area. Suitable props were provided to support imaginative and role play. Child-sized furniture was available throughout the rooms, and soft matting was provided to allow children opportunities to rest comfortably. Children who required sleep were provided with cots or beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. They were made comfortable for sleep with their outer clothing and shoes removed and soothers given to those who used them

Children's artwork was displayed on the walls, alongside a birthday display and a family wall, which helped to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that reflected the children's experiences and identities.

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 secured to prevent unauthorised access and to prevent children exiting unsupervised. Access to the service is managed via a video intercom entry system.
- Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.
- There were no trailing flexes or cables observed and medicines were stored safely.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children were supported to wash their hands before meals.
- Staff reported bed linen is laundered weekly or if soiled.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff when spoken to were knowledgeable on safe sleep guidelines. All sleeping children were physically monitored and sleep checks were recorded every ten minutes by staff.
- The temperature of the cot room and other areas where young children were sleeping was maintained within the recommended range.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly illuminated and unobstructed.
- Staff were familiar with the fire drill procedure.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area the artificial grass surface was lifting posing a potential tripping hazard.
2. The annual service of the fire fighting equipment had not been completed as required. The fire fighting equipment was last serviced in April 2024 posing a potential risk the equipment may fail in the event of an emergency.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy changing policy and procedure were found to be inadequate for infection control purposes. The nappy changing policy did not detail all required infection prevention steps, including the removal of used gloves prior to redressing a child and the requirement to wash the child's hands following nappy changing. In the Lotus Room, staff were observed not washing their hands following nappy changing. Additionally, a staff member was observed washing a child's hands while still wearing gloves that had been used during the nappy change, subsequently disposing of the gloves and failing to wash their own hands. In the Lillie's Room, staff were observed not to support children to wash their hands following nappy changing.
4. In the Lillies room some staff were observed not to wash their hands after cleaning children's noses and disposed of the tissues lifting the lid of the bin rather than using the pedal function. This practice increased the risk of spreading infection.
5. In the changing area used by the Lotus room there was a build-up of dust and debris on the seams of the two changing mats provided. This was not in line with infection control policy and posed a potential infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The sections of artificial grass in the outdoor area that were lifted due to heavy rain in recent days have been fully repaired, and the school will continue to monitor and maintain the surfaces to ensure they remain in good condition and prevent any tripping hazards.
2. The annual service of all fire-fighting equipment was promptly completed on 6th February 2026. The certificate was emailed to the inspectors immediately to confirm that all equipment is fully operational and compliant with fire safety. The school will continue to follow a proactive annual servicing schedule, maintaining records to ensure ongoing compliance and safety at all times. The school will continue to maintain an annual servicing schedule with records to ensure all fire-fighting equipment remains fully operational and compliant at all times.

Infection Control:

3. All staff have received refresher training on nappy changing procedures. Step-by-step visual guides have been displayed in all sanitary areas to reinforce correct practices. Staff have also been reminded individually of the correct procedures, including proper glove use and handwashing for both staff and children. The person in charge will continue to monitor staff compliance through regular supervision and audits to ensure all infection control steps are consistently followed. Ongoing reinforcement and guidance will continue to be provided as needed to maintain the highest standards of hygiene and safety.
4. All staff have been reminded of the correct procedures for hand hygiene after assisting children and for using pedal bins. Refresher training on infection control practices has been provided, and visual reminders for proper handwashing and bin use have been displayed in the room. The person in charge will continue to monitor staff compliance through regular supervision and audits to ensure all infection control practices are consistently followed, maintaining a safe and hygienic environment for children and staff.
5. The mats were immediately and thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. Staff have received reinforced training on nappy changing and cleaning procedures, with emphasis on maintaining all surfaces, including seams, to consistently meet infection control standards. The person in charge will continue to monitor a

consistent cleaning schedule, maintain regular staff supervision, and carry out audits of all changing areas to ensure hygiene standards are consistently upheld, preventing any risk of infection.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Written evidence.

Infection Control:

Written and photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

Evidence was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. Practice will be reviewed on next 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) The monthly record of fire drills was available. The last fire drill was completed on 19 January 2026.
- (b) The number type and maintenance record for fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was available. The fire fighting equipment was serviced on the April 2024 and the smoke alarm was serviced on the 12 January 2026.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the main hall and each care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid insurance certificate displayed on the premises confirming that the pre-school service was adequately insured.