

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL084
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Discovery Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Collegefort, Castleknock, Dublin 15
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D15 DTH6
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Marie Louise Grace
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	14/10/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	53	PM	38
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Jameson
<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

Discovery Montessori School is located in a residential area in Dublin 15, and is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care to a maximum of 63 children aged 2 – 6 years from 08:00am – 06:30pm, Monday to Friday, and currently operates from 08:30am – 05:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme, which is delivered through a morning session from 08:30am – 11:30am. The service also provides school age childcare in the afternoon.

The service operates from a purpose-built two-story premises. There are two care rooms on the ground floor, namely the Green Pod, which caters for children aged 2 years and 8 months – 3.5 years, and the Yellow Pod, catering for children aged 2 to 3.5 years old. There is also a kitchen, an office and sanitary accommodation located on this floor. The first floor has four care rooms, the Red Pods 1 and 2, which both cater for children aged 2 years and 8 months – 4 years old, the Blue Pod 1 which caters for children aged 3.5 – 4.5 years old and the Blue Pod 2, catering for children aged 2.8 – 4 years old. There are further sanitary accommodation and a staff room on this floor. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area located to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service in supernumerary capacity and employs twelve adults to work directly with the children, including the deputy person in charge and eleven early years practitioners. The registered provider also employs one adult who works with the school age children. On the day of the inspection, the registered provider and eleven early years practitioners were present when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service. One adult who works with the school age children arrived in the service at approximately 01:30pm. One adult who is employed by a quality support agency was also present on the day of 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16(1)(j) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Blue Pod 1 and Red Pod 2.

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, 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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was rostered to be present all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on and when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.
  - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

- (2) The full staff files of six adults who had been employed since the last inspection was reviewed along with the Garda vetting disclosure of seven staff members which had expired since the last inspection and one adult employed to work with school age children.
- (a) Ten written and verified references were available from past employers.
  - (b) Two written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for fourteen adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
  - (d) Police vetting was available for six adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six consecutive months or more as an adult.
- (4) Six adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) International police vetting was not available for one adult for one of two countries they had lived in other than Ireland for more than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was not available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to one adult before employment commenced.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (d) An international police vetting application has been submitted for one staff member. The registered provider has updated the service's recruitment policy and will ensure all relevant vetting disclosures are obtained prior to commencement in the service.

(3) All relevant checks will be carried out prior to new staff members commencing in the service as stated in the updated recruitment policy.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

(2)

(d) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

(3) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9(3), however, the non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding as police vetting has not been received. The registered provider is required to submit the police vetting to the inspectorate once it is received.

**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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. In the morning, eleven staff members were caring for fifty-three children, and in the afternoon, seven staff members were working with thirty-eight children.

(2) The correct adult child ratio was maintained in the service for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was available in a supernumerary position to provide cover in rooms as needed.

## 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;*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) Ten administration of medication records were reviewed, and all information was completed in full.

(3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

## 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

(1)

(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Staff members were knowledgeable about the children's individual needs, likes and dislikes, demonstrating strong relationships and familiarity between the children and their caregivers.

- Mealtimes were observed to be a sociable and pleasant event, with staff members engaging in meaningful conversations and offering support where required.
- Staff members were observed to tend to children's individual personal needs promptly, offering discreet supervision for toileting and assisting with hand washing.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The children were supported to follow their own interests; decision making was encouraged by staff members who were observed to actively supervise and guide the children throughout the day. The children appeared to be happy and confident in their environment; a daily routine was evident on the day of the inspection.
- Staff members used kind and respectful language on the day of inspection and were observed to positively reinforce the children's achievements with praise and recognition. A child who required additional support was observed to be encouraged by staff members to explore their environment, was supported during activities and transitions and given freedom of choice.
- Staff members were observed to communicate with parents and guardians through discussion and informal chats at drop off and collection times.

### Physical and material environment:

- Low level tables and chairs were available to the children in the care rooms, facilitating a comfortable area to eat meals and take part in tabletop activities.
- The care rooms were designed to support the age and developmental stages of the children attending the service, equipment and materials were stored at a low level to encourage the children's independence decision making skills.
- Equipment and materials were in good working order and included Montessori materials, construction toys, art and crafts materials, home corners with a wide variety of supporting props and cosy areas with soft mats, pillows and a selection of books, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play.
- A fully enclosed outdoor play area was available to the children. The equipment and toys included slides, a wobbly bridge, balance beams and ride-on toys as well as benches to facilitate rest and quiet activities. Children from all care rooms were observed to spend time in the outdoor play area on the day of 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

##### General Safety:

- The entrance leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- A visitor book was available in the service. The inspector was asked to sign in on their arrival to the service.
- Equipment and materials were in good working order.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed to be supported with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day, before mealtimes and after toileting and activities.
- The service was clean and well maintained, evidenced by up-to-date cleaning records.
- Snacks brought from home were refrigerated to ensure perishable items were kept cool.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to ensure the hygienic disposal of waste.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was observed to be in date, stored in the correct packaging and out of the children's reach. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for two staff members. However, these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

2. Blind cords on two of the windows in Red Pod 2 room were not secured. This posed a risk of injury to the children.
3. The water temperature in one wash hand basin in the first-floor sanitary accommodation was recorded as 44.2°C. This posed a potential risk of injury to children.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting renewal application has been submitted for two staff members. The registered provider will renew all staff vetting within the 3-year timeframe outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Blinds cords have been secured on both windows; all window blinds are now safely secured to the wall.
3. The water heating system has been checked, and the temperature was regulated, the temperature control on each sink has also been recalibrated.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

1. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
2. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
3. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

## 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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for thirteen staff members and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster. In addition, one staff member held in-date Paediatric First Aid training.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises.
- (b) First aid boxes were available for the children in attendance in the event of an emergency.

### 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (2) *The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) *an authorised person.*
- (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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated and staff members reported that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 04 September 2025.
- (b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment on 05 November 2024 and the smoke alarms on 18 September 2025.
- (2)
- (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire records requested by the inspector were available for review.

(4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in the service. Staff members also demonstrated their familiarity with emergency procedures through discussion with the inspector.