

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL093		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Deerpark Montessori School		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Deerpark Montessori School, St Mary's Parish Hall, Howth, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	D13 V259		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Margarita Campos		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/11/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Coyle		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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.		

### Description of service

Deerpark Montessori school is a sessional early years service which was established in 1997 and taken over by the current registered provider in 2024. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12:30pm Monday to Thursday. The service has exclusive use of a community hall within a church building during the operational hours of the service. An outdoor area immediately adjacent to the hall is available to the children.

### Staffing

The registered provider in addition to one other staff member work directly with the children.

### 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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15,19,23,25 and 26; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

(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,
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

The files for 2 staff members including the registered provider and 1 staff member was reviewed.

(2)(a) The following references were available form a past employer:

Two written references were available for one staff member and two written references were available for 1staff member employed in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 2 staff members. The service also 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 1 adult who had lived outside the State as adults for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Two staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service, and each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Two references that were available for one staff member were not validated with the person who provided the references.

(d) International police vetting was not available for 1 adult who had lived outside the State as adults for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

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

#### **Corrective Action**

(2) (a) The registered provider validated each reference by phone, in accordance with Tusla requirements. This document has now been added to the staff file.

(d) The staff member has submitted the English official translation of the Vetting documentation.

#### **Preventive Action**

(2) (a) References will be validated as part of the recruitment process.

(d) International vetting will be required for any staff member who has lived outside Ireland for more than six months. This step will be part of their recruitment process.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of reference validations for 2 references.

Copy of international police vetting.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has forwarded all of the required documentation in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment to the Early year’s inspectorate. The evidence has been reviewed and accepted.

## 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)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

There were 2 adults working directly with 10 children aged 3 years to 4 years 7 months.

(8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single handedly.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*

*(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) Ten children's records were reviewed. The registration forms were completed with the required information as specified in subsections (a) to (i) of this regulation.

### 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 following examples demonstrate how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

#### Basic needs:

- Warm and positive interactions were observed taking place between the staff members and children during the inspection. The registered provider and staff member were observed engaging with the children using welcoming facial expressions and warm vocal tones and showing a keen interest in what each child was doing.
- The staff were observed to build the children's confidence by their support and encouragement especially when the children were developing new skills. The children's independence was encouraged with staff members heard readily providing encouragement and praise for the children's efforts and accomplishments. Staff members responded promptly and kindly when children needed assistance.
- The children brought their own packed lunch with them from home and were given plenty of time to enjoy their lunch with the staff members sitting chatting to the children while they ate thus creating a relaxed and social atmosphere. The children's water bottles were freely available to them to take if thirsty throughout the session.
- The children were accompanied to the sanitary facilities in the adjoining corridor by one of the staff members when they needed to use the toilet.

- The children’s achievements were positively reinforced with recognition, praise and encouragement by both staff members. The staff members were observed to approach any minor disagreements that occurred between the children in a positive and calm way and supported the children to resolve any conflict that arose.
- All of the children enjoyed time in the outdoor play area on the day of inspection and were dressed appropriately prior to going outside.

### Supporting relationships:

- It was observed that the registered provider and staff member knew the children well, as evidenced in the positive manner in which they spoke to and about the children in the service.
- The staff members demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child’s needs (both individual needs and, for some children, their additional needs), their likes and their preferences, thereby fostering each child’s inclusion and involvement in activities. The staff members were observed displaying anticipation and appropriate responsiveness when children experienced challenges within the environment and when children chose to change or opt out of activities.

- Familiar routines had been established, and children’s transitions were supported in the service as evidenced by the staff members signposting which activities were coming next, including indoor and outdoor play, and snack time.

### Physical and material environment:

- The care room was bright, welcoming and spacious, and the play materials and equipment were accessible on low-level shelving to facilitate children’s independent choice and play.
- A range of learning and play resources were available to the children including a broad range of Montessori materials including language, mathematics, cultural and practical life resources, additionally a home area with a play kitchen and a range of accessorial play materials were available for the children to use to support their imaginary play experiences. Construction toys were provided along with transport play materials in addition to a variety of tabletop materials and jigsaws
- A wide selection of books was provided alongside the rest area in the care room and the children’s language development was further enhanced through conversation, storytelling and singing.

- Sensory play experiences were available to the children through the provision of sand in the outdoor play area and paint and craft materials in the care room all of which were available for the children to use as they choose.
- An enclosed outdoor area was located to the front of the service. The area was surfaced with grass, and the children had rainwear and boots available to enable them to play outside regardless of the weather. A storage shed contained a variety of play resources such as balls and a sensory table which were taken out for the children to play with. The area provided space for the children to enjoy running and free movement. All the children present enjoyed time outside 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 doors leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The entrance gates to the service were secured when the children when playing in the outdoor play area.
- The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at all the sinks throughout the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy play.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were available in the service.
- Children's lunches which contained perishable food items including meat and dairy products, provided by parents for the morning snack, were refrigerated on arrival to the service. This reduced the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food contamination.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

### 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 trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of the registered provider, who works in the service on a daily basis.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

### 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

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) Fire drills were not conducted in the service on a regular basis. The last fire drill occurred in February 2025. Fire drills must be conducted monthly to familiarise both staff and children with evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency.

(b) A record was not available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The records were retained by the property landlord and were not available for inspection.

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

#### **Corrective Action**

(1)(a) Following the Tusla inspection, a fire drill was carried out with the children. This drill was fully documented, and the record was added to our daily logbook using the updated fire safety template. At present, they have completed and recorded two fire drills, one in November and one in December.

(b) Manager requested smoke detector inspection certificate from landlord. Documentation not yet received due to delays caused by staff illness and ongoing alarm system upgrades.

#### **Preventive Action**

(1)(a) The service has implemented a monthly fire drill schedule, to be conducted during the first week of each month. All fire drills will be recorded in the daily logbook using the fire safety template, and documentation will be kept on file for inspection to ensure compliance with Regulations.

(b) Certificate will be forwarded as soon as received. Annual alarm checks will be requested and kept on file going forward.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of fire drills conducted since inspection.

Maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers.

Maintenance certificate for the smoke alarm system.

#### **Summary Comment**

The registered provider submitted the maintenance certificate for both the fire extinguishers and the smoke alarm system. The regulatory requirement for regulation 26 - Fire safety measures has been addressed.