

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015FL119 |
|--------------------------|-------------|

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Hope Montessori Autism Care Centre |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Fortlawn Community Facility, Fortlawn Park, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin |
|----------------------------|--|

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Eircode:</b> | D15 EA47 |
|-----------------|----------|

|                                     |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Sherene Powell |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Service type:</b> | Part Time, Sessional |
|----------------------|----------------------|

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 15/09/2025 |
|----------------------------|------------|

|                                   |    |    |    |   |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|---|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 11 | PM | 6 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate,<br>Child and Family Agency,<br>Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A,<br>Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15 |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | E Hosford  |
| <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. |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|

### Description of service

Hope Montessori Autism Care Centre is a part time service located in an urban community setting. The service is registered to provide early childhood care and education to children aged between 2-6 years of age from 9am to 1pm and 2-6pm Monday to Friday. The service is also registered to provide a school age service. The service operates from two care rooms in a community facility. The Poppies room caters for children aged 3-4 years of age and the Daisies room provides care to children aged 4 to 6 years of age with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis. Sanitary accommodation is accessed through the reception area of the community centre, and the service has access to a public playground to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children in the service and employs four staff who work with the children to include the person in charge, deputy person in charge and two childcare staff. On the day of the inspection there were four adults working directly with the children to include the deputy person in charge and three childcare staff. The person in charge and the Director of Education for the service facilitated 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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8,9,11,16,19,23,25,26 and 27.

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 person in charge, director of education, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part II - Registration and Register

#### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection, the service was operating within its registration to accommodate a maximum of 22 children aged from 2-6 years of age from 9am-1pm and 2-6pm Monday to Friday.

### 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 named person to deputise as required.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was present on the arrival of the inspector to the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in place within the service
- (2) The staff files of one new staff member employed in the service since the last inspection in September 2024 were reviewed.
- (a) Two validated written references were available from a past employer.
  - (b) Not applicable as no references were available from a source other than a past employer. or a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the new staff member, three staff working directly with the children and the Director of Education. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) International police vetting was available from one country in respect of the new staff member who had lived outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.
- (3) On review of documentation relating to a new staff member, it was observed that the required procedures as outlined in (2) were completed prior to the staff member working directly with the children.

(4) On review of documentation available the new staff member had evidence to demonstrate that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

**Poppies** room- 1 adult caring for 6 children aged 3 -5 years.

**Daisies** room- 3 adults caring for 5 children aged 3 -5 years.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff on the premises at all times as evidenced by staff rosters and sign in sheets available for 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:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(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)
- (h) The details of the children attending the service to include their time of arrival and departure was recorded on an electronic application
- (i) A staff roster was available, and it reflected the staff present in the service.
- (k) A sample of 12 accident and incidents records were reviewed on the service electronic application. The service has written documentation to confirm that the parents of each child had been informed of the incident or accident that had occurred while their child was attending the service.

## 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)

#### Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service with staff working with parents and children to encourage healthy packed lunches. Staff in the Daisies room provided additional sliced vegetables and fruit at snack time for the children to eat. Drinking water was freely available to the children throughout the session.
- The atmosphere was calm and relaxed at snack time while the children sat together and were given plenty of time to enjoy their snack. The staff members sat with the children at snack time encouraging conversations and extending interactions.
- Transitions within the service were managed appropriately. Children were given plenty of notice to prepare for the next activity. Staff engaged with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play, at mealtimes and when using the sanitary facilities. The children responded to the staff by following directions and requesting additional support when required.
- Strategies to engage and facilitate the children were observed such as using the child's name, repeating clear instructions and reinforcing the planned sequence of events. This enabled the children to become familiar with the daily routine and anticipate activities and transitions.

#### Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- Staff were observed to have warm and responsive interactions with the children using soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.
- Verbal engagement and communication was held with parents at drop off and collection with staff updating them on their child's day, food eaten and developmental achievements

#### Physical And Material Environment:

- The care rooms were arranged into defined areas of interest including home corners, construction areas, a sensory table, library areas and arts and crafts area. Each area was resourced well with suitable play materials and equipment providing children with the freedom to play and explore. The materials were

observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Suitable child size furniture including tables and chairs were available for eating and tabletop activities.

- The outdoor area was available to the children and consisted of a larger space with a poured soft surface, with climbing frames, balance bridges, swings, slides, rope bridges, roundabouts and totem poles. All the children were observed to spend time in the outdoor play area at a designated time.

### 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:

- Entry into the community centre was managed by reception staff member and exit was controlled by an electronic release system.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of children's reach in locked cupboards.
- Children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in an electronic application
- The outdoor area was adequately secured to prevent an unsupervised child from exiting and an unauthorised adult from entering.

##### Infection Control:

- The environment and care rooms were visually clean and maintained with staff completing cleaning schedules daily.
- Liquid soap, paper towels and pedal bins were available to facilitate hand washing. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including following outdoor play, using the toilet and before meals.
- The children's food from home was stored in a refrigerator on arrival and removed at snack time.

##### Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service.
- The designated fire exit was illuminated and clear of any obstructions throughout the inspection

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service exceeded the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. The temperature was recorded as 44.4°C at 10.32am. This increased the potential risk of scalding a child in attendance

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. In response to the non-compliance the registered provider has stated that on identifying that the water temperature had exceeded the recommended maximum of 43°C (recorded at 44.4°C), the affected sanitary area was immediately blocked off to prevent children's access and eliminate any potential risk of scalding. This ensured no child was exposed to unsafe water temperatures while the issue was being addressed. The issue was reported to community centre management without delay. The community centre management took prompt action and completed the necessary repairs to restore the water temperature to a safe and compliant level. After the issue was rectified, photographic and video evidence showing accurate temperature readings was emailed to the inspector to confirm that the issue had been resolved and the service was operating safely. The service will continue to carry out daily water temperature checks and report any issues to the community centre immediately. If any issue is detected, the affected area will be blocked immediately to prevent children's access and eliminate any potential risk of scalding.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

- 1 Photo and video of temperature reading.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

## 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)

Two staff members with up to date First Aid Responder training were available to the children during the operation of the service.

(2)(a)(b)

A fully equipped first aid box was suitably equipped and available to the children while in the care rooms and outdoor area. The box was stored in a conspicuous position and accessible to staff.

## 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 last recorded fire drill that took place in the service was on the 24 July 2025 before the service closed for holidays.

(b)

The number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms was present in the service. Records available demonstrated that they had been serviced on the 17 July 2025.

(4)

A notice of the fire procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

A record was not available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the service.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) In response the registered provider has stated that the equipment was serviced a week before the inspection. The certificate was emailed to the inspector as soon as received. Service will continue to ensure that all firefighting equipment is serviced as and when due, with up-to-date certificates provided and kept on file.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b) An up-to-date copy of firefighting maintenance certificate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under regulation 26 has been adequately addressed

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

### Compliance Information

During the inspection it was observed that staff supervised the children while in the care rooms, when using the sanitary facilities and when transitioning to the outdoor area located to the rear of the building.