

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015FL120

Name of Service: Hope Montessori Autism Care Centre

Address of Service: Mountview Youth & Community Centre, Lohunda Downs, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.

Eircode: D15 EY81

Name of Registered Provider: Sherene Powell

Service type: Full Day, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 20/11/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and T. Nelson
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 a full day care service based in an urban area. The service is located within the Mountainview Youth and Community Centre and consists of two care rooms with two separate dedicated sanitary areas for the children's use. On the day of inspection one care room was operating as a specialised Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class offering a morning and afternoon session. The service operates between 8:00am - 6:00pm catering to children between the ages of 2-6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). The service has access to an enclosed outdoor area with a soft surface located at the side of the community centre and a large hall inside the community centre. The service is one of five early years services operated by the registered provider. The service also offers a registered school age childcare service.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs seven staff to work in the service including the director of education, person in charge, four early years professionals who work directly with the preschool children and one auxiliary staff member who assists with meal preparation and cleaning duties.

On the morning of the inspection there was four early years professionals and the designated person in charge working directly with the children. The director of education arrived at the service shortly after the inspectors and an auxiliary staff member was present in the afternoon.

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 9 Management and Recruitment and Regulation 16 Record in Relation to a Preschool service.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of the inspection under Regulation 23, in relation to a non-compliance identified under Regulation 23. A response was received from the registered provider which mitigated the risk identified. See body of report for details.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the director of education, person in charge, 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,
- (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 if required.
 - (b) A review of the staff roster and discussion with management demonstrated that a designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises the day of the inspection for the duration of the opening hours of the service. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with management confirmed there are currently 7 staff employed by the registered provider to work in the service. The files of three new staff employed in the service since the last inspection along with the garda vetting disclosure of one existing staff member were reviewed.
- The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) One written and validated reference was available from a past employer.
 - (b) Five written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 4 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for 3 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that two adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) A review of available records demonstrated one staff member had commenced employment within the service prior to the appropriate consideration of references.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

As soon as the written reference was received it was verified, validated and documented in the staff member's file. The documentation was available on the day of inspection. For any person who holds a role within the service written references will be obtained and verified before their commencement.

Supporting documentation submitted

None submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs. There were 5 staff including the designated person in charge available to 8 children present on the morning of inspection.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The director of education was present to assist in the care rooms.

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;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) The registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication. A sample of five forms were reviewed dated since the last inspection and all were observed to be completed in full.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (k) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for accidents and incidents. This posed a potential risk of miscommunication impacting the appropriate care of children after an injury. A sample of 7 records were reviewed dated since the last inspection. Five records were observed incomplete and did not include a parent's signature confirming they had been informed of the incident. This non-compliance was observed on the previous inspection in May 2025. The preventive action has not been maintained in line with the information provided to the inspectorate following the last inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the previous inspection, continuous reminders are being sent to all parents to approve any pending accident and incident records. These reminders were presented to the inspector on the day of inspection. However, to ensure that parents sign, the service has also introduced a dedicated recording book where parents sign to confirm that they have been notified of any incident or pending incident report awaiting their approval. These measures aim to ensure that all accident and incident records are complete, accurate, and appropriately acknowledged by parents. The person in charge will continue to ensure that parents receive regular reminders regarding any pending incidents.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Recording book

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 has been addressed.

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) The following practices were observed to be in place to support the learning, development and wellbeing of the children attending across both care rooms in the morning and afternoon:

- Staff used strategies such as timers and visual aids to support children to understand the daily routine.
- Clear guidance was given when children transitioned through activities as they were encouraged to place hands on shoulders and walk at a relaxed pace when moving through the community centre.
- Staff interacted with the children using calm tones prompting them to use language during their interactions and praised their efforts. Staff used strategies such as repetition and questioning to encourage discussion.
- Children were supported as necessary with selfcare practices such as placing on a coat, hanging up belongings and toileting.
- The atmosphere across the care rooms throughout the day was calm and pleasant. Children were observed engaging with activities of their choice and moving freely around the space.
- Children attending a shorter session in the morning or afternoon brought food from home while children who stayed for the full day were given food supplied by the service. On the day of inspection morning snack included melon, pear, apple, banana and carrot. The main meal of the day was sausage, gravy and mash. A child who did not like the main meal was offered a healthy hot meal alternative brought from home. The mealtime was a social occasion as children sat at the table with their peers and staff.
- A quite restful space was created for sleeping children.

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:

- A staff member conducted a risk assessment of the community centre hall prior to children transitioning to the space for play.
- Staff were observed to actively monitor and supervise exit doors from the community centre hallway as children played in the area.
- Storage cupboards containing cleaning agents were securely closed to prevent children from accessing them.
- Staff supervised children during mealtimes to ensure food was not shared which could potentially lead to an allergic reaction.
- An up to date completed cleaning checklist was displayed.

Infection Control:

- Children were supported to wash their hands prior to mealtimes. Warm water and dispensed soap were available to support hand hygiene practices.

Safe Sleep:

- Age-appropriate sleep facilities were available for children who required sleep.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed clear of obstruction.
- Staff were observed to bring the attendance record to the community centre hall during children's play time. This practice supported safe evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- The procedure to follow in the event of an emergency was clearly displayed using both text and images.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Radiator temperatures in the sanitary area had a surface temperature that exceed 50°C were accessible to children and posed a significant risk to children's safety. The following was observed:
 - The radiator in the sanitary hallway had a surface temperature of 53.1°C.
 - The radiator in the sanitary area used by the Jasmine room had a surface temperature of 51.9°C.

An immediate action notice was issued.

2. The radiator accessible to children in the sanitary area used by the sunflower room had a surface temperature of 48.3°C and posed a potential risk of injury to children.
3. The door at the rear of the Sunflower classroom was observed propped open as children played in the room although it is acknowledged there was a high level of supervision in the room at the time this practice could potentially pose a safety risk to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The issue with the radiators was promptly reported to the community centre management. The radiators have been fully shielded with radiator covers. Regular monitoring of radiator surface temperatures will continue, particularly during periods of increased heating use, to ensure they remain within safe limits. All radiators accessible to children will remain covered at all times.
2. A safety cover was installed on the radiator in the Sunflower Room sanitary area, which had recorded a surface temperature of 48.3°C. This corrective action was completed within 24 hours to eliminate any potential risk to the children. Radiator surface temperatures in the Sunflower Room sanitary area will be continued to be routinely monitored, particularly during periods of increased heating use. All radiators accessible to children will remain fitted with safety covers to ensure that no radiator poses a potential safety risk to children in the future.
3. Staff members were reminded at the post inspection meeting that the fire safety door must remain closed at all times while children are in attendance. The importance of adhering strictly to all fire safety procedures was re-emphasised and reinforced with the team. The person in charge and the room leader will continue to continue to carry out routine checks throughout the day to confirm that all fire safety doors remain closed while children are present. Any issues identified will be addressed promptly to maintain a safe environment.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.
- Record of staff meeting post inspection.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) *the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) *the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) *the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) *a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) *the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1) There was a complaints policy maintained that outlined the following:
- (a) The procedure to be followed when making a complaint.
 - (b) The way complaints would be dealt with.
 - (c) The procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.
- (2) (a) The registered provider ensured there was a process in place to record complaints.
- (b) This was maintained in line with service policy.