

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>-TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL229
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naionra Montessori Lusca
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Reamount Farm, Lusk, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K45 H960
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lisa Nash
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/10/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM	17
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Coyle
<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

Naionra Montessori Lusca is a sessional early years' service which was established in 2014. The service operates from a purpose-built care room which is located alongside the registered provider's family home on the outskirts of Lusk village in north county Dublin. Two sessional services are provided in the service on a daily basis, from 9 am to 12 midday and from 12:30pm to 3:30pm through the medium of the Irish language, the service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service has a particular focus on outdoor play with 2 outdoor spaces available to the children, gairdín beag and gairdín mór.

### Staffing

The service employs 5 staff members including a relief staff member. The registered provider works directly with the children attending the service, 2 staff members are employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary, to work with children with additional needs, in posts funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

### 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*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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,*
- (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.*

*(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member was appointed to deputise when required.

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

All staff files were reviewed. A total of 5 files were maintained in respect of the registered provider, 3 staff members who work in the service on a daily basis and the file for the relief staff member.

(2)(a)(b) Two written, validated references were available for the registered provider and for the 4 staff members employed in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and for the 4 staff members.

(d) International police vetting was available for the 2 staff members who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Five staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, 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.*

#### 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 ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the morning session there were 20 children aged between 2 years 11 months and 4 years 7 months being cared for by 4 staff members.
- In the afternoon session there were 17 children aged between 3 and 5 years being cared for by 3 staff members.

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

### Basic needs:

- On the Early year's inspector arrival to the service, the children were engaged in meaningful play-based activities. The 4 early years practitioners present joined in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play. Children appeared comfortable and confident to make choices about their learning, and the adults were responsive to children's ideas and requests.
- The children brought their own snack with them to the service. The practitioners chatted to the children while they enjoyed their snack creating a relaxed atmosphere and promoting social interaction. The children's independence was promoted as evidenced by the children being encouraged to open their own food containers. The practitioners pre-empted children's difficulties and were on hand if a child required assistance and provided affirmation when the child succeeded.
- The children were encouraged to use the toilet independently with discreet supervision and support provided as the children required it.
- The practitioners 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. There was an emphasis on praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour.
- The service has a particular emphasis on outdoor play and the children spend time outside regardless of the weather. All of the children have rain wear and wellington boots available to wear outdoors. All of the children in attendance enjoyed time outside on the day of inspection.

### Supporting relationships:

- The Early Years practitioners were observed to interact with children in a nurturing, sensitive and warm manner. The practitioners demonstrated their familiarity with the children by talking to the inspector about their observations of the children, interests, personalities and the children's developmental stages. The practitioners were heard chatting to the children about their parents, siblings, pets and extended family, this practice nurtures links between the service and home.
- The practitioners demonstrated positive regard for the children and their families through the use of language and the availability of a family wall in the service. This was further enhanced by the children sharing their weekend news with a practitioner which is in turn given to parents on collection.

- The children were observed to be engaged in activities that were planned based on the children’s interests or which the children had chosen themselves with the practitioners paying close attention to the children’s emerging interests. The practitioners were observed to build the children’s confidence by praising and encouraging their involvement in activities and on completion of tasks.
- There was a consistency of staff provision in the service and the Early years practitioners were observed to communicate with each other regarding the children’s need’s, routines or any update’s from parents, this practice ensures consistent care for the children.
- The service works in partnership with parents, this was evidenced as the practitioners were observed updating parents on their children’s progress at drop off and collection. Additionally, the service provides parents with a written update of their child’s progress at the end of each term along with contacting parents by phone and e mail regularly as required.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service was equipped with adequate and suitable furniture and play equipment and materials to meet the needs of the children as evidenced in the following examples:

- In the care room the play materials and equipment were displayed and readily accessible on low level shelving to promote the children’s choice and independence when selecting their play opportunities. The children in the service demonstrated familiarity with their environment to access the toys and play resources they chose to play with.
- The care room was well resourced with a wide range of interest areas in addition to play and learning materials to support the children’s play experiences. Interest areas included an extensive home corner which supported the children’s imaginary play and included a well-resourced kitchen with a sink, cooker, play microwave, crockery and cooking utensils for the children to extend their play, along with dress up materials, hats, wigs and bags along with dolls, a cradle and an extensive variety of dolls clothes. A shop was provided with a cash register and play resources for the children to use as well as construction resources, transport toys along with a nature/science table where the children could conduct

‘experiments’ from. Montessori materials including literacy, numeracy and practical life resources were situated on low level shelves for the children to take as they chose along with a wide choice 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 enhanced through conversation, storytelling and singing.
- Two separate outdoor areas were available in the service, one immediately outside the care room called Gairdín beag and a separate space to the rear of the service Gairdín mór. The doors of the service remained open throughout the inspection which encouraged and facilitated the children to move freely between the care room and Gairdín beag. Gairdín beag was surfaced with a combination of paving stones and gravel, a water wall in addition to 2 water butts and a variety of water utensils were provided for the children to play with. A digging area with mud and play materials along with a sand table, 2 playhouses and bench seat were available for the children to use. Gairdín mór was an extensive outdoor play area positioned directly behind Gairdín Beag which the children accessed through a secure gate. The area was predominantly surfaced with grass, there were a wide range of play resources including a large sandpit which was located beneath a Perspex roof and contained a wide range of accessorial equipment for the children to use for digging and extending their play. The children had the opportunity to climb due to the provision of a wooden climbing frame which included a slide, swings and a climbing wall. Large tractor tyres and car tyres were available for the children to use in addition to balance boards. A well-resourced mud kitchen with an array of supportive resources provided the opportunity for imaginary play. A feature wall contained a variety of interests for the children including blackboards and insect house and a pretend fuel pump where the children enjoyed filling their cars. A wide range of ride on toys were available in addition to copious space for running and free movement. A large room in the outdoor play area with a range of play materials enabled the children to go inside should they chose.

## 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 leading into the service was appropriately secured. The outdoor area was secure ensuring that children could not exit the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and paper hand towels were available at the wash hand basins throughout the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following outdoor play.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition and up to date cleaning schedules were maintained.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication administration forms were available for documentation in the service should they be required.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire drill records were maintained in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
    - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
    - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
    - (iii) an employee, or*
    - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
  - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The service maintained accurate details of the children's attendance during the inspection. The attendance records were accurately maintained to reflect the children in attendance.
- (3)(b) A record was maintained of all visitors to the service. On arrival the Early years inspector was requested to sign into the visitors' book.

## 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) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 14/09/2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 19/04/2023 and the smoke alarms were recently serviced.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.