

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH058			
Name of Service:	Fox Lodge Manor Montessori & Playschool			
Address of Service:	Fox Lodge Manor, Ratoath, Co. Meath			
Eircode:	A85 X051			
Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Holohan			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	15/10/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	30
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath			
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray & S.E O' Brien			
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

Fox Lodge Manor Montessori & Playschool was established in 2005 and is a privately owned childcare facility.

The service operates from 07:30 am to 5pm each weekday and eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme.

The service is a purpose-built childcare facility located in a residential area and consists of 4 care rooms, kitchen and sanitary facilities.

The rooms were as follows:

On the ground floor

Room 1 facilitated the care of children from 3 to 5 years.

Room 2 provided care to children from 2.6 years to 3 years.

On the first floor:

Room 3 provided education and care to children from 3 to 6 years.

Room 4 provided education and care to children from 2.6 years to 4.6 years.

An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager 11 childcare staff, a cook and a cleaner. On the day of inspection, the registered provider, manager ,11 childcare staff and a cook were present.

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.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the registered provider, manager, 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.

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

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

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)&(b) Fifteen staff files were reviewed.

Thirty validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 15 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 2 staff members who had resided outside the country for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Thirteen childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6) (a) Three staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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) On the day of inspection there were the registered provider, manager and 11 adults working directly with the 57 children attending the service. A cook was also present.
- (2) The following adult to child ratios were observed on the day of inspection:
- **Room 1** had 18 children between the ages of 3 to 5 years, 5 children attending on a part-time basis, 9 children attending on a full day care basis and 4 attending on a sessional basis being cared for by 4 adults.
 - **Room 2** had 11 children between the ages of 2.6 years to 3 years, 7 children attending the full day care service and 4 children attending on a sessional basis being care for by 2 adults.
 - **Room 3** had 18 children between the ages of 3 to 5 years, 7 children attending the full day care service and 11 children attending on a sessional basis being care for by 3 adults.

- **Room 4** had 10 children between the ages of 2.6 years to 4.6 years, 7 attending on a full day care basis and 3 attending on a sessional basis being care for by 2 adults.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced in the staff roster maintained in 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) 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:

- All children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. Children rotated between their care rooms and the outdoor spaces during the day.
- Children were comforted when they became upset with adult's holding them, speaking to them softly and responding to their needs.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. There were a variety of themes in the different care rooms such as "Autumn", "Road Safety" and "Halloween" with children's artwork displayed to reflect these themes.
- Meals, snacks, and drinks were prepared in the service and provided at regular intervals. The menu was compiled in collaboration with parents with the main meal consisting of warm lunches instead of traditional dinners. On the day of inspection, the children had fruit and pancakes at 10:30 am. Rolls with hot chicken, apple rice cakes, pears and apples were served for the full day care children at 12:30pm. The children attending the part-time service had a cold lunch consisting of a choice of cheese, chicken and ham sandwiches. The full day care children had a choice of sandwiches and yogurts before leaving for home.
- Staff sat with the children during meals which created a positive atmosphere for the children to interact and developing relationships especially the children new to the group.

- Children who availed of sleep were accommodated in Room 2 at the designated sleep time after lunch.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to be very caring, kind and attentive in their interactions with the children. The staff members were observed promoting positive behaviour and supporting children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. Transitions were handled smoothly with children being given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- Parents were updated by an electronic device regarding activities pertaining to their children throughout the day. Children's work was sent home on a weekly basis. The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Stackable beds were available for the older children requiring sleep which was accommodated in Room2. Cosy areas consisting of children's couches, cushions and mats were available in all care rooms for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.
- (3)(a) An outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises, which was enclosed by walls with gates. The surface area consists of an artificial grass surface. A partially sheltered area permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

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 care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included a wooden activity unit with a climbing wall and a slide, wooden boat, plastic playhouse, slide, plastic benches, adult chairs and a storage shed with cars and buggies.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

All meals and snacks were provided and prepared onsite. The service has a 2-week menu plan with a variety of warm lunches ranging from meat, chicken and fish. A variety of snacks were also served in the mornings and afternoons. A constant supply of water was also available and accessible to the 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:

The following safety measures were observed:

- A risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis on the outdoor entrance and outdoor space to ensure that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor space. The door to the service was secured with a buzzer system.

- All play materials are placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children attending each room.
- The cords on the blinds were mounted to the walls at the windows in the care rooms, out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of Room 2 was maintained between 18 to 22^oC while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- Children were supervised in Room 2 at all times by a staff member.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable 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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service. The last recorded fire drill was on the 18/09/2024

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced in February 2024 and the smoke detection alarms were last serviced on 26/09/2024.

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025. The insurance provided cover for 70 children.