

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX066
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Name of Service:	Laugh & Learn Montessori
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Address of Service:	Drumderry, Bunclody, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y21 T2C3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Daphne Deacon
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan
Title:	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).

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Description of service

Laugh and Learn Montessori is a privately operated preschool service. It offers a play-based Montessori programme to children aged 2 to 6 years of age with a morning session from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The service is located in a converted farmhouse in a rural setting between Bunclody and Clonegal. The house consists of one playroom and sanitary accommodation. A large outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises which provides an enclosed space for play opportunities.

Staffing

There are four staff employed by the service. The registered provider is the designated person in charge and works directly across the service. All staff working directly with the children held the minimum level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),
Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

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Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4).

Regulation 28 Insurance.

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.

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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)(b)

The registered provider is the designated person in charge. There was a second-named person available to deputise when the registered provider was absent.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were four staff employed in the service. All written and validated references were available on file for staff working in the service.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

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(d)
Police vetting was not required as none of the staff members had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)
There were qualifications on file for four staff working directly with the children.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)(3)
There was an adequate number of staff working with the children for the duration of the inspection.
During the morning there were 18 children in the care of 4 staff.

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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 and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service on the day of inspection:

It was observed that staff worked to create a safe, caring, and stimulating atmosphere for all children attending with attention given in supporting children's basic needs, social development, learning and well-being.

During the morning all the children sat together to enjoy their mid-morning snack. A variety of healthy snacks were provided by parents and stored in the fridge. The staff supervised the children with handwashing before eating and they all sat together to enjoy their food. The atmosphere was relaxed and sociable and children were not rushed.

Positive behaviour management strategies such as praise, encouragement, reinforcing simple routines and boundaries were used within the setting. The staff responded calmly, kindly and respectfully to the children. The staff were observed chatting with parents during collection time.

The staff developed a weekly plan of activities to frame the week's activities, play and learning. Each child had a learning journal that documented their play and learning within the service.

The children enjoyed playing outside for long periods during the morning. The service embraced outdoor play and ensured that the children had opportunities outside in both smaller groups or all together. The outdoor area was well thought out and spacious. The children had opportunities to fully engage in a variety of interest areas such as climbing and balances beams, planting boxes, construction areas, a sand house, chalk board, ride on toys, a slide, a sand house, sheltered area, water play and a music wall.

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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)

There was a person trained in a first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending the preschool service. There was evidence on file that two staff working directly with children were trained in a first aid responder course.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in an easily accessible position on the premises which were available to the children attending the preschool service.

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)

Fire drills were completed monthly. The last fire drill completed was recorded on the 15 April 2026.

(b)

A record was maintained when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system were serviced in March 2026.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position at the entrance of the service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance for sessional care for 22 children.