

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DR006
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Name of Service:	Monkstown Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Society of Friends Meeting House, Pakenham Road, Monkstown, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 H9D6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Olivia Dunne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Early O'Brien
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).

Conditions if applicable	NA
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Description of service

Monkstown Montessori School was first established in 1977. This service is privately owned and is located in a premises owned by the Quakers in Monkstown County Dublin. The early years' service is registered to operate a sessional service and consists of one Montessori room. The service caters for children from the ages of 2 to 6 years and operates Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:30. The service has use of a large hall within the premises and an outdoor play area is available to the children to the right-hand side of the building.

Staffing

There are three adults employed to work directly with the children in the service including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, two adults were present, and the registered provider arrived after the inspection had commenced.

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 and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1)(3) - Staffing levels

Regulation 15(1) – Record in relation to a pre-school child.

Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 – First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of a pre-school child.

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
- (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-

- (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,

(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 is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.
 - (b) The deputy person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived at 10:55 on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived after the inspection had commenced.
- (2)
- The inspection focused on the recruitment records for three adults employed in the service. There have been no new staff employed since the last inspection on 20 November 2023. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed in respect of all staff. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults as follows.
- (c) The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, in relation to two adults working in the pre-school. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(4)

There was documentary evidence that all staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed 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.

(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)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

The correct adult to child ratio was maintained at all times. There were twenty-one children being supervised by three adults on the morning of inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)–(i)

Ten children’s records were sampled and reviewed. The records detailed the information as required by the regulation.

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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Needs

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly on the day of inspection. Staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals and toileting.

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all meals are provided by the parents for children attending on a sessional basis. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating a snack comprised of sandwiches, wraps, cheese, crackers and fruit. Children were offered water to drink from their own water bottles. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within the care room.

Supporting Relationships

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their work and play. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during work, play and toileting and mealtimes.

Staff described how they record information about each child's learning and development and how this is shared daily with parents at handover times.

Physical and Material Environment

The Montessori room was laid out to support the children's independence. On the day of inspection children were actively engaged in Montessori work using mathematical materials, practical life resources. These materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Children moved freely around the room and were offered to make their own choices and decisions when choosing tasks and materials to work with. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

The care room provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials.

On the day of inspection children were observed playing in the fully enclosed outdoor play area located to the right of building. This is a large, natural play space with adequate resources that were age and stage appropriate

and children appeared to enjoy their play experiences in exploring the surrounding hedges, playing on the swing and in the playhouse. The registered provider informed the inspector that the children participate and engage in gardening in this space, planting flowers, vegetables and herbs.

Programme of Activities

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment. Their learning and development were supported by the staff in the use of open-ended questions. Children appeared to be familiar with and handled transitions between activities naturally, in the use of visual and auditory cues they have become familiar with. They were aware of their leadership roles on the day such as helping to distribute water bottles and snack.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Children shared their stories and ideas with the adults regularly and these were responded to. Language development was supported in discussions between the adults and the children, observed both in play and at snack 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:

- The entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children in the indoor and outdoor areas on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Medication, which is only administered in an emergency, was stored safely and out of the reach of children.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate handwashing for staff and children in the sanitary area adjoining the care room.

- Good hand washing practices were observed after toileting, before eating and when returning indoors from play.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste products.
- Tables were observed by the inspector to be cleaned before and after snack time.
- Perishable food items were stored in the refrigerator as required.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had an administration policy of medication in place. Medication has not been given to date in the service. An adequate medication record was available to document medication given should this be required in an emergency. All staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the medication policy. Anti-febrile medication was available, clearly labelled, in date and stored out of the reach of children.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosures for two adults were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider has advised that Garda Vetting applications have been made with regard to the two adults.

To prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance in the future, the registered provider has assigned responsibility for ensuring this to one member of staff who will check that all dates on certs including Garda Vetting are current. The staff member will carry out this exercise after each school break.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence has been submitted demonstrating that Garda Vetting applications have been made for two adults.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.

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)
A person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff members hold current FAR certification.

(2)(a)(b)
A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and safely stored on 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)

There was evidence of regular fire drills having taken place within the service. The last fire drill took place on 03 October 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated 10 July 2025 and 04 November 2025 respectively.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the Montessori room and the main hallway of the building.

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 which expires on 27 March 2026 for a sessional service which covers a maximum of 22 children.