

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DR013
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Name of Service:	Foxrock Montessori School
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Address of Service:	247 Foxrock Grove, Foxrock, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 V9Y6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona O'Grady
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	05/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	N/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo.
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Foxrock Montessori School is registered to provide part time care for children from 3 to 6 years of age from 08:30 to 13:30, Monday to Friday. The service also operates a sessional service from 09:00 to 12:30. The service is located in a suburban, residential area and operates from the adapted, two storey private residence of the register provider. The children's care and education is facilitated in two purposely adapted care rooms. The first Montessori room is located on the ground floor and the second Montessori room is located on the first floor of the premises. An all-weather outdoor play area with shelter is available to the children on the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs seven staff members. This includes the registered provider, the person in charge, a substitute teacher who is available when required, and four staff who work directly with the children daily.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 – Record of 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, 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*
- (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-

- (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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

(2)

On the day of inspection, six adults were present, the registered provider and five adults who was employed to work directly with the children.

The following vetting information was available for the seven adults:

- (a) Nine written references from past employers for five of the adults.
- (b) Five written references from a reputable source for three of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Three of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) Of the seven files reviewed on the day of inspection a complete employment history was not available on the day of inspection for two of the adult's files.

(2)(d) Police vetting from the relevant authorities in another state was not available on the day of inspection for three of the adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

The registered provider received an updated CV for both adults. The registered provider checked the CV thoroughly and verified the amended CV and resubmitted the updated CV to the Tusla Inspector.

The registered provider will use a written checklist with two step verification process for reviewing all documentation before submission. All staff CVs and files will be checked twice for accuracy to prevent future errors. This procedure immediately will start immediately.

(2)(d)

Police vetting for two of the adults submitted to the inspectorate. With regards to the third adult, the registered provider received a copy of a corrected CV which now accurately reflects the staff members employment history and confirms that they did not remain in another state for more than six months. The registered provider has reviewed the information and confirmed that police vetting is not required for this adult. The registered provider has added a clear step in the new written checklist with 2 step verification, requiring verification of any periods spent outside Ireland for longer than six months. During the 2-step verification process, CV, dates, gaps and time spent overseas will be checked twice for accuracy before any submission to Tusla. This will ensure any international vetting requirements are identified correctly and will prevent future noncompliance. This procedure has now been added to our staff files.

Supporting documentation submitted

Amended CV for two adults submitted.

Police vetting submitted for two adults.

Checklist template for verification of staff files submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately 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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1)

On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(4)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the 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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,

(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)

On the day of inspection, a sample of 12 children's files were reviewed, a record in writing was held on file contain the required information as set out in paragraph (1) (a-g) and (i) above.

(3)

On the day of inspection, a record in writing in respect of each pre-school child was available and open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

From the sample of 12 records reviewed, the following information was not available on the day of inspection.

(1)(h)

Record of immunisations, if any received by the child, was not present for five files. As a result, It was not possible to ascertain if a risk assessment was required for children who had not been immunised.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider confirmed that:

Information regarding immunisation was retained on the system however the individual files had not been updated. All files are now up to date containing the hard copy of required information. The Immunisation Policy has been updated to include children who have not been immunised, and a risk assessment has been added to this policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Immunisation Policy submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 15 have been adequately addressed.

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 observed to provide a broad and varied range of equipment and materials that supported children's learning and development. A comprehensive selection of Montessori materials was available, catering to each of the key learning areas: practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language, and culture. These materials were well-organised and accessible, promoting children's independence, engagement, and purposeful learning. In addition to Montessori resources, the service offered a variety of equipment that supported different types of play and learning experiences. Examples observed included a play kitchen and a tuff tray with lentils, both of which promoted imaginative and sensory play, alongside the development of fine motor skills. The water play area encouraged exploration, scientific thinking, and social interaction. These messy play areas also provided valuable opportunities for children to develop self-care skills and a sense of responsibility for their environment. Children were actively encouraged to tidy up after play and were provided with child-sized cleaning equipment, such as sweeping brushes and dustpans, to support their independence and involvement in maintaining the play space. Art trolleys supported creative expression and fine motor skills through access to a range of art materials. Small world play setups facilitated imaginative play and storytelling, enhancing language and social development. A dedicated reading area provided a quiet, comfortable space for literacy development and relaxation. Manipulatives such as puzzles, building blocks, and sorting materials supported cognitive development, problem-solving, and hand-eye coordination. Outdoor play was also well-supported through the provision of an all-weather outdoor area, allowing children access to outdoor experiences throughout the year. This space included a range of ride-on toys that promoted physical development, coordination, and gross motor skills. Rugs were available for seating, creating comfortable areas for group activities, storytelling, or quiet play. Additional outdoor resources such as garages and dolls' house further supported imaginative and role play in an outdoor context.

All equipment appeared to be clean, well-maintained, and appropriately stored, indicating regular checks and adherence to hygiene standards. The furniture in each care room was suitable for the age and stage of development of the children attending. This included child-sized tables, chairs, and storage units, which promoted independence and safety. Adult-sized chairs were also available, allowing staff to support children comfortably during activities.

The range and quality of equipment observed throughout the service contributed positively to children's engagement, learning, and holistic development.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that.

(1) A record was maintained of all children of their times of entry and departure in the service daily.

(3) The registered provider has ensured that no unauthorised person is allowed access to the preschool children and that a record is kept of any authorised person entering the service.

(4) A visitors' book is in place within the service and the details specified in paragraph (3)(b) are recorded. The records indicated that this information is retained for the required time set out in regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The supervision practices observed reflected a strong commitment to safeguarding children. Staff were strategically positioned to maintain continuous visual and auditory supervision, enabling purposeful engagement while remaining responsive to each child’s individual needs.

During the rolling snack, staff were situated close to the children, offering appropriate support and maintaining attentiveness to their behaviour. Their knowledge of individual needs was effectively applied to support emotional regulation, particularly during moments of challenging behaviour.

Transitions between activities were calm and gradual, aided by visual supports and verbal cues that helped children anticipate changes and feel secure. Staff ensured safe movement between the care room and outdoor area by positioning themselves at both the top and bottom of the staircase, maintaining supervision and promoting safety.

The outdoor play area was thoughtfully arranged to preserve clear lines of sight and sound, supporting effective supervision and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children present.

Communication among staff and with the registered provider was clear and consistent. Staff routinely informed colleagues when leaving an area, ensuring that roles and responsibilities were understood and that supervision was continuously maintained.