

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DR016
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Name of Service:	Park Montessori School
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Address of Service:	2 Mount Eagle Park, Leopardstown Heights, Leopardstown, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 N265
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Kinch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	N/A
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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:	R. Duff
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

Park Montessori school is a privately operated sessional service located in Leopardstown, Dublin 18. The service provides two sessions daily from 8.45am to 12.15pm and 12.45pm to 3.45pm.

The service is registered to provide sessional care and education to children 2-6 years of age. The service operates from a purpose-built extension to the side of the registered providers private dwelling and children have access to the enclosed garden area to the rear of the house. The programme of care is facilitated through a blend of a Montessori and play based curriculum.

Staffing

The service currently employs two adults including the registered provider. The registered provider and a second adult were working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels.

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

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

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 member, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both were on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)
The inspection included a review of the required documentation for one staff member employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 28 March 2023. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the two staff members employed in the service. The following documentation was available;

(a)(b) Of the two written and validated references that were required, both were available from a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for two staff members present on the day of inspection. Garda vetting disclosures from both staff members were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to one adult commencing employment in the service.

(4) Records were available evidencing that one staff member who was employed to work directly with the children since the last inspection 28 March 2023 held the required qualification or 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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were nine children attending the service being supervised by two adults on the day of inspection.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

A calm and welcoming atmosphere was evident on arrival at the service and throughout the inspection. Children were engaged in a range of tabletop or floor activities and had the opportunity to move freely to a new activity. Children were observed to choose play materials and return them when finished.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative.

Identity and belonging were promoted in the classroom with children's photos and artwork displayed throughout the room, children's families were included on a family tree.

Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to new activity and for mealtimes. Children brought snacks from home. The service has a healthy eating policy which is shared with parents/guardians in advance of enrolment. Mealtime was a social occasion with children and staff members sitting together having the opportunity to chat about the morning. Drinks were readily available within the care room. Children used the toilet independently but were offered support when needed.

Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities. There was evidence that equipment and materials provided were based on the children's individual needs and emergent interests.

The outdoor area was equipped with a range of toys and materials to support play experiences. The outdoor area also had lots of natural materials for example a tree covered walkway, plants, flowers and a wooden bench at the end of the garden.

Engagement with families and parents is facilitated by the daily sharing of information on the child's day. This is shared through conversations at drop off and collection and supported by electronic means. On the day of

inspection transitions from preschool to home were observed to be friendly and informative to parents or guardians collecting and dropping off 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:

- When the inspector arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was enclosed, restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Anti-febrile medication and cleaning agents to include disinfectant sprays and liquids were stored on high shelves or in high cupboards.
- Toys and equipment in the indoors environment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- The outdoor area was observed to be suitable, safe and secure with domestic bins stored out of children's reach and all outdoor play materials maintained and in good condition free from hazards.

Infection Control:

- Both the indoor and outdoor environment were maintained in a clean condition; staff were observed to clean toys and equipment between the morning and afternoon sessions.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, and pedal operated bins.
- The children and staff members washed their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection.

Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire and evacuation procedures were on display in the care room.

Outing:

- The registered provider detailed the procedure for taking the children on a walk to the local park; this included completing a risk assessment and having prior written consent from parents to allow children to take part.

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.*

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

(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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill took place on 09 October 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced on 09 October 2025. Smoke alarms were serviced on 09 October 2025.

(2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

(4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed on the wall in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the sessional service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 22 children and an expiry date of 27 March 2026.