

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DY009
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Name of Service:	Drumcondra Montessori School
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Address of Service:	33 Ormond Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
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Eircode:	D09 R5W2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mina Walsh
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson
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

Description of service

Drumcondra Montessori School is located in a residential area in Dublin 9. The service offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and provides sessional and part time care to a maximum of eleven children, aged 2 – 6 years, Monday to Friday from 08:30am – 12:30pm. The service operates from one large care room with access to sanitary accommodation and an enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children attending the service and an emergency person is available to the service, if required. On the day of the inspection, the registered provider was present when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (2)(c), Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(3), Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a), Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1)(2)(4) and Regulation 28 Insurance; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 02 October 2025 in relation to a non-compliance identified under Regulation 26. A response was received from the registered provider on 3 October 2025; additional information was sought and a response which mitigated the risk identified on the 06 October 2025. See body of report for details.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider 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

(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, and

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) (b) The registered provider was present when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service.

(2) The registered provider operates the service singlehandedly with an additional adult available in the event of an emergency. Garda vetting for both adults was reviewed on the day of inspection.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for two adults. However, 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. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

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, eight children were being cared for by one adult.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

- (8)
- (a) The registered provider did not ensure that two adults were present in the service on the day of the inspection. The registered provider worked single-handedly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (8)
- (a) The registered provider has ensured that a second adult is on the premises at all times during the operational hours of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (8)
- (a) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 11.

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:

- Positive and meaningful interactions were observed on the day of inspection, the registered provider displayed kind, gentle and calm mannerisms which were reflected in the children's experience in the service. The children seemed happy and content in their environment.
- Snack, which included a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, was served on a rolling basis from approximately 10:30am. The children were encouraged to choose and serve their own food at a time that suited them and had access to water throughout. The children displayed patience, independence and turn taking skills during this task, which was encouraged by the registered provider.
- The registered provider offered discreet supervision during toileting and assisted with personal care needs such as handwashing and blowing noses.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The children were supported to follow their own interests, were free to choose activities independently and explore their environment, while being offered support during activities and transitions.
- The registered provider interacted with the children and joined them at their level during activities. Minor disagreements and conflicts were resolved in a calm and prompt manner.
- The registered provider was knowledgeable about the children's individual needs, likes and dislikes, demonstrating strong relationships and familiarity.
- The registered provider was observed to communicate with parents and guardians through discussion and informal chats at drop off and collection times.

Physical and material environment:

- The care room was designed to support the age and developmental stages of the children attending the service, equipment and materials were stored at a low level to encourage the children's independence decision making skills.
- Montessori materials and equipment were available to the children, including jigsaws, rods and number trays, pouring and measuring and dressing frames. The children also had access to art materials such as paint, glue and crayons.
- A selection of books was available to support children's language development.
- An enclosed outdoor area provided opportunities for a variety of play experiences including gross motor, sensory and imaginative play.

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 leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Equipment and materials were in good working order.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Flexes and cords were secured safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The care room and sanitary area was equipped with warm water and liquid soap. Children were observed to be supported with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day.
- The service was clean and well maintained.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available in the care room and sanitary area to ensure the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was observed to be in date, stored in the correct packaging and out of the children's reach. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one adult. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Windows located at the back of the care room overlooking the garden area, where a significant drop to ground level was observed, did not have safety restrictors. This posed a potential risk of injury to children. It is acknowledged that the windows were not opened on the day of the inspection and are equipped with a button release handle.

Fire Safety:

3. Although it is acknowledged that a record of monthly fire drills was available for the previous school year, there was no evidence that a fire drill had been conducted during the month of September which posed a potential risk to children who may not be familiar with the fire drill process.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An up-to-date Garda vetting disclosure has been obtained and added to staff files for one adult. The registered provider will ensure that Garda vetting will be renewed in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. Safety restrictors have been fitted to both windows.

Fire Safety:

3. The registered provider will ensure that fire drills are carried out monthly. Monthly reminders have been scheduled on the service's calendar.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
2. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Fire Safety:

3. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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) One adult who was observed to work directly with the children on the day of inspection held in-date certification for First Aid Response (FAR) training. This ensured that a person with FAR training was immediately available to the children attending the service at all times.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises.
 - (b) A first aid box was available to the children in attendance in the event of an emergency.

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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated that the last recorded fire drill took place on 09 June 2025.
- (4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) Maintenance records for firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service were not available for review by the inspector. The last dated maintenance check for firefighting equipment, observed on the fire extinguisher, was carried out in October 2016. Maintenance checks must be carried out yearly to ensure the proper function of equipment in the event of an emergency. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to this.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (b) The firefighting equipment was checked and certified after the inspection and yearly checks have been scheduled. The registered provider stated that a suitable smoke detection system is in place and regular checks are carried out.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (b) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 26.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that preschool children attending the service were supervised at all times. Two children were observed to play in the garden while six children remained in the care room. The registered provider was observed to move between the care room and the garden and position themselves at the window of the service but was unable to ensure adequate supervision of the children attending the service. The care room is not visible from the garden and areas of the garden are not visible from the care room. This posed a potential risk to the children's safety.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider will ensure that the children attending the service are within sight and/or sound, ensuring appropriate supervision and care at all times. A second adult is now on the premises at all times of operation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 27.

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 that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 27 November 2025.