

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016DY021
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Horizons Montessori School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Lakelands, Terenure, Dublin 6, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D6W DK72
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Fiona O Kelly
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	20/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	N/a
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Sarah Quigley
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Horizons Montessori is one of two privately owned early years' services operated by the registered provider in South Co Dublin. Care and education are provided on a sessional basis to preschool children aged 3 to 6 years from 9:15 to 12:15 each weekday, on a school calendar basis. The service is located in a purpose built premises on the grounds of Terenure College. The registered provider also operates a school aged care service from the premises outside the opening hours of the preschool. An outdoor play area is available to the children on the premises.

### Staffing

The service currently employs six staff members, including two designated persons in charge and an adult who works in an administrative role. On the day of inspection, six adults were present including an adult on a work placement programme. One of the designated persons in charge arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival to facilitate the inspection. The registered provider does not work directly 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/information and records/ 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 and regulation 16.

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 persons in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

Documentation was reviewed in full in respect of Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) for two adults who had commenced employment in the service since the last date of inspection on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all six adults employed, and the adult on a work place,ent programme. The following documents were available;

- (2)
- (a) (b)
- References were available from two sources for both of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for the seven adults. However, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, as detailed under regulation 23.
- (d) International police vetting was not required for one of the adults, and was available for the other adult who required it.
- (4) There was evidence that both of the adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had not been completed prior to the two adults commencing employment in the service to ensure they were suitable and competent as follows:
- The Garda vetting document for one adult who commenced employment in the service on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022 was not obtained until the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
  - The two references obtained for each of the two adults had not been verified prior to the adults commencing employment in the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

Going forward, the service will ensure all staff members are vetted, and references are checked prior to commencing employment. An updated staff file checklist was issued to ensure this occurs. A meeting was held with the recruitment team to ensure corrective actions are understood and enforced.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### **Summary Comment**

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were nineteen pre-school children attending the service being supervised by four adults during the inspection.
- (8) (c) Not applicable, the service is not operated single handedly.

### 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)

A sample of documentation was reviewed for 12 children currently enrolled to attend the service by the inspector. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to points (a) to (i) of the above regulation for each of the records reviewed.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A record was available in the care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that attendance records had been maintained daily in the service.
  - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection.
  - (j) There were no written records of administration of medication available in the service. The person in charge stated medication had not been administered to a child in recent years and is not typically administered in the service. However, the necessary documentation was available to record the administration of medications if required.
  - (k) Records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service were available. The sample reviewed on the day of inspection contained the required information, including record that parents/guardians had been appropriately informed.

## 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-*

*(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

The inspector observed that staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting the health, wellbeing and development of children in the service during the practices observed by the inspector. For example: adults consistently offered praise and encouragement towards the children, prompting individual choices during their Montessori and play based activities. Respectful language was used by the adults who were kind and used gentle tones during all interactions observed by the inspector. Adults made time for individual conversations with the children and communicated well, listening and making eye contact. Staff were each observed to have a supportive role in the children's activities, engaging to extend activities, give Montessori lessons, or when invited by a child.

Children were visibly happy and engaged in their Montessori and play based activities throughout the inspection. The children were all given the opportunity to engage in outdoor play during the inspection and were dressed appropriate to the weather.

Staff members engaged with the children during snack time, creating a sociable atmosphere. A rolling snack table was in place for children who wanted to eat outside of the set lunch time. Independence was encouraged throughout the morning. Children accessed the toilets independently and were encouraged to tidy up after activities and put of their coats for outdoor 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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

#### General Safety:

The entrance door into the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

#### Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Pedal-operated, lidded bins were in place throughout the service to appropriately manage waste. Staff supported children to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff members outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

#### Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of temperature reducing medication, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff members detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector.

#### Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

#### Non-Compliance Information

## General Safety:

1. 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. Two staff members working in the service did not have a Garda Vetting disclosure which was dated within the last 3 years.
2. The temperature of a radiator in the hallway of the service was recorded to be 67.7°Celsius on the day of inspection. The radiator was uncovered at a low level accessible to the children posing a risk of a burn injury to a child.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Updated Garda Vetting was retrieved for both adults. New systems are in place to ensure this does not re-occur; management have noted through a new system required re-vetting dates.
2. An external company performed a check on all radiators. Daily radiator temperature checks have been incorporated into daily cleaning and safety checklists to ensure temperatures are controlled at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

## Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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)

An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children during the inspection.

(2)

(a)(b)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were observed to be immediately accessible to the children within the service and were stored in a conspicuous location on the day of inspection.

### 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 written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place in December 2024.
  - (b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system had been serviced within the required timeframe.
- (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within each room in the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the preschool service was adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children in attendance.