

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016DY028
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Squirrels Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	20 Seafield Road West, Clontarf, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D03 RD27
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Denise Scanlan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/09/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	0
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Á Dunne
<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

Little Squirrels Montessori is a sessional service operating from a purpose-built care room to the rear of the registered providers family home which consists of one care room and sanitary facilities. The service provides care to children age 2 to 6 years from 9am to 12pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks a year. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the children to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service and employs the person in charge and one childcare staff. On day of inspection, the person in charge and the childcare staff member were present and the registered provider was present for the feedback meeting.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 21, 23, 25, 26 and 28.

The scope of the inspection was the one care room of the service

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, the childcare 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.

(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) the service had 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 was being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person was on the premises,
- (c) there was clear management structure in the service that identified the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The files of the registered provider, the person in charge and one childcare staff were reviewed.

- (a) Four written and validated references were available from a past employer for two adults.
- (b) The registered provider had two written references from a source other than past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the 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 of the State for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that three adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## 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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children, with two adults working with 15 children for the morning session.

(3) The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection.

## 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 layout of the room was organised with toys and equipment laid out on low level shelving ..
- There was suitable, adequate and age-appropriate play materials and equipment which included Montessori materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture were present.
- There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the classroom.
- A cosy area consisting of a couch was present in the room with books available.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed, with both artificial grass and real grass surface. The outdoor toys were suitable, available, age appropriate and included a playframe with swings and a slide, a digger, a balance bike, a scooter, a ride in car.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

Children brought their lunches from home and lunch time was provided at 10.45am. Children sat and ate their lunch in a relaxed environment. Food provided from home was prepared to suit the stages of development of the children to include crackers, sandwiches, fruit, yogurts and yogurt drinks. Water in childrens water bottles was available to each child to drink. The children were given support and supervision when self-feeding.

## 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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspector observed, the entrance gate and door of the carer room was secure to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- Attendance records were present, completed with times of arrival and departure for each day and were accurate.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The temperature of the care room was recorded as 19.9°C at 10.25am, within the recommended ambient temperature of 18 - 22 °C.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition throughout, with the premises and equipment observed to be visually clean. The person in charge along with some of the children cleaned the tables before the children's lunch.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after before lunchtime, after activities and after toilet visits.

##### Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed

## 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) The service provided evidence that one adult was trained in First Aid Response and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2) (a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the care room.

## 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 of the fire drills completed in the sessional service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 23 June 2025 before closure for the summer months of July and August 2025 as a 38-week sessional service.

(b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and for the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises, demonstrating they were last serviced on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in a conspicuous position in the service

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for a maximum of 22 children attending the sessional service with an expiry date of 27 November 2025.