

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH058
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Name of Service:	Fox Lodge Manor Montessori & Playschool
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Address of Service:	Fox Lodge Manor, Ratoath, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 X051
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Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Holohan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	31.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building, Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15.
Inspection undertaken by:	E.Saini and N.McEndoo
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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).

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Description of service

Fox Lodge Manor Montessori & Playschool was established in 2005 and is a privately owned childcare facility. The service operates from 07:30 am to 5.00pm each weekday and eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The service is a purpose-built childcare facility located in a residential area and consists of 4 care rooms, kitchen and sanitary facilities.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 16 staff to work in the service including a manager to oversee the day to day running of the service. On the day of inspection the registered provider, the manager, 11 childcare staff and a cook were present.

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 not announced and focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 19 and 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. The scope of the inspection included the two care rooms.

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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 inspectors wish 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*

(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*

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(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)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that 3 new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. In addition, Garda vetting for 4 staff members whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal was requested for review.

The files for new staff were reviewed, and the following information was noted.

- (a) Two written validated references from past employers for two of the adults.
- (b) Four written validated references from reputable sources for three of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for seven staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Documentation was available to demonstrate that three adults working directly with children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualification

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

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection, as follows:

- In Room 1, there were 16 children aged 3 year to 5 years being cared for by 3 adults in the morning and 11 children being cared for by 2 adults in the afternoon.
- In Room 2 there were 12 children aged 2 year to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults in the morning and 6 children being cared for by 2 adults in the afternoon.
- In Room 3 there were 16 children aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 3 adults in the morning and 14 children being cared for by 2 adults in the afternoon.
- In Room 4, there were 11 children aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 2 adults in the morning. Room 4 was closed on the afternoon of the inspection, children who were in attendance for full day care were accommodated between the remaining rooms.

(8) The registered provider ensured that at least two adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced through the staffing.

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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 sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All of the twelve sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i) in this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

On review of the eleven children's registration records the following sections of the registration forms were not completed;

- 9 of the twelve children's records did not include Part (1)(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner, if any, this section had been left blank.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider conformed that records observed on inspection have been reviewed and updated. To prevent reoccurrence forms will not be signed off on by the service until they have been reviewed and completed in full.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated form submitted.

Summary Comment

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

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:

- (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)
- (j) Details of 15 medication records were reviewed. These records included signed parental consent, evidence showing that two staff members had checked and countersigned each dose of medication administered and also that signatures had been obtained from the children's parent or guardian when collecting the child to document that they were aware if medication was administered to their child over the course of the day and at what time.
- (k) On the day of inspection, a sample of 15 accident and incident records were reviewed that had occurred since the last inspection. The records were found to be comprehensive and contained the required information, including parental acknowledgement of the notification.

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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 are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

Basic Care Needs

- The mealtime experience was observed to be a leisurely sociable occasion, where children sat together with their peers and the staff and chatted.
- The children appeared comfortable and confident in their environments and were familiar with the daily routine and activities.
- All the children attending the service on the day of inspection were afforded the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area to the rear of the service during the inspection and were dressed appropriately prior to going outside.

Supporting relationships around children

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. Children received help from staff when needed.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there were 'Family Wall' displays at children's level with photographs of children's families. Children's artwork was displayed in the care rooms.
- Throughout the care rooms the early years practitioners verbally informed the children of upcoming activities, movement and changes in routine as well as songs and rhymes being used to support smooth transitions.

Physical and Material environment

- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment

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available to them. Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence in the care rooms.

- The fully enclosed outdoor play area located to the rear of the service. Play equipment included a suspended walking frame, swing sets, a sand pit, water tray self-propel cars, ride-on and push-along toys.
- Suitable rest areas were available in the rooms to enable a child to rest and take a break from activities throughout the day. They consisted of soft mats, cushions and a library.

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:

- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- The door 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.
- The outdoor play areas were secured with railings to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes.

Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- There were fire drill procedures displayed in the Montessori room of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An upstairs window in the sanitary facilities of Room 3 was observed not have a working window restrictor present.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider confirmed the faulty restrictor was repaired immediately. Checking of window restrictors has been added as part of the services documented safety checks to prevent reoccurrence.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Copy of updated safety checklist.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.