

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH038
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Name of Service:	Culmullen Montessori Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Culmullen, Drumree, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A85 R123
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Forde
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath.
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray
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).

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Description of service

Culmullen Montessori Pre-School provides a sessional service for children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The hours of operation are from 09:15am to 12:15 pm each weekday. The service is situated in the local community centre beside the church and consists of 2 care rooms:

The Rainbow room provides care and education for children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

The Butterfly room provides care and education for children from 4 to 5 years.

Other facilities available in the centre were a kitchen, sanitary facilities and a large hall which the pre-school has access to. An outdoor space consisting of a grass area is allocated to the pre-school at the end of the adjacent cemetery.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service and employs 3 staff members.

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.

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

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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 co-operation of the registered provider, staff member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

(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) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

Four staff files were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(2) (a)&(b) Eight validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 4 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.

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(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All 4 staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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.

(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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service on the day of inspection.

In the Rainbow room there was 1 adult providing care and education to 6 children ranging in age from 3 to 4 years.

In the Butterfly room there was 1 adult providing care and education to 7 children ranging in age from 4 to 5 years.

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

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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 of the Infants and Children:

- There was a relaxed and calm atmosphere in the service and the adults were observed to speak kindly and respectfully to the children. Children sought out staff members who readily acknowledged and praised the children's efforts and accomplishments.
- Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and gentle reminders regarding hand washing.
- Children were observed engaging in tabletop activities, art and crafts and free play with children afforded the opportunity to choose and change activities if they so wish. The curriculum was child led with the children having a particular interest in "Life Cycle of the Frog", with caterpillars growing in a controlled environment in a container. Other themes were "Summer" and "Sunflowers" with artwork displayed and sunflowers growing in individual pots for children to bring home.
- The children brought their own healthy lunches which they had at 11am. Lunch time was observed to be a social and pleasant experience with lots of conversation and laughter observed. The children in the Butterfly room had a particular interest in the "Seaside" story being read by the staff member.
- Children were comforted when they became upset with the staff adopting behavioural management strategies such as speaking to the child softly with the children responded well to distraction and re-direction.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes. Children were given advance reminders to support transitions to a new activity and for snack times.
- The staff members worked closely with parents to provide a child centred approach to learning. The adult's demonstrated knowledge of the individual care needs of the children especially the children who needed additional attention.
- The children appeared comfortable and happy in their environment.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day,
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Soft furnishings beside the book rack were available for a child to take a break from activities and rest if needed.
- (2)(a) The service had access to a grass area at the end of the adjacent cemetery which the staff members mark out with cones, so the children are aware of the area allocated to them. The larger cemetery area is enclosed with fencing and hedging with a secure side gate. The service also has use of a large indoor hall.

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 care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys. Some of the equipment included, dolls, shop and home area, building blocks, wooden puzzles, reading area, construction table, magnetic shapes, treasure and sensory baskets, toy musical instruments, animal box, dress-up box and nature trays with birds' nests and cones.
- Play equipment was available and brought to the outdoor space.

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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 the day of inspection both the indoor and outdoor environment appeared safe. The staff members had a clear understanding of their role and range of responsibilities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The hand-washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. The water temperature in the hot taps did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance. liquid soap and hand paper towel was available for effective hand washing.
- Pedal bins were in use in the service.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules available.
- A fridge was available for the refrigeration of perishable items in the children's lunch boxes.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One staff members garda vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. Perishable items in children's lunch boxes were not refrigerated. This increases the risk of bacterial growth in these food items.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting has been sought for this staff member. The registered provider will ensure that all garda vetting's are renewed every 3 years.

Infection Control:

2. The lunches will be stored in the fridge available in the kitchen. All staff have been informed, and the registered provider will ensure that this practice is continued on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Garda Vetting.

Infection Control:

None required as fridge seen on the day of inspection.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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 a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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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 service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 27/05/2026.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on 11/02/2026. The firefighting equipment was last serviced in August 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed 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 that the service was adequately insured for 22 children. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2026 to the 27/03/2027.