

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018GY512
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Forever Friends Montessori
-------------------------	----------------------------

Address of Service:	St. Vincent's National School, Coolarne, Turloughmore, Co. Galway
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	H65 PK03
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Cora Concannon
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date of Inspection:	24/04/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	6
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	---

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Forever Friends Montessori is a private part-time and sessional service registered to provide care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. Opening hours are from 09:00 to 14:00, Monday to Friday, school term time only and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is available from 09:00 to 12:00.

The service currently operates from a modular unit located on the grounds of the school. It comprises of a care room, off which there is a separate kitchen and two individual children's sanitary rooms and an adult sanitary room.

Staffing

There are currently three adults employed in the service including an adult employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and the registered provider.

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.

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-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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, deputy and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and a second adult was available to deputise, as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present in the service while the pre-school children were in attendance throughout the day.

(2) Recruitment files for all three adults were reviewed.

- (a) Four of the six required validated references were from past employers.
- (b) The remaining two of six required validated references were from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three adults demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) The curricula vitae on file for the three adults working in the service evidenced that no overseas police vetting disclosures were required as none of the adults had resided outside the State for a period of six consecutive

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

months or longer as adults.

- (4) Certificates were available to evidence that all three adults, working directly with the children, had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) The minimum adult child ratios were met. There were 12 children in attendance with 2 adults in the morning and 6 children in attendance with 2 adults in the afternoon.
- (8)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were two adults on the premises while the early years children were present. The staff roster confirmed that the designated person in charge and the deputy were on the premises when the early years children were in the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

Basic Needs:

- Snacks, which were provided by parents/guardians and stored in the fridge, were observed being eaten at 10:40. They were noted to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included- berried fruits, scones, bite sized vegetables, crackers and filled sandwiches. Additional food was available for lunch and children were given time to finish their food.
- Children's individually labelled water bottles were available from an easily accessible tray and children were observed drinking from these during the day.
- Staff were alert, proactive and responded quickly to children's toileting needs. A staff member in the outdoor play area was noted to respond immediately to a child's cues in line with the child's individual toileting needs.
- A quiet area equipped with soft seating was available for children where they could sit quietly away from noisy activities.

Supporting children's relationships:

- Independence was encouraged and children were observed putting on and zipping up their jackets when dressing for outdoor play. The two adults were nearby to help, if required.
- Children were informed verbally, with a bell and by way of a visual sand timer of the transition from one activity to the next thereby reducing any anxiety and supporting independence.
- Both staff members were observed sitting with the children while engaging in social conversation during mealtimes and tabletop activities. They were noted to listen to the children's conversations and use strategies such as open questioning, feedback and explanations to extend the children's thinking and learning.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Various forms of communicating with parents/guardians was stated as being in use, including phone calls, emails, a personal messaging application and a digital application where staff inform parents of the children's activities. Staff stated they communicate with parents at drop off and collection.

Physical and material environment:

- The indoor and outdoor areas were laid out in clearly defined areas with age and stage appropriate toys and equipment which provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas.
- Toys and play equipment were easily accessible from storage boxes and trays at each area.
- Tables and chairs were positioned to facilitate group and solitary activities with a wide variety of resources stationed nearby.
- Displays including children's artwork and photographs were visually appealing and included relevant titles and captions including frogs, Spring and a tree with photographs of the children and their families.
- The fully enclosed outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was observed in use by the children. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk with a nest swing supervised by one of the adults, a slide and a seesaw. Balance bikes and tractors provided opportunities to practice gross motor skills of pedalling, coordination, balancing and core strength. In addition, imaginary play opportunities were available with the mud kitchens and water located in a covered table available for sensory exploration. A covered shelter was available ensuring the children could play outdoors in all weathers.

Programme of activities:

- Long, medium- and short-term planning was visible and available in the service. Artwork on the walls evidenced the recent theme of life cycles and photographs in the "Our Learning Journey" scrap book were available of live chicks brought into the service by a parent following the life cycle of a hen.
- Ongoing observations of the children, demonstrating their learning and development, linked to both the national curriculum and quality frameworks, were furnished to the inspector. These included details of the children's extended learning and included examples of artwork related to the curriculum themes.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one, group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the day. Children were heard engaging with an adult in

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

conversation identifying actions from a corresponding card. Examples included a child holding cards which included actions such as sway your arms, touching your head and clapping your hands.

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 external door was secured on arrival ensuring unauthorised adults could not gain entry or that children could not leave the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors including the kitchen and adult toilet were secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas. Access keys to these areas were positioned out of reach of children.
- The care room temperature was recorded as 21.9°C maintaining a comfortable and safe environment for the children.
- The glass panel on the entrance door was highlighted with stickers preventing children from banging into it accidentally.
- Indoor and outdoor toys and equipment appeared to be well maintained and in good working order.
- Handrails were available on the ramps and steps up to the service entrance ensuring that children could navigate safely and independently.
- Storage units and heavy equipment were secured to prevent tipping and falling.
- No flexes or cords were accessible to the children in the care room.
- Cleaning agents were secured with a child safety lock in the locked kitchen.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with wooden fencing, stone walls and a gate with a sliding bolt.
- The area directly accessible from the main entrance of the service was secured with metal fencing and two metal gates with sliding bolts, preventing children from leaving the area unsupervised.
- Staff completed a head count of the children before going outdoors and again before returning to the service from the outdoor play area. This ensured that all children were accounted for, promoting safety and security.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection Control:

- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the service fridge preventing the food from spoiling.
- Children's belongings including bags and coats were stored away from the floor area.
- Sinks and wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, between 40.1°C and 41.2°C, dispensing soap and hand dryers.
- Handwashing was observed before the serving of food, after toileting and coming in from outdoor play preventing the spread of germs.
- Cleaning checklists for the sanitary areas were documented and were noted to be up to date ensuring that the areas had been cleaned preventing the spread of germs.
- Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of rubbish in the care room.
- Natural ventilation was available from the four windows in the care room and sanitary area, ensuring the circulation of fresh air.
- Cleaning schedule templates were visible for the prefab and the sanitary areas.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was available in the event of an emergency. It was stored in its original container and placed out of reach of the children.
- No medication was observed being administered in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep mats and individual bed linen were available for children requiring rest/sleep. No children were observed resting on the day.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit door was unobstructed allowing the quick evacuation of adults and children in the event of an emergency.
- In date fire extinguishers were secured in a frame near the main exit door ensuring functionality in the event they may be required.
- Emergency lighting signage was lit and visible in the service ensuring the safe evacuation of the children and adults in an emergency.
- The fire assembly point was visible on a fence in the national school playground, a safe distance from the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service. The date recorded of the most recent fire drill was 18 March, with previous dates including 18 February and January 2026.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 26 December 2025 and the smoke alarm certificate was recorded as 26 February 2026.
- (2)
- (c) The fire drills, firefighting equipment certificate and the smoke alarm certificates were open to review on the day of inspection in the service.
- (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of evacuation was located on the wall of the care room beside the main exit door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A written policy was available to evidence that the service was insured for the number of children stated on the policy and the service type.