

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE011
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Name of Service:	Confey Montessori
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Address of Service:	San Carlo Senior School, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 E1N8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gertrude Hallinan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Confey Montessori is a privately operated sessional service for children aged 2-6 years. The service operates from two prefabricated buildings on the grounds of San Carlo Senior School. There are three rooms allocated for use by the pre-school service with sanitary facilities. A fourth room is used to provide a school-aged service. The service has sole use of an outdoor area at the rear of one building and joined use of an outdoor area at the rear of the second building. The service currently operates from 09:15-12:45 Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 12 adults employed to work in the service including the registered provider who provides relief cover when needed. There were 10 adults present on the day of inspection including 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 areas 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-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, 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
- (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.

(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

- (1)
- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise in their absence.
 - (b) The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service. This was documented on the staff roster and staff demonstrated an awareness of their roles and the lines of accountability.

(2)

(a) & (b) The inspection focused on references in relation to seven staff who had been employed since the previous inspection dated 9 November 2023. Appropriate references had been sourced from past employers or reputable sources for six of these adults and records of verification were available.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) The inspection focused on qualifications in relation to seven staff who had been employed to work with children since the previous inspection. Six adults held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a) & (b) One of the references available for a staff member employed since the previous inspection was not deemed appropriate. There was no address on the reference; it was not stated in what capacity the referee was known to the staff member and there was no information documented on the verification record.

(d) Two out of seven adults required international police vetting. There were no international police vetting records available or records to show that any attempts had been made to source these.

(3) The registered provider did not ensure that the procedures outlined in regulation (2)(a), (b) and (d) were always carried out prior to allowing staff access to children.

(4) There was no documentation available to evidence that one of the adults employed to work with children since the previous inspection held the required qualification. This regulation was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 9 November 2023. The actions submitted following that inspection had not prevented the issue from recurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) & (b) The staff member in question has not worked in Confey Montessori since 18th November 2025 and will not be returning.
- (d) One staff member has not worked in Confey Montessori since 18th November 2025 and will not be returning. The second staff member has applied for and received international police vetting.
- (3) A full and thorough review of all HR and recruitment policies has taken place. A new 'Reference Validation' form has been created and must be completed for all new recruits. Also, a new 'Staff File – Pre-Start checklist' has been created to ensure nothing is missed prior to a new staff member starting. New staff members cannot start until the 'Pre-Start Checklist' is completed.
- (4) The staff member in question has not worked in Confey Montessori since 18th November 2025 and will not be returning.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Outstanding international police vetting for adult remaining in employment dated 21 November 2025
- Copy of 'Staff File – Pre-Start checklist'
- Copy of 'Reference Check Validation Form'

Summary Comment

9 (2)(a), (b), (d), (3) & (4) The actions have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance.

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 with the children. There were 8 adults working directly with 55 children. The registered provider and person in charge were available to assist as needed.

(3) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

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

Staff supported the children to manage their personal care independently. The children used the toilet and washed their hands as needed. They wore coats when playing outdoors appropriate to the weather. The children brought drinks and food from home. They sat together in groups when eating with staff available and engaging in conversation. Areas with soft seating were provided where children could rest or take a break from activities.

Supporting Relationships around Children

The children appeared content and approached the adults freely. Transitions between activities were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next. The adults fostered positive relationships with the children by offering support through attentive listening, gentle guidance and responsive interactions. They guided the children to manage minor conflicts by promoting cooperation and problem-solving. Staff discussed maintaining connections with families by communicating at drop-off and collection and holding meetings when needed to support children's development.

Physical and Material Environment

The rooms were organised with a variety of play materials which were easily accessible to the children. The equipment supported fine motor, constructive, creative, sensory and pretend play. Low tables and large matted areas were available for children to engage with materials comfortably. All children spent time outside where they had access to equipment which supported physical play including ride-on toys, a climbing frame and small slides. Reception areas were equipped with low level hooks for the children to access and care for their belongings independently.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Hazardous items including blind cords and cables were secured out of children's reach. Emergency exits were kept clear. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Staff reported they undertake fire drills monthly and demonstrated an awareness of safe evacuation procedures.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises appeared clean and well-maintained. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing, and children washed their hands at the appropriate times. Pedal operated bins were in place to manage waste appropriately.

Administration of Medication:

The person in charge reported that no child attending receives medication routinely. Staff were aware of procedures for administering medicine safely if required including obtaining parent/guardian consent, safe storage and keeping a record of any medicines given.

Outings:

The registered provider reported the children are not taken on outings from the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The registered provider did not ensure that entrances/exits were appropriately secured as outlined below. The registered provider is required to ensure that entrances/exits do not pose a risk to children whilst also adhering to fire safety legislation.

(a) The door in the reception area which led directly to a carpark was secured with a low-level, thumb-turn lock which could be opened by a child. This area was used by children to hang their coats and belongings, posing a risk of harm if a child were to leave unsupervised.

(b) The gates to the two outdoor areas were secured with a low-level latch which could be opened by a child from the inside and by an adult from the outside. These led directly to the car park, posing a risk of harm if a child were to leave unsupervised or if an unauthorised person gained entry.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. (a) & (b) New locks have been put in place out of reach of children on the two front doors and two gates leading outside on to the primary school yard. The new locks prevent a child being able to get to the outside.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. (a) & (b) Photographic images.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed. The registered provider must ensure that any adaptations made adhere to fire safety legislation.

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) A person with a recognised certificate in first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a trained person to be available on the premises at all times of opening.

(2)

(a) The service had suitably equipped first aid boxes which were stored in conspicuous positions in the children's rooms.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available for use by staff.

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) Records were available of fire drills carried out. The most recent record was dated 20 October 2025.

(b) A certificate was available detailing maintenance of the firefighting equipment dated 21 January 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in each room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record was not available in relation to the smoke alarm.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

(1)(b) The service is based in rooms belonging to the primary school. Therefore, all fire safety systems are linked and are the responsibility of the primary school. The last fire alarm checks were completed in October 2024 and were due for review in October 2025. A fire safety review took place on 27 November. The technician made recommendations for improvements to the current system. The school is going to invest in a new system and is currently undertaking tenders for the required works. The principal has assured works will be completed as soon as possible.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b) Letter from the school principal stating the matter is being treated as a priority and works will be carried out once procurement requirements have been satisfied.

Summary Comment

It is acknowledged that plans are in place to upgrade the fire alarm system. However, the non-compliance remains outstanding until a record is provided.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed to be well supervised throughout the inspection. This included when playing, engaging in activities, using the sanitary facilities, spending time outdoors and eating.