

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC022
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Name of Service:	Farran Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Farran, Ovens, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P31 EK66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Breffní Hyde
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	37
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
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Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Farran Montessori School is a long-established privately-owned service in the village of Farran, Co Cork. The service operates from a purpose built 2 story premises with 2 care rooms and large outdoor play areas to the front and rear of the premises. The service offers sessional and part time day care along with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from 9am to 2pm and 1pm to 5pm, Monday to Friday, 44 weeks of the year. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years with a Montessori based pedagogical approach to learning that incorporates the outdoors as a play and learning environment. The service also operates a registered school age care service.

Staffing

The service employs six staff including the registered provider, who is based in the service. On the day of inspection, there were six staff members working directly with the children. A student on work placement was also 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ 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, 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.

(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 two named persons who were able to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider and the named persons were in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service and the staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Six staff files were reviewed including the file of the registered provider. The file of the student was also reviewed.

(a) Eight of the 14 references available were from a past employer and were validated.

(b) Six of the 14 references available were from a reputable source and were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members and the student. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes 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.

(d) A Police vetting disclosure was available for one staff member who had lived outside of a state for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Six staff members worked directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 7 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent. The student on work placement was supernumerary and was supervised by the staff members at all times.

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, provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There was adequate staff available to care for the children in attendance in the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were observed to meet the minimum requirements over the duration of the inspection. The inspector was informed that the children from Bay Window and Field care rooms merge in the afternoon and are cared for in the Lunchroom. All these children had attended a morning ECCE session in the service. The registered provider was observed as an additional support to the care rooms in the morning and was observed working directly with the children in the Lunchroom in the afternoon.

Room Name	Age range of children	Number of children present	Number of staff present
Bay Window Room (AM ECCE)	3 to 5 years	21	3
Field Room (AM ECCE)	3 to 5 years	21	2
Lunchroom	3 to 5 years	21	3
Field Room (PM ECCE)	3 to 5 years	16	2

(8) The checking in and out records for the staff were reviewed and indicated that a minimum of two staff members were on the premises at all times while the service was in operation.

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 sample of 12 children's records were assessed and reviewed.
 - (a) All records assessed contained the names and dates of birth for the children.
 - (b) All records assessed contained the date on which each child first attended the service.
 - (c) All records assessed had the capacity to record the date on which each child ceased attending the service.
 - (d) All records assessed had a record of the names and contact numbers of parents and guardians if required.
 - (e) All records assessed had a record of those authorised to collect each child.
 - (f) All records assessed had a record of any illness, disability or allergy each child may have.
 - (g) All records assessed had a record of a registered medical practitioner for each child.
 - (h) All records assessed had a record of immunisations, if any, received by each child.
 - (i) Ten of the 12 records assessed had a record of written parental consent for the service to provide appropriate medical treatment if required in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
 - (i) Two of the 12 records assessed did not have a record of written parental consent for the service to provide appropriate medical treatment if required in the event of an emergency.

Not having children's records complete may hinder the care and safety of the children in the service if this information is needed for care provision.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action:

The registered provider stated in their response that parents and guardians were requested to sign and return the children's registration forms with signatures to allow appropriate medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

Preventive Action

New child record forms from Early Childhood Ireland have been purchased. These forms are clearer for parents and guardians and all areas are identified in a clear and appropriate manner. These forms are now available for the children enrolled to start in the service in September 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the completed children's records forms was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documented and photographic evidence submitted has been reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

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:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (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) The following records were reviewed:

- (i) The checking in and out records of staff were recorded on each care rooms attendance record books and clearly outlined the start and finish times of each staff member in the service.
- (j) There were no completed medication administration records available for review. The service did have the capacity to complete medication administration records in the event of medicine being administered to a child. Staff were aware of the procedures to follow and outlined this to the inspector.
- (k) Ten accident and incident records were reviewed and were completed and contained the relevant information required.

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

- Children were observed washing their hands before mealtimes and after outdoor play.
- Children were observed freely moving around the care rooms and participating in different activities of choice.
- All children had several opportunities to play in the outdoor areas which children were observed to enjoy. The outdoor areas were easily accessible from both care rooms.
- Staff in the Bay Window room were observed supporting children with toileting while encouraging independence.
- During the inspection, children were observed having access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Morning snack of apples, cheese, crackers and water were provided by the service. Lunch was provided by the parents and guardians and contained fruit, veg, yogurts, meat sandwiches and wraps.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff in the care rooms were observed speaking to the children in a respectful manner and ensured they were at the child's level when communicating with them. It was observed that the staff listened to each child's voice and valued their opinions.
- Staff in the Field room were observed showing empathy to the children this was observed when a child fell in the outdoor area.
- Staff were observed sitting with the children during mealtimes and was a relaxing environment for the children to sit and enjoy their food.
- It was observed that there was a sense of teamwork and collaboration between the staff and the registered provider in the service.

Programme of Activities

- A Montessori approach to learning was observed in both care rooms. For example, in the Field room, children were observed placing cups and plates on each table and pouring their own water. This supported and encouraged independence.
- The children in the Bay Window room were observed sitting for circle time, singing animal songs, reading a story with puppets. This promoted communication and social skills.
- The care rooms had class pets such as goldfish and caterpillars. Children in the Bay Window room were observed learning about the life cycle of a butterfly.
- Children from both care rooms were observed playing in the outdoor areas available. Children were observed riding bikes, rolling in the grass and playing running races. These activities promoted physical development and movement.

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 main entrance to the service was secured with an electromagnetic lock. The outdoor areas to the front and rear of the service secured with fences and gates and were observed to be secure for the duration of the inspection. This prevented any child from exiting the service unsupervised and prevented any unauthorised access.
- All internal doors to unsafe areas were appropriately secured during the inspection.
- Medicines such as an inhaler were observed to be stored in their original container, clearly labelled and out of reach to children in the Field room.
- All toys and equipment observed were in good condition on the day of inspection in both care rooms.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored out of reach to children in the care rooms during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to the children and staff in the sanitary areas.
- The appropriate bins were available throughout the care rooms and sanitary areas.

- Perishable food items from the children’s lunches were observed to be stored in a refrigerator to prevent food spoilage.
- The care rooms were naturally ventilated.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be clear and free from obstruction on inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’. It is acknowledged that an application for renewal of Garda vetting in respect of the staff member was made on 21 May 2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in their response that a Garda vetting application was completed on 21 May 2025 in respect of the staff member.

Preventive Action

All staff records will be checked on a regular basis with all staff updating their required certification.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documented evidence of the Garda vetting disclosure was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documented and photographic evidence submitted has been reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

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. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2025 and expired on 27 March 2026.