

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021WH016SA
Name of School Age Service:	Na Fea Montessori Preschool & Homework Club
Name of Registered Provider:	Marie McManus
Address of School Age Service:	Beech Park, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Eircode:	N37 YK24

Dates of Inspection:	19 February 2026			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	n/a	PM	8
Registration status:	Registered			
Conditions (if applicable):	Not Applicable.			

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	L O' Connor and S. Murray
Title:	Early years inspector

Authority to Inspect

Tusla's 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).

Description of Service:

Na Fea Montessori Preschool & Homework Club is located on the outskirts of Athlone town, Co Westmeath. The service operates from a single-story building. It is registered to cater for up to 24 children aged 4 to 10 years old and operates from 2pm to 5.30pm Monday to Friday during term time.

The children have access to one care room. There is a kitchenette area adjoining the main care room. The children are provided with an outdoor

	area to the rear of the premises. The registered provider also provides a pre-school service from the premises which is registered separately.
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Staffing:	There are five adults employed within the service, including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, there were five adults present within the service.
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Additional Information:	The inspection was triggered by information which was received to the inspectorate.
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Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- a) caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,

- b) provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- c) the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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.

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The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

The inspector would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in relation to the following:

- Regulation 8(1)(2): Vetting disclosures.
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels.
- Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service.
- Regulation 12: Insurance.
- Regulation 13: Complaints.
- Section 58(G) of the Child Care Act 1991 as amended.

Conclusion and follow up actions:

There are no follow up actions from this inspection.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

(1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.*

(2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)

There were five staff files reviewed. There were two references available for the four staff members and the registered provider. Evidence of validation was in place for the staff members references. The required Garda vetting disclosures were available and it was demonstrated that the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. The registered provider had determined that Police vetting was not required for any staff member.

It was demonstrated that the required documentation was in place prior to the staff being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)(4)

The adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. On the day, there were four staff members working directly with eight school age children. Throughout the inspection, the children were appropriately supervised by the staff members through sight and sound. The staff members supervised the children from a reasonable distance and adapted their supervision strategies based on the needs of the children. The supervision of the children was also supported through the layout of the care room. For example, while there were various zones created in the room by the placement of furniture, the children remained visible to the staff members.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The following policies, as required under were reviewed during the inspection; Child Safeguarding Statement, Internet and Photography Policy, and Complaints policy.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement met

The service was insured for 24 school age children to attend at any one time. The policy was dated from 03 November 2025 to 27 March 2026.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Regulatory Requirement met

(1)(2)(3)

The services complaints policy detailed how a complaint was made to the service and supporting procedures, to include how a complaint was managed and the timelines. The registered provider advised that one complaint has been received in the past 2 years which was available for review.

Evidence was available to demonstrate that the registered provider was following the procedures as set out in the service's policy. Through discussion, it was confirmed that the registered provider was familiar with the requirement to keep records of any complaints made regarding the service for a 2 year period.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

In discussion with two staff members, it was outlined that there were opportunities provided for the staff members to regularly engage with the service's policies and procedures. The staff members outlined that as part of their induction, they were provided time to read the service's policies. The practice described was reflective of the service's Child Safeguarding Statement and the staff training policy which outlined as part of the induction process, all new staff were familiar with the service's policies within the first few months of employment. A record to confirm that staff read the policies and procedures was available for each staff member. Through further discussion, the staff members outlined that there were monthly team meetings which they focus on one specific policy each month. One of staff members shared that the policy which was chosen was flexible, and that they could discuss another policy to the meeting if they needed to. They explained to the inspector how beneficial the monthly meetings were to discuss the policies and discussed the policy which was the focus for the January meeting. In the conversation, they named the policy which was planned to be discussed at the February meeting. The practice of regular and consistent team meetings was reflective of the service's own staff training policy.

The service had a Child Safeguarding Statement on display on their notice board. It outlined that staff were provided with child protection training as part of their role in working with children. Staff explained to the inspector that they regularly engaged with the safeguarding policies in the service and completed child protection training. Through a review of documentation, certificates of completion were available to demonstrate that staff engaged with the Children's First e-learning

programme. The safeguarding statement outlined that a Designated Liaison Officer and a Deputy Designated Liaison Officer was appointed in the service. And that staff members would be familiar with the named persons. In discussion, the staff members identified the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL), and described the procedures to follow as set out in the service's Child Safeguarding Statement. The staff members identified were reflective of the staff members named as the DLP and DDL within the safeguarding statement. In discussion, these staff members were familiar with their responsibilities and they explained their role and the procedures, as per the service's Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement.

Through discussion with the registered provider and staff members, they outlined that children's play experiences in the service were captured through photographs to share with their parents/guardians. The procedures which were described, including the use of the service's mobile phone and prior parental consent for children was reflective of the service's photographic and recording devices policy. The registered provider and staff members explained that photographs of children were captured only on the service's mobile phone. They outlined that their personal phones and belongings were stored securely in an adjoining room. This was in adherence of the service's Child Safeguarding Statement which outlined that staff mobile phones were not permitted within the care room.

The interactions observed between the staff members and the children were observed to be respectful and curious. The staff members engaged with the children through age-appropriate language and sought the children's opinions throughout the inspection. For example, when the older children arrived at the service the staff members asked the children about their day. Soon afterwards, the staff member playfully asked the children what they would like to do for the afternoon. The children individually responded and their choice was positively recognised by the staff members. The children's interests appeared familiar to the staff members. For example, when one child responded to say they would like to make playdough, the staff member responded warmly and acknowledged how they enjoyed making and mixing things together. These practices were reflective of the service's Child Safeguarding statement which outlined that each child was recognised as an individual and that their choices were respected.