

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DY002		
Name of Service:	First Step Movements		
Address of Service:	Malahide Road, Dublin, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D03 YX08		
Name of Registered Provider:	William Lowry		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	14/01/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15		
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne		
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 Not Applicable.

Description of service

First Steps Movements is a sessional service for children aged between 2 – 6 years old. The opening hours are from 9:15am to 12:15pm, Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service is located in a purpose-built prefabricated building located on the grounds of St Vincent’s GAA Club in Dublin 3. There are two large care rooms, sanitary facilities, a staff sanitary facility and an entrance lobby within the premises. One care room was closed on day of inspection. An outdoor play area is available to the service on the grounds of the GAA Club. The service also provides a school age service.

Staffing

The registered provider employs six staff. On the day of inspection two members of staff were working directly with the children, one of whom was the deputising person in charge and one who was employed under the Access Inclusion Model. Two staff members were present to carry out administration and support within the service. The registered provider later identified two additional members of staff who were not present on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service but visited the service on the day of inspection at 11.00am and returned for the feedback meeting at 12.39pm.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,.11, 19, 23, 25, and 26.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

The scope of the inspection included the one classroom of the service open on the day of inspection.

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.

Additional Information

Two Immediate Action Notices (IAN) were issued on the day of Inspection to the service on the 14 January 2026, as follows:

In Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment, absence of a Garda Vetting disclosure for one staff member present on the premises.

A response which mitigated the risk was received by the inspector on the 15 January 2026.

In relation to the Regulation 23- Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

A response which mitigated the risk was received by the inspector on the 15 January 2026 with additional information provided on the 16 January 2026 and 20 January 2026.

Please see details in the body of the inspection report of the accepted actions.

Acknowledgments

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

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(3) The registered provider failed to notify the Early Years Inspectorate of a change in circumstances in relation to the following as per the schedule 4 Form for Notification of Change in Circumstances:

- The details in relation to the person in charge were at variance with the information listed on the national register. It was confirmed to the inspector by staff that the registered person in charge left the service in August 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (3)A manager has now been appointed, and the registered provider has submitted a notification of change of person to the Agency. A person in charge must be appointed before the previous manager leaves. A governance checklist has been set up so the registered provider can ensure all register details remain accurate and up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) Email from Registration Office Acknowledging Change in Circumstances submission

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8 has been adequately addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(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

(2) The files of four staff, two students and the Registered Provider were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

The garda vetting files for two additional staff who were identified as part of the IAN response issued under Regulation 23 were also reviewed.

(a) Three written and validated references were available from a past employer

(b) One validated written reference was available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, six members of staff employed in the service and two students. In relation the vetting disclosure available, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(c) There was no clear line of management structure in the service on the day of inspection. On the inspector's arrival it was discovered that the person in charge, as per the Tusla register, no longer worked in the service. One of the administration staff identified themselves as the person in charge. At 10.35am, the inspector was informed by the same administration staff member that one of the staff members from the care room was the deputising person in charge. At 12.15pm, through discussion with the deputising person in charge, they confirmed they had been informed only on the inspector's arrival that they were the deputising person in charge on the day. The lack of clear line management has the potential to impact on adequate service provision.

(2)(a) (b) One written and validated reference was not available for one staff member from a previous employer or from a source other than a previous employer.

(a) Three written reference available from a past employer were not validated.

(b) Eight written references available from a source other than a previous employer were not validated.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one staff member. An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued to the registered provider on 14 January 2026 for this one staff member present on the day of inspection.

(d) International police vetting was not available for review for one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult on the day of inspection.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out in full prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service, as above, garda vetting was not available for one adult, international police vetting not available for one adult, one written and validated reference was not available for one adult and eleven references were not validated.

(4) Two staff members who were working directly with the preschool children and two staff who were present in support roles had no documentary evidence of at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (c) A clear management structure has been formalised and communicated to all staff.

An organisational chart outlining lines of authority and accountability is now displayed within the service.

- (2)
- (a)(b) All written references have been checked, validated and are now stored correctly on file and the manager is aware of its location. Manager will complete checks to make sure all documents are completed, ensuring that all references are checked and on file prior to staff/students start date.
- (c) All documentation is now in place for all staff within the service. The Manager will double check all staff files prior to new staff member/ student beginning, no new staff/ student can begin without all the information being on file
- (d) International Police vetting is in place and on file. The registered provider will complete check and police vetting before employment and international police vetting will be sought if required.
- (3) All vetting is in place for staff. Ensure all vetting is in place before commencement of staff. Manager designated to this job.
- (4) Staff members within the service have the required qualifications to be in the service, one is awaiting results. Other staff are there as a support system and are not included in the child: adult ratios. New staff qualifications will be reviewed prior to start date, if unsure the manager will check with DCDE but will ensuring all staff will have at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) (c) Organisational Chart to be submitted
- (2) (a)(b) Validated reference from a previous employer
- (2) (a) Three validated references from a previous employer.
- (2) (b) Eight written and validated references from a source other than a previous employer
- (2) (c) Garda vetting disclosures for six staff.
- (2) (d) International police vetting
- (3) Staff file Checklist
- (4) Evidence of Qualification for three staff.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 2 adults working with 15 children in the morning.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained on the day of inspection as 2 adults were caring for 15 children in the morning, aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years, with two adults available to support if required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that two adults were present on the premises during the operation of the service.

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:

- Lunchtime was at 11.13 am for the children who attend the sessional service. The children's water bottles were available for the children to drink.
- Lunchtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable event, with children given time to sit at low tables appropriate to their age. Children were observed to eat independently, with staff on hand to help as required.
- A cosy area was present in care room in use offering a comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner.

Physical Environment:

- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment available to them.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Up to date care plans were not available for three children to outline specific actions and strategies required to facilitate continuous care and on-going development.
2. Outdoor play was not provided to the children on the day of inspection. Through further discussion with staff, it was established that outdoor play was not provided daily. Lack of outdoor play limits children's opportunities to develop gross motor skills, experience risky play and experience nature.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Reports have been completed. Weekly reports have been put in place. Manager is reporting and signing off.
2. Daily outside play has been implemented with a daily outdoor log implemented
Rubber matting is to replace wet area for access. This will be installed in May 25th - 29th 2026.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Samples of Weekly reports for three children.
2. Outdoor Play log

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have been addressed. The actions taken in response to non-compliances under Regulation 19 will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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 unannounced arrival at the service by the inspector, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- No trailing flexes were observed in the service.
- Room temperatures were kept between the recommended 18 °C to 22°C.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued on the 14 January 2026, when it was identified that there was no documentation to evidence that the 4 adults available to the children on the premises held a recognised minimum qualification. The lack of qualified staff in the service poses a risk to the children's health, safety and welfare. Two qualified and vetted staff were identified and made available to the children by the Registered Provider as part of the IAN response.
2. The children's attendance in the service was not accurately recorded as follows, at 9:15am each child's time of arrival to the service was not recorded in the care room attendance book and their attendance was not completed until 11.00am at circle time, when 15 children were marked as present. This leads to a risk of the safety of all the children in the event of an emergency evacuation.
3. The first aid bag was stored on the floor under the sink and contained suncream and anti-febrile medication, which was accessible to the children, leading to a risk of safety.
4. Staff handbags and coats were accessible to the children, leading to a risk of safety.
5. Grapes eaten by two of the children at snack time were not cut up, the inspector had to intervene and inform staff to address this safety risk which increased the potential risk of a child choking.

Infection Control:

6. Each child brought their own food for snack at 11.13am, however, perishable food items such as yogurts, cheese and meats were not refrigerated on arrival to the service at 9.15am. This increased the potential risk of food borne illnesses.
7. The lack of appropriate equipment in the sanitary area and care room resulted in poor infection control practices and increased the risk of cross contamination. The following was observed:
 - The bin in the care room containing general waste was not pedal operated. The children were observed touching the bin to dispose of waste.
 - The toilet paper holder was not hygienically dispensed from the holder available. It was observed to be sitting on the back of the toilet which also made it difficult for the children to access.
 - The paper towels for hand drying were not hygienically dispensed from the holder.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Two fully qualified Montessori members on site. Two Staff members have the relevant qualifications for caring for children, one staff member is awaiting their level 5 qualification, and one staff is in a supportive role and not included in Child: Adult ratios. The service now has all qualifications to hand for inspection. Staff must have a minimum level 5 to be included in ratios. Staff training being put in place for current staff to complete level 5/6
2. Children will be recorded at arrival time not at 11am.
3. First Aid box is now located on the top shelf. It will be stored high out of reach going forward.
4. Staff belongings are now located out of the care room, located in lockers, staff will be reminded to use lockers.
5. All staff informed to the danger to whole grapes and that they need to be cut. All parents received notice about the importance for grapes being cut into four pieces. Lunch boxes will be checked beforehand, and staff will be vigilant, if whole grapes found, they will be placed on counter and parents will be informed at collection time. Staff training on food safety was implemented.

Infection Control:

6. Lunchboxes will be placed in fridge on arrival. All lunch boxes will be refrigerated.
7. Bin has been replaced
New toilet paper holders will be replaced in March.

Container for the paper towels will be fixed in March.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Evidence of qualification for the two additional staff who were identified and made available to the children by the Registered Provider as part of the IAN response.
2. None
3. Photographic Evidence
4. Photographic Evidence
5. Parents Notice issued

Infection Control:

6. Photographic Evidence
7. None for toilet paper holders and blue roll holders

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection

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 one adult was trained in First Aid Response and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was stored in an accessible position in the service.

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 9 December 2025
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced in September 2025 and of the mains powered smoke alarms in the premises which were last serviced on the 9 September 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises