

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC034
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Name of Service:	Ballinspittle Playschool
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Address of Service:	Ballinspittle Village, Ballinspittle, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P17 Y868
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carmel Condon
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien & M Creagh
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Ballinspittle Playschool is an established community service located in the village of Ballinspittle, Co Cork. The setting is based in a purpose-built building, built in the mid-1980's with 1 care room, an outdoor area, kitchenette and children and adult sanitary facilities. The service operates from 9:15am to 12:45pm, Monday to Thursday. The service offers a sessional preschool service and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years.

Staffing

The service employs three staff members, including the registered provider who is based in the service and works directly with the children. On the day of inspection three staff members were 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 inspectors wish 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

(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 person in charge of operating the early years service. In the event of her absence, a deputy person in charge had been named.
 - (b) At all times during the inspection process, the person in charge was available, including when the inspectors arrived at the premises. The staff roster indicated that the person in charge and the deputy person were on duty throughout the hours of operation.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of three adults employed at the service were examined. The following was noted:
- (a) Three of the six references required were from past employers and were validated.
 - (b) Three of the six references were from sources other than previous employers and were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member working directly with the children.

(4) All three of the adults held a recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 6, as listed 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that there was adequate staff to care for the children in attendance in the service.

(3) There were 17 children aged 3 to 5 years being cared for by 3 adults during the inspection. The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained.

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 record were assessed, and all records were completed and contained the required information outlined from (a) to (i).

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

- The children were observed freely moving around the care room and outdoor area for the duration of the inspection.
- Children's snacks were provided by the children's parents and guardians. Sandwiches, fruit, cheese, and yogurts were observed in the children's lunches.
- Individual water bottles were freely available to the children throughout the day and were stored on a child height shelf.
- Staff were observed supporting children with toileting and handwashing when needed in the sanitary area located adjacent to the care room.
- The children had several opportunities for outdoor play during their time in the service.
- There was a quiet corner available to the children to sit and rest if needed. This allowed for children to relax and take some time away from the larger group.

Supporting Relationships

- The staff were aware of the individual needs of the children and the registered provider stated the importance of communicating with parents daily through an electronic application where pictures were shared of the daily activities in the service.
- A family tree was displayed in the care room which supported the children's sense of identity and belonging.
- The staff were observed sitting with the children during snack time and allowed the children to sit and enjoy their lunch in a relaxed environment.
- The staff were aware of the individual needs of the children and supported each child in their learning and development. This was observed during circle time, when some children wanted to play with the doctor's role play toys instead of partaking in circle time. The staff were observed to respect and listen to each child's opinion.

Programme of Activities

- On arrival to the service, the children were observed partaking in free play. Children were observed playing with plastic and timber bricks, reading books in the reading corner, playing in the construction and role play corners.
- The children were observed playing on the slide and climbing frame which supported physical development.
- The children were observed playing in the large sand box with shovels and buckets.
- The children sang songs during circle time.
- The children were observed planting seeds in compost pots and watered their seeds.
- The children had opportunities for water play with the large water wall in the outdoor area.

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 was secured and prevented children from exiting unsupervised and any unauthorised access to the service.
- The outdoor area was observed to be a safe and secure area for the children.
- Blind cords and windows were secured and made safe on the day of inspection.
- Flexes and cables were observed to be out of reach on inspection.
- During the inspection, a kitchenette used for storage was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to the children and staff. Water temperatures were recorded between 20.1°C and 22°C in the handbasins in the sanitary areas.
- The care room was naturally ventilated through open windows.
- Perishable food items from the children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator and prevented food spoilage.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, fire exits were clear and unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A standalone plastic slide and ride along tractor had broken and sharp edges present. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in their response that the standalone plastic slide and ride along tractor have both been removed from the playschool and put in the recycling bin.

Preventive Action

Regular checks on the outdoor equipment have been put in place and on checking everything that poses a safety risk will be removed at that time.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documented and photographic evidence was submitted for review 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 the service had adequate insurance in place. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2025 and expired on 27 March 2026. The service was covered to provide a sessional service for a maximum of 22 children to attend at any one time.