

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC037				
Name of Service:	Ballyellis Childcare T/A Quality Childcare				
Address of Service:	Valley Walk, College Wood, Mallow, Co Cork				
Eircode:	P51YK72				
Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Relihan				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	04/02/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>59</td> <td>PM</td> <td>47</td> </tr> </table>	AM	59	PM	47
AM	59	PM	47		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y				
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and E Friel				
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

Ballyellis Childcare T/A Quality Childcare offers early years care and education to children on a full time, part-time and sessional basis. While registered to accommodate children from 0 to 6 years of age the service currently facilitates childcare from 1 to 6 years old. The Early Years Care and Education (ECCE) scheme operates from 9:30 until 12:30 and while the service is registered to open from 7:30 until 18:30, current opening times are from 7:30 to 18:00. A breakfast club is available in the morning from 7:30 until 9:00 and the afterschool club is open from 13:00 until 18:00. The outdoor play areas are located at the back of the service and are accessible from the ground floor care rooms, car parking is available to the front and side of the building. The service is located in a residential housing estate on the outskirts of the urban area of Mallow town in Co Cork. It operates from a purpose-built childcare facility which consists of five care rooms, three of which are located on the ground floor and two on the first floor. There is an office, professional kitchen, staff room, adult and children's toilets, three nappy changing units and three dedicated sleep rooms. In addition, one of the care rooms upstairs and the toddler care room downstairs were also in use as sleep areas after lunch.

Staffing

There are 25 adults employed in the service including 2 AIM (Access and Inclusion Model) support workers, 2 school age care, a cook and a cleaner. In addition, four students are on placement on various days, one of whom was present in the baby room. Although not serviced based, the registered provider attended the closing meeting.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 records in relation to a pre-school service, Regulation 19 health welfare and development of a child and Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, as a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms named the Baby room, Montessori 1, 2 and the Toddler room.

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 children, registered provider, person in charge and staff 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The service had a person in charge and named person available to deputise.
- (b) The roster indicated that the designated person in charge or the named person were on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.
- (c) There was a clear management structure displayed in the reception area of the service with staff photographs and roles visible.
- (2) A review of the staff roster and discussion with the manager confirmed that there were five new staff members since the last inspection on 6 March 2024 and four students currently on placement. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to the five new staff members and the four students were reviewed.
- (a) There were thirteen validated references on file from past employers.
- (b) There were five validated references available from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the five staff members and the four students. In addition, three further files were assessed in this regard which evidenced compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) One police vetting record was available on file for one adult for whom it was required who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures detailed above, under Regulation 9(2), had been completed prior to new staff members commencing employment, and students commencing placement, in the service.
- (4) The five new staff members, who were employed to work directly with the children, all held major awards, between levels 5 and 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The four students on placement did not require childcare qualifications.
- 7 (a) Thirty-two records were available to evidence that staff and students were appropriately supervised. Certificates of training completed in relation to individual needs identified following supervision were visible in the staff files.

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,

Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The service exceeded the minimum ratio required as per the regulations in all five care rooms, both in the morning and the afternoon.

(8)(a) The staff roster indicated that the service operated with at least two adults present at all times.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee,*
- (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)(a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge, named person and of every other employee and student were available in the staff recruitment files.

(i) The staff roster was furnished to the inspectors upon arrival. This evidenced each staff member and student's start and finish times. In addition, staff breaks were evidenced on a separate roster with persons identified to provide cover.

(j) A sample of 20 administration of medication records, 10 of which were from the Toddler room and 10 from the Montessori room 1 were reviewed. The records were found to be completed with the relevant information along with staff and parental signatures.

(k) A sample of 20 accident/incidents records, 5 of which were from the Baby room and 15 of which were from Montessori rooms 1 and 2, were reviewed. These were found to contain all of 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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff:

Basic needs:

- The layout of the room supported children to move freely within their environment and to actively engage in their chosen tasks.
- All meals and snacks were prepared on the premises for children in full day care by the cook and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Sessional children were provided with food and parents also brought in snacks for children and these were refrigerated until required. Bacon, cabbage and potatoes were seen to be eaten by the children for lunch and pasta salad in the afternoon. The menu, which was displayed showed, wheat and oat cereals and toast had been given for breakfast. On the day of inspection extra food was seen to be offered to the children and staff informed the inspector that alternative food was available if required. In the Montessori room 1, children's independence was encouraged by allowing them to clean their plates afterwards.
- Babies and toddlers were seen to wear bibs on the day of inspection.
- Drinking water was readily available throughout the day in each care room.
- Suitable cutlery was provided to the children who sat in appropriate seating for meals in the form of highchairs, waist high tables and low-level chairs.
- Two outdoor spaces were in use by the service and outdoor play was observed during the inspection. The children were seen to have use of a climbing area, a playhouse, slides, tunnels and plastic wheeled cars.
- Children dressed appropriately going outdoors wearing wet suits, coats and hats. Children's independence was encouraged in putting on and off outdoor clothing, with staff at hand to help if needed.

- The inspector observed that the individual sleep needs of the children in the Baby room were met; with various children observed sleeping in cots at different times throughout the day. In addition, seven children in the Toddler room were observed sleeping on suitable floor beds and mattresses at 12:38.
- Rest areas were available in the care rooms and were furnished with low level sofas or cushions in the book area of each room.
- The children in the Baby room were observed to be able to walk freely, crawl and play in a safe environment.
- Regular nappy changing was observed in both the Baby and Toddler changing areas, adults were noted to interact sensitively with the children at these times.
- Children were seen to access the sanitary facilities with the supervision of the staff.

Supporting relationships

- During mealtimes, the adults remained with the children and assisted as required. The children were afforded sufficient time to enjoy the food in a relaxed atmosphere and staff conversed with children at the tables. Children in the toddler room were seen laughing heartily with staff during the mealtime.
- In the Baby room children had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to the age and stage of development along with the staff sitting at the child's level and assisting also as needed.
- The staff were seen to be warm, sensitive and interactive with the children, comforting upset children in all three rooms and being playful and positive towards the children in their interactions through singing, stories, artwork and puzzles.
- Family pictures were evident on the walls and staff stated they communicated with the parents through a software technology application to provide photographs and written information to parents in relation to updates on the children's day at the service.
- Sleep plans were decided in partnership with the parents for the children in the Baby room but were altered if needed for the child on a given day.
- The staff readily acknowledged and encouraged the children's efforts in building towers in the Montessori room, colouring in the Toddler room and playing with balls in the Baby room.
- The staff promoted positive behaviour among children encouraging them to take turns as seen 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:

- When the inspectors arrived, the entrance door to the premises was secure. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and reduced the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The temperature of the hot water was within the appropriate range throughout the sanitary accommodations. It was recorded between 30.3°C and 38.3°C.
- Blind cords in the rooms inspected were secured by a tension device and not accessible to the children.
- The care room windows inspected were adequately secured to ensure a child could not exit.
- The baby highchairs in use were fitted with safety harnesses.
- Flexes and cables were kept out of reach of the children.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and wall mounted paper towel dispensers. Children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals.
- Children's coats were stored off the ground on wall hooks.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the care rooms inspected.
- Staff were seen to wear aprons and gloves during nappy changes and to dispose of the nappies in a sealed bin.
- Soothers were cleaned in a sterilising solution.

Administration of medication:

- The inspector observed that a child had been administered temperature reducing medicine on the day of inspection, signed for by two staff and sent to the parents to sign via the software technology app in use in the service.
- Temperature reducing medicine was stored out of reach of the children and the bottles checked were in date.

Safe sleep:

- The air temperatures in the five designated sleep areas were recorded between 18.3°C and 19.5°C while the children were sleeping. The rooms were maintained at the required temperatures of between 18°C and 22°C for the children above 12 months.
- Staff remained with the children who were asleep in the care rooms with stackable and floor beds.
- Staff were noted to maintain sleep records in relation to children's colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals in the Toddler room and the upstairs sleep room and intervals of between 5 to 10 minutes in the Baby room.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Outing:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that no outings occur from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The inspector noted that the water temperature in the sink in the nappy changing area for the Baby room posed a scalding risk to the children as the water temperature was 45°C.

Infection control:

2. Children were observed placing used paper towels into open bins in the Toddler and Montessori 1 toilet areas which had no lids and were not pedal operated. This posed a risk of cross infection.

3. Whilst it was acknowledged by management that waterproof mattress covers were available the inspector observed that two mattresses in the baby room did not have a protective cover which made effective cleaning difficult. This was also observed on previous inspection on the 06 March 2024.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The water temperature has been regulated by manually lowering the boiler and a plumber has been arranged to call to fix the issue. The service plan to monitor the water using a temperature gauge.

Infection control:

2. Pedal bins have been purchased and placed in the bathrooms and the nappy changing rooms. The use of these bins is included in the infection control policy.
3. Mattress protectors were available in service for use on these mattresses and further covers were purchased. Staff were reminded about the importance of using these.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. This response is accepted from the registered provider.

Infection control:

2. A copy of the infection control policy and the receipt for bins purchased was received in the office of the inspectorate.
3. A copy of the receipt for purchasing mattress protectors was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23. This will be reviewed at 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) Evidence was available to demonstrate that four adults held current first aid responder (FAR) certification and at least one of these adults was rostered to work at the service during the hours of operation. In addition, 14 adults had paediatric first aid certificates.

(2)(a) There was sufficient first aid equipment supplied in the service which was stored out of reach of the children.

(b) The first aid supplies were accessible at all times should they be required.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) The inspector was provided with a list of monthly fire drills which were recorded in writing. The most recent fire drill was dated the 30 January 2025.
 - (b) The certificate of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated that it was carried out on the 25 September 2024 and the certification of testing for the smoke alarms was dated the 16 October 2024.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm certificates were available to review on the day of the inspection.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the wall of the care rooms and on the main corridor.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a full day care service and the policy was valid until the 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From a visual assessment, the building appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b) Access to the building was through a bell system and a door release button at adult height on the interior to exit.
- (c) Within the care rooms, natural lighting was provided through windows, and this was supplemented with artificial lighting.
- (d) The service employed cleaning staff and the premises was noted to be maintained in a clean condition.
- (e) The inspector saw that a new nappy changing unit in the Toddler nappy changing room had been put in place since the last inspection. Three nappy changing units were available at the service.