

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC255
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Name of Service:	Mallow Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Ballyellis, Mallow, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 EH90
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Name of Registered Provider:	Christina Dunstan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	04/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins
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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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Mallow Community Childcare is a purpose-built childcare service on the outskirts of Mallow in Ballyellis. The premises is located at the rear of the Cork Education & Training Board, Further Education and Training Centre. This early years service offers full day care, part time and sessional care and facilitates the ECCE programme for 38 weeks of the year.

The centre is a community service and operates between the hours of 07.45-18.00 hours, Monday –Friday. The service caters for children aged four months to six years. The service also accommodates a registered school aged service.

The premises is single story, and consists of a large foyer, four care rooms, with adjacent toilet and nappy changing facilities. The premises also contains a staff room, staff toilets, service kitchen, an office, parent room and storage facilities.

The service has an outdoor play area divided into three sections on the premises which all children have access to on a daily basis.

The premises has adequate off-road parking for the safe drop off and collection of the children.

Staffing

The service employs 17 adults and there were 14 adults present on the day of inspection of which 12 were working directly with the children, inclusive of the person in charge and the deputy person in charge.

The additional staff present on the day of inspection was the cook and cleaner.

Eleven of the 12 staff working in the service providing care to pre-school children held a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care & Education or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent. The remaining adult was a student on college placement.

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.

Regulation 9 (1), (2), (4)

Regulation 11 (1), (2), (8) (a)

Regulation 19 (1)

Regulation 23

Regulation 24

Regulation 32

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, person in charge, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises, a named person able to deputise was available. The person in charge as per the register was on leave and the service had staff in the role of person in charge and an additional deputy named in the service.
 - (b) The person in charge or a named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear arrangement in the service that identified the management structure. Each care room had a room leader, childcare workers and in one care room a student on college placement.

(2)

Seventeen adults worked in the service; all 17 files were assessed for completeness.

- (a) Of the 34 references required, 28 validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Of the 34 references required, 6 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for all 17 adults who work in the service and had access to children, however, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for all staff, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was available and translated for four staff who had resided outside the country for greater than six consecutive months and have access to children.

(4) Fourteen adults held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the national qualifications framework or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

The student who was working with the children was supervised at all times.

The remaining two staff did not hold a relevant qualification and were not providing care to the children. These staff were employed as the cook and cleaner.

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) 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) Three of the four care rooms were in operation on the day of inspection. There were adequate staff available to the children in attendance with the person in charge providing additional support when needed.

(2)

- The Cool Cats room: This care room had 12 children in attendance. The children were aged between 2 and 3 years. The adult child ratios were correct in the care room as observed throughout the day. There were 3 qualified adults caring for 12 children.
- The Busy Bees room: This care room had 15 children in attendance. The children were aged between 3-4 years and were being cared for by 3 adults.
- The Tiny Turtle's room was closed on the day of inspection as the children that were due to attend were out sick.
- The Little Lambs room: There were eight children in attendance aged between 1- 2 years being cared for by three adults and they had the additional assistance of the student on college placement.

The staffing as indicated by the roster and available on the day of inspection ensured each care room would have sufficient staff to allow the staff to take their breaks. This ensured that there were adequate staff remaining to care for and supervise the children.

(8)(a) The roster provided to the inspector by the person in charge identified that a minimum of two staff were on the premises at all times 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

- The meals the snacks on the day of inspection were suitable and nutritious. Snacks and meals were provided by the service and on the day of inspection the snack consisted of different fruits and crackers. Drinks of milk or water were offered with meals. Dinner for all children was beef curry with the food provided to the younger children in a different consistency. A child that had tolerance issues to certain foods was served an equally nutritious hot meal.
- Drinks of water were freely available at all times, inclusive of when the children went outside. The water dispenser was brought outside with glasses so children could independently access water if needed.
- Additional food was available should any child be hungry and wish to have additional food.

- Staff supported the children with toileting if required and children were reminded to wash hands.
- Nappies were changed on a scheduled basis and also if needed in between these times.
- Aprons and bibs were available for use when the children were eating or for messy play activities.
- Children slept on a scheduled basis after dinner with cots and stackable beds used according to the age group of children. When a child from the Cool Cats room did not require sleep, they were facilitated with the children from the Busy Bees room to play outside.
- The children in each care room had access to rest areas where adult sized armchairs were accessible to the children and were observed to be used by the children.
- All children could move about freely and there was no restriction placed on their movement.
- Staff were observed in the Little Lambs room to be observant where children needed their noses cleaned often and the staff ensured the children were helped with this.
- The room temperatures were suitable for the children's comfort. The Little Lambs room was recorded at 22.1°C at 10.30am. At 11.05am the Cool Cats room was recorded at 22.1°C when the staff had pulled the blinds and put on a fan due to the heat from the sun. The temperature in the Busy Bees room was recorded at 21.5°C at 11.42am.

Supporting Relationships

- The staff that were working directly with the children were allocated to the same room daily and the children were observed to be very comfortable in their care.
- Children were observed to seek the support of staff when needed and when waking up following their sleep a staff member was observed to cuddle a child to allow them wake up gently.
- The children in the Cool Cats and the Busy Bees rooms were observed to play alone and play in small and large groups. The children were observed to help each other and this was encouraged by the staff.
- Parents were spoken to at drop off and collection by the staff and the service used a care application system and posted photographs daily and also recorded food eaten, sleeps taken and nappy changes on the app which could be reviewed by parents/guardians.
- Staff in the Little Lambs room encouraged the children to be independent and when finished their snack the children removed their own bib and went to wash their own hands; support was given if needed.
- A homely environment was created by the staff in the Busy Bees room where at dinner time the staff encouraged the children to put down tablecloths on each table, put little table mats with the children's

photographs beside each child. Some children added flowers to the middle of the table and other children handed out the plated dinners and another the drinks.

Physical And Material Environment

- Each of the care rooms had a variety of toys and resources. There were soft mats available in the Little Lambs room and a quiet room off the playroom where children could relax and opt out of activities.
- The Busy Bees and Cool Cats rooms had rest areas and access to adult sized armchairs where the children were observed sitting with friends and chatting.
- Fine motor development was encouraged through the use of shape sorters, jigsaws and the use of pencils for drawing, as observed in the Cool Cats and Little Lambs rooms.
- Gross motor development was encouraged outside when the children had access on a daily basis to different areas. The three areas for use by the older children were rotated on a weekly basis so the children got access to different toys and activities.
- Stories were read to the children in the Busy Bees room and children were observed to be talking and interacting with the staff allowing for a language rich environment.
- Independence was encouraged through the use of age-appropriate equipment and children were observed to dress up dolls and the staff helped only when the children needed help, but the children in the Little Lambs room were encouraged to complete the tasks as far as possible.

The Outdoor Environment

- The outdoor environment was well developed. The children who attend the Tiny Turtles room (babies), had access to a dedicated outdoor space attached to the care room.
- The larger outdoor area was divided into three areas, one with a large ship to climb in and out of and there was access to ride on toys and to sensory play materials. In the second area the children had access to a large climb into tractor, access to chalk boards and to ride on toys. The third space was the garden area with a stage, digging and planting areas, a sand pit and benches for the children to sit together.

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 internal doors were secure to areas such as the adult toilets, and the staff areas were inaccessible to the children.
- The fire exit doors were not blocked by any restrictive opening device.
- The toys and play equipment were suitable for the age group using them. These toys were in good condition and were free from pinch and crush points.
- No baby walkers were noted to be used in the service.
- There was no high, heavy equipment or furniture in use that was not secured that may if pulled, could fall on a child.
- All flexes and cables observed, appeared to be in good condition and were not lose or hanging down.
- The storage facilities were inaccessible to children. All waste was inaccessible in lidded bins.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high hooks over the sinks in the care rooms so staff could have easy access but they were out of reach of the children.
- Hot drinks were not consumed near the children and the kettle was stored in the kitchen and in the staff room with both areas inaccessible to the children.
- The outdoor area was fenced to ensure no child could gain access to the car parking area or to the broken wall.
- There were no ponds, pits or other hazards noted on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- There was hot water available in the sanitary areas and hand basins in the care rooms and the range of water temperatures were between 28°C to 42.6°C. This would allow for comfortable hand washing for children and staff. Liquid soap and paper towels were available at each sink and used by staff and children for hand washing. There was also hot water available in the adult toilets.
- Staff were observed wearing gloves and aprons while caring out nappy changing and were observed to wash the hands of the children and themselves after each nappy change.
- Hands were washed before snack and dinner time, after coming in from outside and after messy play.

- Tables were cleaned before and after mealtimes with suitable sanitizer.
- The care rooms appeared clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- A record was available to record observations when children slept.
- Children slept in cots or stackable beds which were placed more than 50 cm apart.

Fire Safety:

- Firefighting equipment was suitably fixed to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for all 17 members. However, one vetting disclosure for a staff member working in the service was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The garda vetting in question has been obtained and a process for ensuring all staff have up to date Garda Vetting has been put in place and will ensure staff going and returning from leave have in date Garda Vetting disclosures.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of the Garda Vetting disclosure has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this Regulation has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

Compliance Information

(1) The staff were observed using an attendance record section of the online care application in each care room for checking in and out of the children. Each child that was in attendance was checked in on time of arrival. When children left the service, the staff signed them out immediately.

(3) (a) The inspector was asked to sign in and out of the service on a visitor book which was approved by the person in charge on arrival to and departure from the service.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider 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

Compliance Information

(1) The register provider had a complaints policy in the service:

(a) The complaints policy identified the procedures to be followed if and when a complaint was made in relation to the service.

- (b) The policy indicated how complaints would be dealt with.
 - (c) The policy indicated the procedures to be followed to keep the complainant informed of how the complaint was being dealt with.
- (2) (a) No complaint had been received by the service since the last inspection and therefore no records of a complaint were reviewed on inspection