

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CN006		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ballinamoney Childcare Project CLG Ltd		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballinamoney, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan		
<b>Eircode:</b>	A82 X263		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Geraldine Gilsean		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	06/05/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	49	PM 35
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Cunningham & D Murray		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable		

### Description of service

Ballinamoney Childcare Project has been operating as a community based childcare service since 2007 which provides sessional, part-time, full day and school aged childcare to children from 6 months to 6 years. A school aged service is also provided. This is a not-for-profit service and caters for a maximum of 58 pre-school children and operates from 08.00am to 17.30pm daily. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme from 09.00am to 12.00 midday. The service operates from a purpose-built single-story premises in a rural setting in Co. Cavan. The service has 4 care rooms in operation, namely the Little Buds Room, Cherry Blossoms Room, Precious Petals Room and Blossoming Buttercups, and two dedicated sleep rooms. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered providers do not work in the service. They employ 15 staff members which includes a manager, assistant manager, 1 cook/cleaner, 1 staff in accounts, and 2 CE workers. A student on work experience was also 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/ premises and facilities. 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 manager, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Sixteen files were reviewed on the day of inspection which includes the student's file.

(a)& (b) Thirty two validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 16 adults employed by the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for 8 staff members as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 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 for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 12 adults employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff present as outlined below. The manager and assistant manager were available to provide assistance as needed.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity on the day of inspection:

In the **Little Buds room** there were 2 staff with 6 children ranging in age from 14 months to 1 year 6 months, 5 children attending on a full day care basis and 1 child on part-time care.

- In the **Cherry Blossoms room**, there were 2 staff with 9 children ranging in age from 20 months to 2 years 6 months, 5 children attending on a full day care basis and 4 on part-time care.

- In the **Precious Petals room** there was 2 staff with 14 children ranging in age from 2 years 6 months to 3 years, 12 children attending full day care service, and 2 children attended a sessional service.

- In the **Blossoming Buttercups room** there were 2 staff with 20 children ranging in age from 3 years 6 months to 5 years of which 13 were attending the full day care service and 7 attending a sessional service. A student on work experience was also present.

The manager was also present and available to provider relief at nappy changing and sleep time as required.

(8) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced in the staff roster maintained in 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

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

##### Basic needs:

- Children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Children in the Little Buds and Cherry Blossom rooms sleep times were child led, and children were placed to sleep as they required.
- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. The theme of the week in the Precious Petals room was the "Beach" as many of the children had spent time at the beach at the weekend. Children participated in art activities and artwork was displayed to reflect the various themes in the rooms.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning with all children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers on the day of inspection.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- Transitions were handled smoothly as the children were given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- The adults were observed promoting positive behaviour and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials. The children showed confidence around the staff members and children in the Little Buds and Cherry Blossoms room sought out staff members for reassurance, comfort and support.
- Parents were greeted at collection time with friendly conversation overheard.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) The service had 2 cot rooms one within the Cherry Blossoms room and one off the hallway with a total of 6 cots for the children under 2 years requiring sleep. Sleep mats were placed on the floor of the Precious Petals room for the older children requiring sleep. Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(3)(a) There was a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to the front of the premises and 5 additional play areas opposite the car park with only 3 in use on the day of the inspection. Five of the areas were safe and secure. Surface areas consisted of soft tiled surface and grass.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

#### Compliance Information

- The care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment. Low level shelving was available in the rooms which assisted the children to select and replace items of interest. The care rooms were resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.

- Equipment in the outdoor areas consisted of a playhouse, wooden bench, wooden frame with a slide, mud kitchens, blackboards mounted to the wall, wooden huts, picnic benches, pirate boat and large tyres. A storage shed was available with additional play equipment.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a 2-week menu plan for the children attending the full day care service with a variety of dishes ranging from meat, fish and poultry cooked on site. At 10am the children in the Little Buds room and Cherry Blossom room had snack provided by the service which consisted of yogurts and crackers. Children in the ECCE rooms brought their snacks from home. The main meal of the day was served at 12md which consisted of pasta with ham and tomato-based sauce with cheese, the children choose what they would like to eat. At 14.30pm brioche rolls and bananas were provided to the children. Children who remained in the service at 16.00hrs were provided with either cheese, crackers, or yogurts, children choose their snack. Water was the drinks of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children in the care rooms.

### 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children attending each room.

### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- Items of food in children's lunch boxes which required refrigeration were stored in a fridge. This reduced the risk of bacterial growth in these food items.
- The premises was in a clean condition with up-to-date documented cleaning schedules available.
- Pedal bins were available in the care rooms.
- The sanitary areas were ventilated.

### Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the two cot rooms was maintained between 18 to 20°C while children were sleeping. Fans were available to reduce the air temperature.
- A sleep log recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals on all sleeping children.
- All children sleeping on sleep mats were supervised at all times.

### Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 8 staff members. However, the vetting disclosures 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'.
2. Although it is acknowledged that children were adequately supervised in the outdoor area on the day of the inspection, the outdoor space at the lower end of the outdoor area had footholes in the fence wire where a child could place their foot in and climb over the fence. Areas behind the fence lead to a stream and a wooded area with a bank which led to a public road.

### Infection Control:

3. Children were not assisted to wash their hands after each nappy change.
4. The nappy changing bin (used by the Cherry Blossom room) was broken and not foot operated.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective Action:

#### General Safety:

1. On the day of the inspection, applied for re-vetting for all our staff members. All Garda vetting back and sent them all onto Tusla by the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2025.
2. Since the day of the inspection, the manager has not used this garden area. The registered provider purchased rolls of netted fencing wire that will totally cover the existing fencing area in this garden. To prevent any future hazards from occurring the fencing is being installed in the coming week, this will eliminate the footholds in the fence.

#### Infection Control:

3. All staff had been reminded on 7<sup>th</sup> of May the day after the inspection the importance of hand washing after each nappy change, which is stated in our infection control Policy. Infection control policy was given to all staff on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May the day after the inspection. In this Policy the following is stated *“all staff promote and model good hand hygiene for the children, good hand washing, after using the toilet, after nappy changing, before preparing or eating food, after wiping noses, after emptying/cleaning the bins and after mopping up spills.”*

Risk assessments will continue to be carried out on nappy changes to ensure all staff are using high infection control standards at all times.

4. The nappy bin was replaced in the Cherry Blossoms room on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2025.

#### Preventive Action:

1. In the front of the staff folder a page with the renewal dates for all the staff garda vetting has been included. Please find attached this updated file that has been now added to the staff folder.
2. Risk assessments carried out in the outdoor area daily.
3. Infection control policy was given to all staff on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May the day after the inspection. In this Policy the following is stated *“all staff promote and model good hand hygiene for the children, good hand washing, after using the toilet, after nappy changing, before preparing or eating food, after wiping noses, after emptying/cleaning the bins and after mopping up spills.”*

4. Risk assessments will continue to be carried out on nappy changes to ensure all staff are using high infection control standards at all times

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Evidence of garda vetting renewal for all eight staff members received.

Receipt for purchase of wire received and assurance that this area is not used until the wiring is erected.

Policy for infection control and hand washing.

Indoor risk assessment to ensure all equipment in working order.

### **Summary Comment**

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance's in Regulation 23.

## 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 a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

### 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 04/04/2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment. The mains powered smoke alarm was last serviced on the 11/02/2025. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 31/01/2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises

### 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 that the service was adequately insured for the number of children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) In the Buttercups room between 12 and 1pm adequate clear floor space was not available for the 26 children in the room having their dinner.
- (2) There were 26 children aged between 3 to 5 years requiring 2.3 m<sup>2</sup> each. The space available in the care room was 52.84 m<sup>2</sup> which could only accommodate 23 children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective Action

- Between 12 and 1 o'clock the children who are going for sleep in the Precious Petals room will remain in this room for their dinner, after their dinner they will get ready for their sleep, which also takes place in the precious petals room.
- On the 9<sup>th</sup> of May the manager sent the architectural plans of our building to the Tusla inspector. The reason for sending the plans was to show Tusla that our room had always been inspected at a higher square footage to what was measured on the day of the inspection. In seeing that the room was in fact 52.84m<sup>2</sup> on the day of the inspection the registered provider ensured that between 12 and 1pm there are no more than 23 children in the room at any one time.

#### Preventive Action:

- All children going for their sleep at 12:30 will have their dinner in the precious petals room and not be moved over to the Blossoming Buttercups room.
- Following the inspection the manager made sure to note the square footage of the room and will ensure that all clear floor space is available to accommodate the specific age groups moving forward.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 30.