

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

2TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN020		
Name of Service:	Drumlane Community Childcare CLG		
Address of Service:	Uragh, Milltown, Belturbet, Co. Cavan		
Eircode:	H14 K224		
Name of Registered Provider:	Bernard Burns		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	21/01/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM 24
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Mc Kenna		
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

Drumlane Community Childcare CLG is a community based not-for-profit Early Years service. Pre-school children are accommodated in the service, from the age of 1 to 6 years. Eligible pre-school children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday from a purpose built 2-storey premises located on the outskirts of a small village in Co. Cavan. There are three care rooms namely the Wobbler/Toddler room, Preschool 1 and Preschool 2 with designated sanitary accommodation for each care room, and a sleep room adjoins the Wobbler/Toddler room. Ancillary accommodation includes a kitchen, dining room, staff facilities, office and storage rooms. The service has access to an enclosed outdoor play area which is directly accessed from the premises. In addition, they also have access to the spacious indoor community hall, community garden and GAA pitch with surrounding running track, all of which are located adjacent to the premises. School aged childcare is also provided. Car parking is provided to the front and side of the building.

Staffing

A total of fourteen staff are employed in the service which includes a manager, a cook, a cleaner, an admin person and 10 staff employed to work directly with the children.

In addition to the above a student is also on a work placement programme for the current school term.

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 and 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy 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*

(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 who is the service manager, and a named person in charge who deputises in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) A total of 14 staff and one student files were reviewed.

(a) A total of 16 written and validated references from a previous employer were available on file.

(b) A total of 14 written and validated references from reputable sources were available on file.

(c) A total of 15 Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A review of the 15 employment records on file, demonstrated that 4 adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 4 adults was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 11 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. A qualification for three adults and one student were not required.

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 the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Morning:

Three adults cared for 11 children aged 1 years 6 months to 2 years 11 months in the Wobbler/Toddler Room.

Two adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years 2 months to 3 years 11 months in the Preschool 1 Room.

Two adults cared for 21 children aged 4 to 6 years in the Preschool 2 Room.

Afternoon

Three adults cared for 8 children aged 1 year 6 months to 2 years 11 months in the Wobbler/Toddler Room.

Two adults cared for 16 children aged 3 to 6 years in the Preschool 1 Room (this included the children from Preschool 2 attending on a full day care basis)

In addition to the above, the person in charge was available to assist in care rooms where required and worked in the school age room in the afternoon.

In the afternoon 11 school aged children were observed to be present, being cared for by adults in the Preschool 2 room.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. All food and drinks consumed by the children were provided by the service and are prepared and cooked on site daily. Breakfast is served to children who arrive early morning, with a mid-morning snack, a hot dinner and an afternoon snack also offered. The children eat their snacks in their care rooms and use the dining room at dinner time. The staff were observed to support and encourage children's independence at meal times by encouraging the older children to feed themselves, with supports provided if needed. The staff assisted with spoon-feeding the younger children. Drinks were available in each care room throughout the day.

The older children were observed to use the toilet by themselves, and staff were observed to remain close by to assist the children who needed additional help. The younger children in nappies had their nappy changed in line with their daily routine. During nappy changing times the staff were observed to use this one-to-one time as opportunities to sing and talk to the younger children.

Children's appearances were cared for with runny noses being cleaned, handwashing being promoted, and children's clothes changed as required. Bibs were used at meal times for the younger children. Aprons were provided for messy play activities. Hi Visibility jackets and waterproof clothing suits were provided for the children, allowing play opportunities in the outdoor areas during various weather conditions.

Areas of rest were provided in each care room to include soft mats with cushions, allowing children opportunities to take time out and relax during their day. Sleep routines for younger children were child led.

A disagreement among children about toys was observed, the staff were quick to respond and used age-appropriate strategies to assist the children in finding a positive solution to their problem.

Discussions among the children and staff about “working together” was observed, with staff giving praise to the children where positive interactions were observed.

Supporting Relationships

A key worker system was in place with minimal staff change over occurring, which provides continuity of care to the children. Opportunities for siblings to play together is provided during outdoor play time, and when the preschool rooms join in the afternoon. The staff were observed to model positive interactions and use gentle tones when talking and giving guidance to the children within their care.

Staff demonstrated sensitivity and positive regard for children and their families through respecting parental wishes and requests, while also providing for the children’s own personal care routines.

Each care room has a daily routine named “our schedule” with photos of the children on display. Flexibility in routine occurs where children’s likes and needs require, for example a longer time outdoors or to move on to another activity sooner is facilitated.

Communication with parents is at arrival and collection times and through the use of a digital application, where photos of the children’s activities and updates is provided to parents on a regular basis. The staff demonstrated knowledge of the children’s preferences and home lives, which was observed during conversations among the children and staff. The staff team were observed to work well together, with transitions during the daily routine observed to be smooth.

Physical And Material Environment

The care rooms were bright and welcoming, with materials laid out to support the children in attendance in each room. The layouts provided ease of access to the resources and toys, which facilitates opportunities of choice for the children.

Preschool 1 and Preschool 2 rooms had similar designated interest areas to include a sand tray, home corners with dress up clothing and some real-life materials. Plus, a tool bench, office play area, art and painting areas, and shop play areas which were all well-resourced with play materials. Floor play areas with blocks, small world toys to include houses, fire stations and farms along with dolls, little people and animals were available. In the rest areas a selection of books and soft teddies were provided. Areas for tabletop toys such as connecting, threading, building, magnetic resources, jigsaws and playdough was observed as popular choices of play on the day of inspection. The children in Preschool 1 were observed to enjoy the story and song time in line with their curriculum planning theme on the day of inspection.

The children in Preschool 2 were observed to enjoy a play time rotation activity, where five areas were set up with children observed to have adequate time to play in each area before moving on to the next area. The children in both Preschool rooms were observed to be continually engaged during both indoor and outdoor play times with their peers. Throughout the inspection the staff were observed to interact and engage in many games and play activities with the children.

The Wobbler/Toddler room was spacious and allowed for opportunities of movement between various play areas. Designated areas included two play kitchens with real life play equipment such as pots and pans and dress up and role play materials. Building toys, dolls and suitable play equipment such as prams, clothing, highchairs and cots were provided. Wall mounted activities, wooden beaded toys and push-a-long toys provided many play opportunities for the children. Pull up units with mirrors and musical toys provided additional physical and interactive play opportunities for the younger children.

Additional equipment was available in cupboards, high shelving and in a store room which staff advised is used for changeover of equipment and resources in the care rooms in line with curriculum and themed activities.

Many creative activities were displayed on the walls throughout the service. Family walls, birthday charts, emotion posters and “my feelings” were also on display. The tables, chairs and play furniture in each care room were suitable for the age and stage of development of the children in attendance.

The designated outdoor area had soft ground surfacing. There was many play areas and opportunities provided for the children to include, a wooden bus, a sand tray, plating area, mud kitchen, play kitchen, story corner area, chalkboard and many ride on and push along toys. The staff facilitated for additional play materials to be taken to the outdoor areas with the children. Small play tractors and animals for play at an artificial grass surfaced table area was provided for Preschool 1 designated outdoor time. Prams were taken outside to allow the children from the Wobbler/Toddler room to take their own doll/teddy for a walk, that they took in that day in line with their curriculum planning of “take a doll/teddy to crèche day”. A ball run, music wall, wall mounted wooden toys, along with painted murals and a section of covered area for play in inclement weather conditions was also available.

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 observed on the day of inspection:

- The main entrance was secured upon the inspector’s arrival, preventing a child leaving unsupervised or a person gaining unauthorised access. A visitor log was maintained, with the inspector requested to sign in upon arrival.
- The designated outdoor area located directly off the building was secured with locked gates.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised both indoors and outdoors during the inspection.
- The play materials and equipment used by the children was observed to be maintained in good repair.
- Risk assessments were completed daily, with risks removed/addressed where required, for example a ride on truck with a missing pedal was removed from the outdoor area as it required mending.
- The storage, laundry and kitchen areas remained inaccessible to the children.
- Two sets of handrails were provided on the stairway for use by adults and children. Floor coverings were observed to be maintained in good condition.
- Blind cords were observed to be adequately secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored up high in each care room and sanitary area, out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

- Warm running water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and paper towels were provided for handwashing.
- Sanitary areas were suitable for the children in attendance and included steps and posters on handwashing routines. The sanitary areas were ventilated through openable windows or mechanical ventilation. Cleaning materials were stored up high in these areas and easily accessible to the adults should they be needed
- Hand washing was promoted by the staff and observed in practise after outdoor play and before snack/meal and sleep times.
- Children’s soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes and washed and sterilised as needed.

- At nappy changing times disposable gloves and aprons were worn by staff for each individual nappy change, which is in line with the services policy. The staff and children were observed to wash their hands after nappy changing times.
- Cleaning checklists were on display through the service and completed up to date. The service was presented in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff outlined the procedure for administering medication. Records reviewed demonstrated that prior consent for administration of medication was completed, and that the first dose of medication was administered by the child's parent, prior to any medication being given by the service.
- Records available include details of; child's name, medication administered, storage, route of administration, time and dosage with staff signature and witness signature.
- Care plans were in place for children with allergies or intolerances, which clearly outlined the steps to follow in the event of a child having a reaction. Emergency medication was clearly labelled, easily accessible, and stored out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep

- A sleep room was provided for children aged 2 years and under. Six cots with waterproof safety mattresses, individual sheets and cellular blankets were observed in use.
- Sleep checks were maintained for all sleeping children, to include child's name, room temperature, sleeping position, skin colour, breathing pattern and staff signature. Records demonstrated 10-minute checks were carried out.
- Stackable beds and suitable bedding were provided for children aged 2 years and over.
- Where children in the Wobbler/Toddler room and Preschool 1 room were observed on stackable beds, a staff member remained with the children at these times while also completing 10-minute checks on the sleeping children. A staff member stayed with the children in the Wobbler/Toddler sleep room, monitored all children who were sleeping and then continued to carry out 10-minute sleep checks. A monitor and viewing panel were also provided between the sleep room and Wobbler/Toddler care room.

Outing:

- The staff outlined the procedures and risk assessments carried out prior to taking part in outings. The staff advised they take first aid boxes, and the children wear hi visibility vests. Outings can include a visit to the community garden, the football pitch and walking track, all of which are in close proximity to the service.

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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times, this was evidenced by five in date FAR certificates on staff files.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises, and were stored in each care room, clearly labelled in an easily accessible and conspicuous location, out of the reach of children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 70 pre-school children attending the service on a Full-Time basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.