

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015GY019

Name of Service: Ballinderreen Community Childcare & Education Centre

Address of Service: Ballinderreen, Kilcolgan, Ballinderreen, Co. Galway

Eircode: H91 P3Y5

Name of Registered Provider: David Hardiman

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 13/11/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	22

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Quality and Regulation Directorate,
Clinical & Administration Building,
Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor),
Merlin Park Hospital,
Galway.

Inspection undertaken by: E. Friel

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

Ballinderreen Community Childcare & Education Centre provides a range of services including full day, part-time and sessional care. Operating hours are from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday for 49 weeks of the year and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 09:00 to 12 noon, school term time only. While registered to accommodate children aged from 0-6 years of age, children currently attending are aged from 12 months to 6 years old.

The service is located in the village of Ballinderreen in south county Galway, between Kilcolgan and Kinvara. It operates from a purpose-built childcare facility which has been in operation since 2005. There are 4 care rooms, 3 of which were in operation on the day- Toddlers, ECCE 1 and ECCE 2. The Baby care room was not in use. There is a large bright reception area, an office, staffroom, kitchen and dining room. Adult and children's sanitary areas are available and outdoor play areas are accessible from the 3 care rooms in operation. A car park is located at the front of the service and a school age care service operates in the morning from 08:00 to 09:00 and from 13:40 to 18:30 in the afternoon.

Staffing

There are 12 staff employed in the service including an adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), a cook and 2 relief workers. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 (d). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1) - Record of a Pre-School Child, as a result, the scope of the inspection included a total of 15 records; five from the Toddler, ECCE 1 and ECCE 2 care rooms.

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, designated 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 registered provider ensured that the service had a person in charge and named person available to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge and the named person were both present when the inspector arrived at the premises. Both were available throughout the inspection process.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure displayed in the reception area of the service on the notice board.
- (2) Recruitment files for the 12 adults and the registered provider were reviewed.
- (a) Twenty-three of the required 26 validated references were from past employers.

- (b) The remaining 3 validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 13 adults, demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
 - (d) Police Vetting disclosures were available for the 7 staff working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months as adults.
- (4) There was evidence that 10 of 12 adults, which included the chef, had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent. Two of the remaining 12 adults that did not have the required qualification had letters of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The registered provider did not require a childcare qualification.

0-/*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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children while the children were attending the service.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met. There were 9 adults working directly with 42 early years children in the morning and 6 adults working directly with 22 early years children in the afternoon.
- (8) (a) The staff roster indicated that the designated person in charge and a named person were on the premises while the early years children were present.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 15 children’s pre-school records, 5 records of individual children attending the Toddler, ECCE 1 and ECCE 2 care rooms were reviewed. The following particulars were found to be compliant; (1) (a) to (i) above.

(3)

(c) The children’s pre-school records were reviewed on the premises on the day of inspection.

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 service promoted healthy eating. Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals with parents/guardians of children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme providing food for the sessional service and the service providing the remaining food requirements of the day. Young children in the Toddler care room had the opportunity to feed themselves, appropriate to their age and state of development, while others in the care room were observed eating independently with a spoon.
- Staff stated breakfast of oat and wheat-based cereals along with toast was available at breakfast served between 08:00 and 08:30.
- Mid-morning snack in the ECCE 1 care room was observed at 10:30 and consisted of brown bread, filled sandwiches, mixed berries, bite sized pieces of fruit and vegetables.
- Lunch served at 12:05 in the Toddler care room was noted to be cottage pie with vanilla yogurt served after lunch. The consistency of the food was appropriate for the age and stage of the children in the care room, requests for more food were facilitated. Scones with butter and jam were observed in the Toddler room in the afternoon for snack and the menu indicated homemade soup and brown bread were available in the evening for children staying on for the full day care service.
- All children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery suitable for their age and stage of development.
- Water was available from mobile trollies which were within easy access of the children.
- Bibs were observed on Toddlers while they were eating, protecting their clothing and spare clothing was available for children requiring a change of clothing during the sessional service.
- Children from the ECCE 1 and 2 care rooms were observed being escorted to the sanitary areas at regular intervals and nappy changing was carried out regularly, promptly and as required. Regular nappy changing

was observed throughout the day. Staff stated that children's nappies were changed at designated times; 10:00, 11:30 before lunch, 14:30 after sleep and again at 16:30 and as required.

- Toileting accidents were treated in a matter-of-fact way. Staff were supportive and sensitive to the individual needs of the children and were observed treating the children with dignity and respect.
- On the day of inspection the weather was raining, children were observed to be dressed appropriately in the outdoor play areas with their hats and coats on.
- Six cots and one floor bed were observed in use at 12:40 in the Toddler sleep room. In addition, each care room had a cosy rest area where children were observed sitting a reading during the day. Each area was fitted with soft furnishings some of which included scattered cushions with colourful rugs in each area. Books were available in each area for the children to read while sitting/resting.

Supporting relationships:

- During meals staff sat with the children and were heard engaging in social conversation, promoting a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Staff members sat at the children's level in the Toddler care room when feeding the younger children or when assisting children to feed themselves.
- Children in all of the care rooms were supported to engage positively with each other and encouraged in sharing and turn taking.
- Staff members were observed to work well as a team in all the care rooms and were frequently heard collaborating and communicating with each in relation to the children's needs.
- Structured team meetings between management and staff were stated by staff as having taken place at Halloween and in the Summer with topics including child development, day to day issues, planning and cleaning. Dates and documentation were in place for yearly staff appraisals.

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:

- All internal doors were appropriately secured including the laundry room preventing children accessing unsafe areas.
- The adults in the care rooms came out to collect the children at drop off ensuring that no unauthorised adults could enter the service.
- The main entrance door was secured with a buzzer and operated from the inside with an electronic switch placed out of reach of the children preventing unsupervised children from leaving the service.
- All windows were fitted with window restrictors preventing children from falling or exiting from them.
- Spillages, in the sanitary area, were dealt with in a timely manner preventing children from slipping.
- Cleaning agents in the care rooms and sanitary areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Handrails were in place facilitating children walking up and down the staircase in the ECCE 2 care room.
- The individual outdoor areas were secured with high metal fencing and metal gates secured with hatches preventing children from leaving the areas unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Children's personal belongings were stored on hooks and in cubby houses away from the floor area. These were easily identifiable with each child's photograph and name visible.
- Tissues were easily accessible to facilitate children blowing their noses.
- Hygienic hand washing was observed before and after eating, returning from outdoor play, after toileting and before and after nappy changing. Adults were nearby to provide assistance at all times.
- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and the children were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, between 32.6°C and 36.7°C, foam soap from a dispenser and automatic paper towels. Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of paper waste.
- Nappy changing was carried out as per the service nappy changing procedures. The adult from the Toddler room was observed putting on a disposable apron and single use gloves for each nappy change.

Following completion of the nappy changing procedure the used apron, gloves and nappies were disposed of in a pedal operated, lined and lidded bin.

- Daily cleaning checklists were noted to be completed and up to date for each area.
- A mop observed in use on the day was dealt with in a hygienic manner; when a staff member from the ECCE 2 had completed cleaning the sanitary area with the mop it was immediately removed to the laundry area where it was washed in the washing machine.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was stored in its original container and placed out of reach of the children. The expiry date was noted as 09/2026.

Safe Sleep:

- Physical sleep checks, available for review by the inspector, indicated that these were carried out for each child every 10 minutes. These included recording details such as the colour/pallor, position and breathing of each child asleep in the room, the temperature of the room and signature of the adult carrying out the checks.
- While initial sleep preparation was taking place the inspector observed 2 adults settle the children until they were asleep. An adult remained in the sleep room for the duration.
- Cots were placed more than 50 centimetres apart for hygiene and safety purposes.
- The sleep room temperature was recorded at 19.1 °C, within the recommended limits for children over 12 months of between 18°C and 22°C.

Fire Safety:

- All fire doors were fitted with thumb twist cylinders and were unobstructed aiding the quick evacuation of the adults and children in the event of an emergency.
- Fire extinguishers were secured by brackets to the walls of the service.
- The fire assembly point was visible at the front of the service in the car park.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. A rug at the exit door to the outdoor play area in the ECCE 2 care room had pieces of rubber missing and the corners were ragged, posing a tripping hazard.
2. There was a cracked semi-circle window in the upstairs area of the ECCE 2 care room which was accessible to the children, posing a safety risk.

3. The surface of a circular table in the ECCE 2 outdoor play area was weather beaten and the top had various cracks. In addition, there was no cover protecting the exposed wood on the rim which had areas of exposed wood posing a safety risk should a child come into contact with the splintered wood.
4. An electrical flex from a hanging light in the ECCE 2 care room was accessible to passing children posing a safety risk, when informed a staff member removed the flex straight away.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The rug at the exit door to the outdoor play area in the ECCE 2 care room has been replaced and no longer poses a tripping hazard.
2. The glazing company has been out to measure the replacement glass which will be replaced when manufactured.
3. The circular table in the ECCE 2 outdoor play area has been removed eliminating the risk of a child coming into contact with the splintered wood.
4. The electrical flex from a hanging light in the ECCE 2 care room was removed by a staff member when informed on the inspection. This hazard has been added to the daily risk checklist to address by staff if observed in the care rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographs and documents were received in the office of the inspectorate:

1. A photograph of the new rug placed at the exit door of the outdoor play area in the ECCE 2 care room.
2. A copy of a letter from the glazing company confirming the order for the new glass and confirmation of fitting when the glass has been manufactured.
3. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted. A copy of the daily risk checklists with the identified risk included to ensure that this is addressed and does not cause a safety risk to the children.
4. A copy of the daily risk checklists with the identified risk element included to prevent any safety issues.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection under 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) First Aid Responder certificates (FAR) were available which indicated that 2 staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR); the staff roster indicated both were available while the early years children were on the premises. In addition, 1 staff member had training in paediatric first aid.
- (2)
- (a) The well stocked first aid boxes were stored within easy reach of the adults in the ECCE 1, ECCE 2 care rooms and kitchen.
 - (b) The first aid boxes were available at all times while the early years children were present in the service.

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 firefighting 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) Monthly fire drills were furnished, the last date recorded was noted as 15 October 2025.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The recorded dates were noted as 30 September 2025 and 14 August 2025, respectively.
- (2)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review.

(4) The fire procedure notices were visible on the walls of the service ensuring that the adults were aware of the steps to be followed in the event of an emergency to ensure the safety of the children and adults on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were furnished which included the following details:

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 67
- The type of service: Full Day Care
- Expiry date: 27 March 2026.

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,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.*

Compliance Information

(a) The manager stated that the building was of a sound and stable structure.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) Paint was chipped and missing from the following areas;

1.
 - The wall under the book shelving in the ECCE 1 care room where the edges of the shelving were noted to be rough.
 - The outdoor windowsills of the ECCE 2 care room.
2. Two wooden chairs in the upstairs area of the ECCE 2 care room had residue build up on the arms of each side of the chairs.
3. Two light fittings in the ECCE 2 care room were covered in cobwebs and dust.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.
 - The wall under the book shelving in the ECCE 1 care room where the edges of the shelving were noted to be rough have been sanded and painted.
 - The painters have been contacted and the painting of the outdoor windowsills of the ECCE 2 care room will be completed when the weather improves.
2. The 2 wooden chairs in the upstairs area to the ECCE 2 care room which had a build-up of residue on the arms of each side of the chairs have been cleaned.
3. The 2 light fittings in the ECCE 2 care room which were covered in cobwebs and dust have been cleaned and added to the cleaning check list. This has been added to the agenda for discussion at our next staff meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic and documentary evidence was received from the registered provider:

1. A photograph of the painting completed in the ECCE 1 care room. The statement from the registered provider regarding the painting of the windowsills of the ECCE 2 care room has been accepted.
2. A photograph of the cleaned wooden chair.
3. A photograph of the clean light fittings and the cleaning checklist with the light fittings added.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 29 (d).