

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH033		
Name of Service:	CBS pre-school		
Address of Service:	CBS Primary School, Chapel Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth		
Eircode:	A91 E0AW		
Name of Registered Provider:	Donna Kirk		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	29/09/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM -
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

CBS pre-school was established as a privately owned early years' service in 1996 and was acquired by the current registered provider in August 2023. The service is one of 3 owned and operated by the registered provider. CBS Preschool is currently registered to accommodate 44 pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years from Monday to Friday on a sessional basis for 38 weeks each year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme from 9am to 12 midday and from 12.30 to 3.30pm daily. School-aged children are not accommodated in the service. The service is conducted from two classrooms (one on the ground floor, one on the first floor) within a primary school located in the centre of Dundalk town. The service has access to an outdoor grassed area and spacious hall on the school premises.

Staffing

There are 9 staff employed to work in the service, to include the registered provider. The registered provider works 2/3 days per week 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 28 Insurance.

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 30 September 2025 in relation to no Garda Vetting available for one staff member. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on 01 October 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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 registered provider, and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the deputy person in charge, 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) The files for 9 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 9 adults.

A total of 13 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 5 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 8 staff. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for these 8 employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for 9 staff, demonstrated that 8 adults had not lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 9 staff 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) Following review of staff files, it was found that there was no Garda vetting on file for one staff member. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 30 September 2025 in relation to no Garda Vetting available for the one staff member. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on 01 October 2025.

(d) The required police vetting for the one staff member who lived outside the State for longer than 6 months as an adult was not available on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) A staff member's Garda vetting had been misplaced. A copy has since been submitted to the Inspector by email. I will regularly check that all records are present and up to date.

(d) The required Police vetting has been obtained and submitted to the Inspector by email. In future when employing someone who has lived outside the state for more than 6 months, I will ensure to have the relevant Police vetting prior to commencement.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of garda vetting received.

Copy of police vetting received.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted have adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 9 (2) (c) and (d).

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Three adults cared for 17 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years 4 months in the Downstairs Preschool.

Three adults cared for 16 children aged 2 years 10 months to 4 years 8 months in the Upstairs Preschool.

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 children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

- At snack time the staff were observed to sit with and support the children and engage in conversations about their home life. The children snacks contained a variety of fruit, sandwiches and yogurts. The children had access to their drinks during the preschool session.
- Children were observed to use the toilet independently, and the staff supervised the children at these times due to the location of the toilets outside the preschool room.
- A rest area was available in each preschool rooms to include soft child sized sofas and blankets, where children could take time out from their preschool session to rest and relax.

Supporting Relationships

- The atmosphere upon the inspectors arrival was warm and welcoming. The children in the Downstairs Preschool were playing games with their peers, playing with playdough and dolls. The children in the Upstairs Preschool were playing with garages and cars, playdough and connecting sand.
- The staff were heard to speak to the children using soft gentle tones and were observed to promptly provide help and supports to children where required. The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour, and praise was given for positive behavioural interactions observed between the children.
- Communication with parents/carers is in person upon arrival and collection, and also through a messaging application.

Physical And Material Environment

- The indoor preschool rooms were comfortable, pleasant and laid out to suit all children's needs. There were clearly defined interest areas to include home corner, dress up, construction, small world areas, table

top toys, jigsaws, floor play areas, garages and cars, and a rest area with books. Materials were provided on low level shelving units, and accessible to the children at all times, allowing children to explore their play environment independently and to lead their own choice of play.

- The outdoor area is a section of the school grounds, which was spacious and secure with a ground surfacing of grass. Play equipment taken outside when the children are in this area to include ride-on trucks. An indoor hall is also available for use in inclement weather conditions.

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 premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A visitor log was maintained, and the inspector was requested to sign in upon their arrival.
- The play equipment and toys used by the children were maintained in good condition.
- Risk assessments were available for review and completed up to date.
- Blind cords were secured out of the reach of children.
- Handrails on stairways and floor coverings throughout the premises were maintained in good repair.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children.
- Fire exits were observed to remain free from obstruction during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically control warm running water to a maximum of 40.7°C, liquid soap, paper towels and bins were available for handwashing.
- Sanitary areas on the first floor were ventilated through means of openable windows, and mechanical ventilation was in place in the ground floor sanitary areas.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after snack time.
- Children take in their own snacks from home, which contained perishable food items, and were observed to be stored in the fridge in the preschool rooms until snack times.

- Cleaning schedules were available for review, and the premises was observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Windows on the first floor were not fitted with restrictive devices. The windows were observed to open up to a maximum of 10 inches. There were stacked chairs and shelving units observed located underneath the windows, which could provide a step up for children to access the open window, in turn posing a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

2. Hand washing practices observed in the Downstairs Preschool were inadequate, with hand sanitiser used to clean the children's hands before snack time instead of warm running water and liquid soap.
3. The pedal on the pedal operated bin in the Downstairs preschool room was broken and required staff to lift the lid with their hands, posing a cross-contamination risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Window locks have been installed to the windows. Window locks will regularly be checked.

Infection Control:

2. A staff meeting was held and staff instructed to ensure hands are washed with warm soapy water instead of sanitiser. A reminder is now beside the sink in writing.
3. A new pedal bin has been purchased. Bin will be regularly checked and replaced immediately if needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographs of window locks in place.

Infection Control:

Photograph of new bin.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted have adequately addressed the non-compliances 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 registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was always immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Five staff members held in-date FAR training certificates.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each of the Preschool rooms and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

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.
- (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 record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded in June 2025. The service was closed for the summer months.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 20 December 2024, and the smoke alarms was dated 24 September 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls in the preschool room, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

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 3 sessions of 22 pre-school children on a sessional care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.