

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015LS042

**Name of Service:** Cherish Childcare

**Address of Service:** Springhill Road, Graiguecullen, Co. Laois

**Eircode:** R93 XH60

**Name of Registered Provider:** Melanie Watson

**Service type:** Full Day

**Date of Inspection:** 08/07/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	50	PM	54
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R Flynn
<b>Title:</b>	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

Cherish childcare provides full day care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is one of three services operated by the registered provider. The service operates from a two-story premises located in of town of Graigcullen, Co Laois. Cherish childcare has one pre-school room, two playschool rooms, a toddler room, a wobbler room and a baby room. An onsite kitchen, a sleep room and an office are also provided. An outdoor area is located to the back and side of the premises. The service opens from 07:00am to 18:15pm Monday to Friday.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs twenty-four staff. There were 17 adults present on the day of the inspection including the area manager, a person in charge, a staff member in the kitchen and an auxiliary staff member. The designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge who were not assigned to care rooms but available onsite to provide support if required. The registered provider manages oversight of the service and does not work directly with the children. The person in charge and the area manager facilitated the inspection.

### 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.

- Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4),
- Regulation 11– Staffing Levels (1)(3)(8)(a),

- Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school child, (1)(h)(i)(j)(k),
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a),
- Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play (1)(a)(b) (3)(a),
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,
- Regulation 25 - First Aid (1), (2)(a)(b)
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures (1) (a) (b), (4).

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 area manager, 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, 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)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

Twenty five staff files including the registered provider's were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of twenty four staff members and the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of twenty four staff members and the registered provider. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for five staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4)

The twenty two staff members employed to provide direct care to the children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Levels 5 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children attending for full day care was adhered to during the inspection.

On arrival to the service at 10:00am there were fifty children attending the service being cared for by fourteen adults evidenced by the following observation;

- There was one adult providing direct care to two children aged between 0-2 years in the Baby room.
- There were three adults providing direct care to eight children aged between 1-2 years in the Wobbler room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to nine children aged between 2-3 years in the Toddler room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to eight children aged between 3-4 years in Playschool room 1.
- There were two adults providing direct care to nine children aged between 3.5-5 years in the Playschool room 2.
- There were two adults providing direct care to fourteen children aged between 4-6 years in the preschool room.

The manager and one additional staff member were available to provide cover for staff lunch breaks and were observed to alternate between care rooms as required. The area manager joined the staff complement at 11:00. An additional 4 children arrived to the service over the course of the day and during the afternoon 12 adults provided direct care to 54 children. The manager and area manager were also available to provide assistance and support to the care rooms during the afternoon.

(8)(a)

On review of the service roster, it was observed that a minimum of two adults were on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(h)

Details of the attendance of each child was recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service in a sign in and out record books in each room.

(i)

The staff roster was available and reflected the adults working in the service on each day.

(j)

A sample of four medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k)

A sample of twenty five accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

## 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

(1)(a)

#### Basic Needs:

The service provides all meals. Children were observed eating a freshly prepared lunch of Chilli con carne and rice. Staff sat with the children during mealtimes and engaged in conversation. The staff encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently. Children in the wobbler room were observed to serve themselves by using a spoon to scoop rice from a large serving bowl placed on the low-level table and put the rice into their individual bowls. Children served themselves additional portions if they wished. Staff were observed to support the children who required assistance. Drinks were readily available at water stations in each room or served by the staff at the low-level tables while the children ate their food.

Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely, and a positive experiences for the children. Staff interacted with the children, telling them they were going to have their nappy changed, and engaging in conversation during the nappy change.

Sleep practice observed on the day of inspection were child led. Babies in the baby and wobbler room slept when they needed and were allowed sleep as long as they required. Older pre-school children were facilitated with a scheduled rest in the afternoon if required. Children who did not require a sleep, were accommodated in playschool room 1 where staff were observed to observed participating in tabletop activities with the children who did not require a sleep.

#### Supporting relationships:

There was a calm atmosphere in the service. The children were observed engaged and active as they chose between activities, for example participating in artwork with stickers and engaging in free play in the care rooms. Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Interactions such as active listening, questioning, giving praise and reassurance were used. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during interactions observed. The materials available supported and reflected the identity of children who attend the service and their families, for example, the toddler room had a family wall and displayed photographs of children and their families. A photograph of each child was placed above their low-level hooks for their coats and bags.

The staff advised the inspector that information and updates regarding the service are given to parents at drop off and collection times. A notice board in the hallway displayed information about the service including the menu for the week for parents/guardians to read. Individual books with a record of the child's day are sent home with the younger children attending the service each day.

### **The physical and material learning environment:**

The staff member in the baby room was attentive to the two babies attending the baby room. The baby room had an armchair for staff to sit on when bottle feeding or providing comfort to a child. A baby in the baby room was observed to enjoy a variety of floor-based play activities with developmentally appropriate play equipment such as the soft ball pit, and with toy fish on a mat which reflected the ocean.

The pre-school rooms had a range of play-based equipment. This included art equipment, paper and crayons, baskets of jigsaws and puzzles. Toy animals were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged imaginative play. Areas of interest in the care rooms promoted spontaneous play. For example, the toddler room had a kitchen corner, a construction area, dolls with cots and prams and a dress up corner. The preschool room had a dress up area. Children had the opportunity to take the lead and were observed engaged in imaginative play in these areas.

Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions which were observed during the inspection. A range of books were available in the reading areas of each care room. Children in the toddler room sat in a circle in the cosy reading corner while the staff member read a book to them.

### 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-*

*(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and sensory materials in each room.

(b)

Soft furnishings such as vinyl couches, cushions and cosy corners provided facilities for rest and relaxation in the pre-school rooms. The toddler room had vinyl couches, cushions and soft toys in a cosy area for children to read and relax when they wished. The baby room had a large rocking armchair for staff to sit and feed the children who were bottle fed. The wobbler room had two couches, and a cosy area with carpet, blankets and soft toys which provided a retreat if children wished to take a break from activities.

Children from the baby and wobbler room slept in cots in the sleep room. Children from the toddler room were provided with low level beds for nap time facilitated in their care room. Children from Playschool room 1 and 2 were provided with a low-level bed in Playroom 2 following their lunch if they required a rest. Additional low level beds were available in a storage room for any other children who required sleep.

(3)(a)

Outdoor play areas were provided directly off the downstairs care rooms. The outdoor play areas were separated to accommodate peer group play. Children from the toddler room had access to an outdoor area to the side of the property. Artificial grass covered the surface and a mini slide and climbing frame, a play kitchen, cars and bikes were available to the children.

The preschool room had direct access to a large outdoor area to the rear of the property. Natural grass and tress provided a natural environment. Swings, a slide, climbing frames and tyres provided opportunities for child led play. The outdoor area for the baby room and wobbler room was equipped with mini slides, soft balls and a variety of bikes and trikes. The perimeter of the outdoor areas was secured by fencing and gates.

### 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 entrance door to the service had a keypad entry system. The entrance and exits were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The keypad system was at the entrance and was managed by staff. Exit electronic release buttons were positioned up high at the hall door at the entrance out of reach of children to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.

Cleaning products were stored safely in the sluice room out of reach of children.

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were developmentally appropriate and in good condition.

The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.

The door at the top of the stairs was operated by a high electronic release button which was out of reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

Warm water and liquid hand soap were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible to children from dispensers. The children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play, before meals and after using the bathroom. Staff washed younger children's hands after nappy changes.

Pedal bins were available in each care room and sanitary accommodation for the disposal of waste.

The care rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the sanitary accommodation.

### Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in a medicine's cupboard out of reach of the children. No medication was administered on the day of inspection. Staff were familiar with the procedure of administration of medication if required by a child.

### Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on low level beds. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals. Staff in the baby and wobbler room were observed using a manual timer, set at 10-minute intervals to alert them to conduct a check. The children sleeping in the play school room 2 were supervised by the two staff members who remained in the room and completed the required sleep observations.

### Fire Safety:

All fire exits were clear of obstruction. Regular monthly fire drills took place with staff detailing the procedure to the inspector.

## 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)  
Five staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises for the hours of operation.

(2)(a)  
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were located in each care room of the service.

(b)  
First aid boxes were accessible to adults caring for children 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 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 10 June 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number and type of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced 03 June 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire were positioned at doorways throughout the service.