

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY051
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Name of Service:	Cherrytots Playschool
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Address of Service:	Cherrybrook House, Killoneen, Daingean, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 Y244
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Name of Registered Provider:	Irene Bergin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/10/2025
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Regulatory Compliance Meeting:	09/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Flynn
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.
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Description of service

Cherrytots Playschool is a privately operated sessional early years' service for children between the ages of 2-6 years. The service is located in a rural town land of Killoneen, Co. Offaly. The premises is a stand-alone building situated on the site of the registered providers domestic dwelling. The preschool consists of one pre-school room which can be divided into two rooms. A large outdoor area is provided to the front, side and rear of the premises. Cherrytots Preschool operates from 09:30 – 12:30pm Monday to Friday. Parking and set down is available in the carpark to the front of the property.

Staffing

The registered provider employs one adult in the service. The registered provider and one staff member were working directly with children on 09 October 2025. The registered provided 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under,

- Regulation 9 (1) (a) (b) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child.

- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- 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

A regulatory compliance meeting was held with the registered provider on 09 December 2025 regarding an outstanding non-compliance under Regulation 26 (1)(b).

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Two staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(a)

Two written validated references were available from a previous employer and

(b)

Two written validated reference was available from a reputable source.

- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for two staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d)
Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
Two employed childcare staff members working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 8 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.*
- (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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection.
- (3)
The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection. There were twelve children attending the service being supervised directly by two adults.

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

(1) (a) Basic needs

Children were observed eating a packed lunch provided by their parents. Lunches consisted of a variety of sandwiches, wraps, yoghurts, rice cakes and fruit. Staff sat with the children during snack times and engaged in conversation. Children had individual drink bottles and drinks were readily available in their lunch bags. The children sat together at low level tables while eating and engaging in conversations with each other. Regular hand washing was observed as children washed their hands before meals, after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary. Nappy changing facilities were available for any children who were not toilet trained.

Supporting relationships

Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names and appropriate eye contact was made. Photographs of the children and their families were displayed on the wall and positioned at child's eye level. This helped the children feel connected to home. For a circle time activity, each child's name was laminated into cards, staff held up each card and the children called out each name. The name card was placed in front of each child. Three book choices were given for their circle time activity; each child placed their laminated name on their book of choice. When each child had made their choice, they counted the votes together and the book with the most votes was read to the children. Children's artwork was also on display, such as 'Our Autumn Tree'. The leaves on the tree were the children's painted handprints.

Information and updates regarding the children's day to day activities and learning were provided to parents at drop off and collection times. Additional notices and updates were shared with parents via an electronic application.

Physical and material environment

The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the session as they independently chose between activities in the preschool room. Toys and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open

shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged spontaneous play. Areas which promoted role play were available such as a dress up area with a variety of costumes, a playhouse area, a music area with a drum set and a play kitchen with equipment. A busy board was positioned on the wall with spinners with beads for the children to explore.

Children's language development was supported. A range of books were available in the reading area of the preschool room. Children were observed engaged in storytelling and a group discussion about a book being read by the staff. Children participated in activities such as building a train track, painting at an easel wearing aprons and playing hide and seek. Staff sat with the children at tables engaging with the children and talking about what the children were creating and building.

The service had a large outdoor play area to the front, side and rear of the preschool building. The natural grass areas had goal posts, footballs, swings, picnic tables and a sandpit. A wooden playhouse, tunnels and scooters were also available to the children.

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 pre-school was securely locked and controlled by staff to prevent children exiting the pre-school unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access. The glass entrance doors allowed staff visibility of any visitors. An electric gate at the front of the property was in place and could be closed manually or electronically from within.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen and bathroom area up high, out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Single use hand towels were accessible to children from a basket. Used hand towels were placed in a bucket under the sink after use. The children were supported to wash their hands before snack time and after using the bathroom. Pedal bins were available in the preschool room and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the

sanitary accommodation as well as openable windows. The care rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the procedure should children required medication.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were easily recognisable and unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Popcorn was observed in the lunch boxes of two children on the day of inspection. Popcorn poses a choking risk and is not recommended as a snack for pre school children.
2. It was observed that a metal climbing frame located in the back outdoor play area was unsuitable for use by preschool age children. The climbing frame was above the recommended height for preschool-aged children. The metal frame lacked the appropriate fall protection surface and showed signs of rust on the climbing bars. This posed a potential risk of injury if a child were to fall from the top of the frame or slip/trip on the metal bars at the bottom of the frame.
3. A small trampoline was in the outdoor play area. Trampolines are prohibited from being used in early years services. The trampoline had damage to the outer protective cover exposing the springs. This posed a potential risk to children getting their feet caught in between the springs and tripping.
4. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider notified parents that popcorn is not permitted in the preschool. The services policy and procedure were also updated to reflect this.
2. The climbing frame in the garden has been removed.
3. The trampoline has been removed.
4. The out-of-date Garda Vetting for one staff member has been updated.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographs of garden with small trampoline and climbing frame removed.

Copy of updated Garda Vetting disclosure received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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)

One staff member was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and was available on the premises during the operational hours of the service on 09 October 2025.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school 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

(4)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record for completed fire drills was not available on the premises on the day of inspection.

(b)

Fire detection equipment had not been tested within the required timeframe. A record demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (a) A written record of completed fire drills was submitted with the most recent fire drill recorded on 03 October.

(b)

A maintenance record dated 03 July 2025, for the fire extinguishers was received.

The smoke detection alarm system was serviced and tested on 28 January 2026.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire drill record submitted via email.

Certificate of maintenance of fire extinguishers and smoke detection system received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 26 have been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for twenty-two children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.