

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH042
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Name of Service:	Ballymore Community Childcare Facility
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Address of Service:	Market Hill, Ballymore, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 D264
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Name of Registered Provider:	Vincent Mc Cormack
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes
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

This community service provides a full day, part time and sessional service to children aged between 2 to 6 years. The service is operating from 08:00 to 17:30 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The premises is a purpose-built single storey dwelling and consists of four pre-school rooms. Two pre-school rooms the Cherry Blossom and the Acorns room were in operation only during the Easter holidays. An office, a kitchen and staff room are available in the service. Outdoor play areas are attached to the rear, side and front of the service. The service is located in a residential area in a rural setting in the village of Ballymore, Co. Westmeath.

Staffing

Five adults were working directly with the children on the 16 April 2025. The designated person in charge arrived to the service after the inspector's arrival and attended the closing meeting. An administrator and assistant cook were present in the service. An adult working with school age children attended the service at 12:15.

The registered provider does not work with children.

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.

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, acting 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were not available upon the inspector's arrival. A staff member acted up in the capacity of the acting designated person in charge for the inspection.

(b)

The designated person in charge arrived to the service after the inspector's arrival to the service and stayed for the duration of the inspection.

Twenty-two staff files were reviewed including the registered provider. The designated person in charge stated the board of management do not have contact with children in the service.

The following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers and from a source other than a past employer in respect of twenty-one files including the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the adults 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 in respect of four adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All adults working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5,6 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were not available in respect of one adult that attends the service to carry out a service in a contractor's role.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The contractor has been asked to supply references. Please see two references attached.

The service will ensure that such sub-contractors supply references in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two written references.

Summary Comment

The non compliance has been addressed.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were six pre-school children and four school age children attending the service supervised directly by five adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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

- (h)
Children’s attendance was recorded on a daily basis in the service.
- (j)
Documentation reviewed indicated that correct procedures were in place for the administration of medication to children in the service.
- (k)
The accident and incident book reviewed indicated that accidents and incidents were recorded and signed by parents.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i)
The staff roster presented was dated 10 January 2025. The designated person in charge stated it was a roll over roster.
The staff roster did not detail the following.
- The rostered hours of the designated person in charge.
 - Reference to the designated person and deputy designated person in charge.
 - The allocated rooms the staff members worked in.
 - The relief cover available for lunch breaks.
 - Full names of the staff members.

A daily roster is required to be available in the service for review with details of all staff employed in the service in all capacities with their relevant hours including designated persons in charge, deputy persons in charge, childcare practitioners, administrators, cooks and cleaners and relief cover for breaks.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Three typed rosters have been prepared containing the specific information, which are now displayed in the front office. They are also emailed to all staff via their personal email address.

The typed templates are kept in word format so they can be amended on a weekly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster.

Summary Comment

The non compliance has been addressed.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Cherry Blossom Room

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before their mealtime. Children went to the toilet independently supervised by staff. Children enjoyed play experiences indoors including tabletop activities and a farm activity. Children were observed to play freely in the pre-school room. Staff sat with children talking to and assisting them with the tabletop activity. Transitions were smooth as staff gave notice as to a change in activity using a timer and children were prompted to the change in the activity. Health care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition. Staff were familiar with each child and their personality.

A child's learning journal was reviewed depicting their play, work activities and "all about me" information. This journal is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The colourful room was laid out with low level tables and chairs. Materials were available to children on low level shelving that included bricks, blocks, art and craft supplies, animals, jigsaws, dolls and play kitchen utensils. A kitchen, dolls play area, arts easel and cosy rest area was noted. Children's artwork was displayed.

Acorns Room

Older children were independent and enjoyed the various play opportunities including creative messy play and arts and crafts supervised by staff. Positive conversations and interactions were observed between staff members and children. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs was available in the pre-school room. The learning journal for the pre-school room incorporating the numerous children's play activities carried on during the pre-school term was available for review. Child developmental observations are shared with parents on a regular basis in the children's learning journal.

The service worked in partnership with parents and guardians in the following ways, a verbal handover was given on collection to parents, a short messaging service (SMS) was used and a parent handbook was available to parents.

Evidence of the early childhood curriculum was noted.

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 main entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents in the Cherry Blossom and Acorn rooms.

Infection Control:

All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed.

Warm running water, hand paper towels and liquid soap were available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 31 degrees Celsius.

The pre-school room and sanitary accommodation were ventilated by openable windows on the ground floor.

Mechanical ventilation was working in the sanitary accommodation on the first floor.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods in the Cherry Blossom and Acorn rooms.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was given at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored safely in the service and available if a child presented with a high temperature. Medication records reviewed indicated that medicine was administered correctly in the service.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed in the service. A fire assembly point was located to the front of the building in the outdoor play area.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The glazed doors in the Cherry Blossom and Laurel rooms which opened onto the staff car park were alarmed to give notice in the event of a child opening the door and exiting their assigned pre-school room since the last inspection on the 18 May 2023. It was observed on two occasions at 11:00 and 13:00 that the alarms were switched off which would mean that the alarm would not sound in the event of a child leaving their assigned room through the glazed doors in the Cherry Blossom and Laurel rooms.

Infection Control:

It was observed that the sanitary accommodation adjacent to the Cherry Blossom room was used as storage for equipment and materials including tables, chairs, a small shelving unit, a large shelving unit and a selection of toys which was a potential infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

All staff have been informed of the importance of ensuring that the alarms remain turned on throughout the day.
Stickers which have been placed upon the alarm boxes.
Stickers which have been placed upon the alarm boxes and emails sent to all staff in relation to the alarms.

Infection Control:

All personal toys and play items have been removed from the sanitary area. The items will be stored elsewhere in the service.
The personal toys and items will be stored elsewhere in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographs of the alarm and written documentation.

Infection Control:

Photographs of sanitary accommodation.

Summary Comment

The non compliance has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)
All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

(4)
The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of 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)
Ten adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
First aid boxes were available in the pre-school rooms.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)

Bandages had expired in November 2023 in the first aid box in the Cheery Blossom room.

This was at variance with the first aid box checklist dated 8 April 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The expired bandages have been removed. They have been replaced with fresh supplies of bandages.

The Health and Safety Officer will conduct a checklist within each room for every First Aid Box.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of bandages and first aid box checklist submitted.

Summary Comment

The non compliance has been addressed.

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 the 10 March 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 16 July 2024 and 17 October 2024 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms.

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 the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

Compliance Information

The service submitted a notification of incident form to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 16 January 2025 in respect of (b).

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The service provided the required information for the inspection.