

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CE007				
Name of Service:	Cairde Beag -Kilrush				
Address of Service:	Grace St, Kilrush, Co. Clare				
Eircode:	V15 N882				
Name of Registered Provider:	Doirin Graham				
Service type:	Full Day				
Date(s) of Inspection:	19/06/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>52</td> <td>PM</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table>	AM	52	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E				
Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes & A McCarthy				
Title:	Early Years Inspectors				

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

Cairde Beag-Kilrush was registered in 2016 as a purpose-built childcare facility, operated by a community group limited company. The service is located in a two-story building in Kilrush town, in County Clare. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care, Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 17:30 for children ranging in age from six months to six years.

The five care rooms included the following: the Baby/Wobbler room (age range: six months to fifteen months), the Toddler room one (age range: one to three years), the Toddler room two (age range: two to three years), the Pre-school room one (age range: three to four years) and the Preschool room two (age range: four to five years). An additional, staff room, office and sensory room is available on the first floor. Three designated outdoor areas were accessed by the children to the front and side of the service.

Staffing

Of the twenty two adults who have access to the service, the service manager, fourteen adults who worked directly with the children, a student and an auxiliary person who prepares, cooks and serves food were present on 19 June 2025. The registered provider was not involved in the day-to-day operation of the full day 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3) (8)(c)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b) (4)

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.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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)

On the day of inspection, a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

During the inspection both a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available on the premises at all times.

Twenty-two files were available for the adults who access the service. These files were reviewed, and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

Thirty-seven written and validated references were available from past employers.

(b)

Seven written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)
Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of all the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)
International police vetting was available in respect of four adults who lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)
All the adults working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to 8 or an equivalent 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)
On the day of the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children who attended the service.

(2)
An adequate number of adults cared for the children at all times during the inspection. On the 19 June 2025 fourteen adults cared for fifty-two children in the morning, and nine adults cared for thirty children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available on the premises at all times.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children. Five care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

Healthy eating was a focus within the service. Nutritious hot meals were prepared fresh by kitchen staff each day and served to the children in the dining room. On the day of the inspection, a freshly made shepherd's pie with mashed potatoes and peas were served as the main meal of the day. Healthy snacks were provided by the parents and stored in the refrigerator in the dining room and served at regular intervals throughout the day. Children's drinks were removed from their bags upon arrival to the service and stored within easy reach in each room.

Sanitary accommodation was located close to each room. Nappy changing facilities were situated near the Baby/Wobbler and Toddler rooms, with waist-high changing units accessible. The children's nappies were changed on an individual basis when required and the children were treated in a sensitive manner. All toiletries were safely stored and clearly labelled, within easy reach of staff while changing. Nappy changing policies were clearly displayed in each changing room. Sanitary facilities for older children were next to the pre-school rooms, allowing supervision by sight or sound while children used the facilities.

A separate sleep room with seven standard cots was available for children in the Baby/Wobbler room, while low-level sleep beds were used in the Toddler rooms. Sleep periods were closely observed and electronically recorded, with air conditioning units controlling temperatures in sleep rooms to ensure a safe room temperature was maintained. The sleep needs of the children were met on an individual basis.

Relaxation areas in all rooms included comfortable seating, soft floor mats and cushions. These rest areas provided spaces for children to relax away from active play areas. Staff encouraged quiet periods during the day to facilitate each child's need for comfort and relaxation. A sensory playroom was available upstairs for children to access when they needed time away from the large group activities.

Children experienced regular changes of environment from the playrooms to the dining room and also spent long periods outdoors. Younger children had exclusive access to separate play areas accessed directly from their rooms. Consistent staffing helped create a sense of belonging and well-being for the children. Staff worked collaboratively with parents, providing information electronically throughout the day. The staff offered continuous praise and encouragement and the children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities.

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 to the service was appropriately secured with a keypad and a bell operated system to monitor people's entry to the service. The internal and external entry and exit points prevented children exiting or unauthorised persons accessing the service. Unauthorised persons were signed in, in the visitor's book.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall, fencing and gates.
- The children were supervised at all times during the inspection and their arrival and departure to the service was recorded on the service's electronic recording system.
- The materials and equipment throughout the service were maintained in good condition.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children. Cupboards were secured with child safety devices to prevent the children accessing the contents within.
- The highchairs were maintained in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- Laminated strips were placed on the window glass panels for the children's visibility.
- A fridge was provided for the storage of children's perishable food.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

- The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined and pedal operated bins.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, outdoor play, toileting and before mealtime.
- The soothers were stored in individually labelled containers.
- The children's bedlinen and personal care items were labelled and stored individually.

Administration of Medication:

- A service policy was available to inform practice. Adequate documentation was recorded for prescription and non-prescription medications that had been given to children.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room accommodated six standard sized cots and an emergency evacuation cot were available in the sleep room. for the babies to sleep. Low level beds and mattresses were available for children to sleep in the care rooms. Areas for the children to relax were available in each room with soft furnishings.
- The sleep room and care room temperatures were maintained between 16-20 degrees Celsius during the inspection. A thermometer was available in the sleep room for staff to measure and monitor the room temperature.
- Upon discussion, staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's safe sleep policy. The children's sleep observations were recorded by staff every ten minutes on the service's electronic application system. These observations included the children's colour, position, and breathing.

Fire Safety:

- Staff maintained records of up-to-date fire safety training.
- The fire exit doors and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exit routes, and fire assembly points were readily identified with clear signage.

Outing:

- An outing was not undertaken during the inspection. A service policy was available to inform practice. The manager outlined the steps taken to ensure risks assessments are carried out prior to each outing.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last fire drill took place on the 12 May 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on the 3 September 2024 and the 4 October 2024.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed demonstrating the procedures 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

Up to date insurance cover was available for eighty children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2026.