

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019CC006
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Name of Service:	Bel Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Unit D4, Donnybrook Commercial Centre, Donnybrook, Douglas, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 FY89
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Name of Registered Provider:	John Bowman
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	30/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	46
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast & B Fraher
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).

Description of service

Bel Childcare Ltd offers early years care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years. The full day care service is open from 7.30am to 6.00pm, each Monday to Friday, over 51 weeks of the year. Sessional services are provided from 8.30am to 11.30am and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm daily, over a 38-week annual period, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

The premises consists of a two-storey building, located within a commercial centre, in a suburban area of Cork city. There are four care rooms, child and adult sanitary facilities, a reception area, a kitchen, a staff room and a sluice room. An outdoor play space is provided on site.

Staffing

There are 29 adults attached to the childcare facility. This includes the registered provider, the service owner, two cleaners, one cook and a general manager, who are not involved in the direct care of the children. All 23 of the adults who work directly with the children and the service owner, have achieved a relevant award in early childhood care and education.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices		
Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN1901	30/03/2026	On review of the staff files, it was noted that police vetting was not translated for four staff, who were present on the day of inspection and had access to the children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	
Improvement Notice IN1901	30/03/2026	On review of the staff files, it was noted that one adult onsite who had access to the children, had ECRIS Garda Vetting, but did not have translated police vetting and two adults, who were not onsite with Garda vetting carried out prior to the 7 July 2025, had no certified translated police vetting.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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.*
- (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 service had a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named deputy, who could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times, during the hours of operation.
 - (c) There was clear evidence of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member.

This was displayed on the notice board.

- (2) The recruitment records in relation to 29 adults attached to the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the 58 required references, 36 were from previous employers, with required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 58 required references, 22 were from sources other than previous employers, with records of validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the 29 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting records, with certified translations where required, were available on file for 13 of the staff members, who had lived outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as adults.
- (3) The procedures listed in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) Records demonstrated that 16 adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, at level 5 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent. Eight staff members held a letter of qualification recognition, from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) See statutory notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN1901 and Improvement Notice IN1901 served.

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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.

(2) The adult child ratio was maintained as follows:

- A total of 47 children, aged 3 to 5 years, were present in the morning, with 12 adults involved in their direct care.
- There were 46 children, aged 3 to 5 years present in the afternoon, with 9 adults working directly with these children.

In addition, the person in charge and the deputy were observed to provide cover as needed. The general manager was also available to facilitate the inspection process.

(8)

(a) At least two adults were present at all times throughout the inspection period. This practice was also evidenced through review of the staff roster.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee,*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) The staff rosters for the week of inspection and the previous week were available for assessment. A copy of the rosters were received; the rosters were in keeping with the staff working in the service on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A curriculum vitae, outlining the experience of one staff member, was not available for review by the inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written response from the registered provider stated that a copy of the CV was submitted the day after the inspection, on 31 March 2026. As a preventive measure, it will be ensured that managers request a copy of each employee's most recent CV.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the CV was forwarded to the Inspectorate following the inspection.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider are accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

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:

- Mealtime routines were conducted at a relaxed, unhurried pace. During this time, the adults were observed to promote a chatty atmosphere and provided appropriate assistance to the children. Second helpings were also noted to be offered during the mid-morning snack.
- Tissue boxes were within easy reach for the children, which encouraged them to develop personal hygiene and self-care skills. A staff member was also noted to provide children with wipes to clean their faces, after eating.
- The adults interacted with the children in a warm and caring manner. For example, calm tones of voice were used, and children were patiently guided during activities and routine tasks.
- During conversation, a staff member advised that children who required nappy changing were attended to at regular intervals and according to their individual needs. For the older children, the location of the sanitary facilities, which adjoined each of the care rooms, enabled them to access and utilise these facilities in an independent manner.
- Soft seating areas, with books and soft toys, were included within the care rooms, for any child who may wish to opt out of scheduled activities or take some time to relax.
- A scheduled nap period was facilitated in Room 3 in the afternoon. Prior to this, the children were asked whether they wanted to rest or play outdoors, which provided them with an opportunity to make decisions in relation to their own needs. During discussion with a staff member, it was confirmed that children who displayed signs of tiredness at any stage would be accommodated to sleep. This was subsequently observed in practice, when a child who had been playing outdoors was brought inside by an adult, to rest.

- Adequate space was provided within the indoor environments for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. The children also had opportunities to play in the outdoor area on the day of the inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The colourfully decorated care rooms were warm and inviting. A selection of the children’s artwork, along with their birthdays and family photographs were prominently displayed.
- There was an adequate supply of child sized tables and chairs available, which supported the children’s participation in tabletop activities and mealtime routines.
- Shelving used to display play materials was positioned at a low height, which supported ease of access by children.
- The range of interest items on offer across the four care rooms included the following:
 - Play kitchens with utensils, dress up clothes, dolls and doctor’s sets.
 - Construction based materials, such as wooden blocks, plastic bricks and play tools.
 - Books.
 - Natural play resources, such as pinecones, small wooden logs and smooth stones.
 - Jigsaws, threading materials and connectable shapes.
 - Art and craft materials.
- In the outdoor area, the children had the use of equipment such as sand boxes with digging toys, a playhouse, building blocks, a climbing frame with a slide and suitably equipped play kitchens. Seating areas were also available to accommodate tabletop 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:

- Entry to the service was via a keypad mechanism, which was in place at the main entrance door. A buzzer was provided for parents and visitors. These safety measures reduced the risk of unauthorised access. On the interior of this door, the door release button was positioned at adult height, which minimised the risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- In the outdoor play space, a secure enclosure was created through a combination of fencing and a secure gate.
- The blind cords in the care rooms were safely anchored by tension devices.
- Low-level cupboards were fitted with restrictive opening devices, which reduced the likelihood of a child coming into contact with potentially harmful materials.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of children's reach.
- The door to the adult toilet adjoining Room 4 was secured when not in use, which restricted access by children.

Infection control:

- At the children's wash hand basins, there was a supply of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins. These facilities supported the practice of effective handwashing. It was noted that handwashing routines took place after the children had used the toilet, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Tables were sanitised before mealtimes.
- Single use aprons and gloves were available for nappy changing procedures.
- Suitable storage was provided for the children's bags, outdoor clothing and footwear.

Administration of medication:

- The inspector was advised by staff that some of the children had been prescribed medication. This was found to be securely stored and was and in-date. A sample review of the temperature reducing medication that was held at the service, was also found to adhere to this practice.

Safe sleep:

- A review of the written sleep records demonstrated that the children's breathing, colour and position were assessed at 10-minute intervals.
- While occupied by sleeping children aged over 3 years, the air temperature of Room 3 fell within the required range of 18°C to 22°C; a temperature reading of 20.8°C was noted.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- All visible firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.
- Fire exit signage was clearly visible.

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) Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for eight of the adults, who worked at the service.
- (2)
- (a) There were two sufficiently stocked first aid boxes available, which were safely stored out of reach of children.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

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) The monthly fire drills which had been conducted previously were recorded in writing. The most recent fire drill was noted to have been undertaken on 20 February 2026.
 - (b) A record which contained details regarding the number and type of firefighting equipment was on file. According to the servicing documentation available, the firefighting equipment was last checked on 2 October 2025 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on 7 January 2026.
- (4) A notice, which outlined the steps to be taken in the event of a fire, was displayed in several locations throughout the premises.