

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2022CC006

Name of Service: Cherryblossoms Cullen

Address of Service: Cullen Community Centre, Mullaghroe, Cullen, Co Cork

Eircode: P51 YY06

Name of Registered Provider: Christina Dunstan

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 20/08/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	4

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: 13 Market Place
Mallow
Co Cork
P51DD5Y

Inspection undertaken by: B Fraher

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 N/A

Description of service

Cherryblossoms is a full day care service operating from one care room in Cullen community centre. The service can accommodate 22 children aged from 2 to 6 years, facilitating the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service can operate from 7:00 to 18:30 Monday to Friday and currently operates from 07:45 to 17:30 Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor area in the front of the service. A school age service is currently available also.

Staffing

The service currently has six adults employed in the service, including the registered provider who is not service based but offers relief cover. The six staff also includes one relief staff member and one school age worker.

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 children, person in charge and staff 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) The service had a person in charge and two named adults available to deputise.
 - (b) The roster indicated that the designated person in charge or the named deputy was on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure displayed on the wall of the care room.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that three new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Three of these new staff members work directly with the children and a total of three files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for three staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
- (a) There were four validated references on file from past employers.
 - (b) There were two validated references available from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the six adults. There was evidence of compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) No newly employed adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more as an adult, therefore police vetting was not required.
- (4) Two of the new adults, who were employed to work directly with the children, held major awards, between levels 5 and 6, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The third new adult did not require childcare qualifications as they worked in the school age service.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed on inspection:

- Policy on infection control, which was incorporated into some individual policies.

The policies contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for children.

Non-Compliance Information

The policy on outdoor play did not set out how children would be supervised during play or set out the safety requirements of the outdoor play area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was made by the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The policy is now updated and will be reviewed annually.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated policy was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 10.

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 at all times.

(2) The service had exceeded the required ratio as per regulation in the care room for both the morning and the afternoon. There were two adults directly caring for nine children in the morning, two of whom were school age and in the afternoon, there was four adults directly caring for five children, one of whom was school age.

(8)

(a) On the day of inspection, there were two adults present on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

(a) the name and date of birth of the child;

(b) the date on which the child first attended the service;

(c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;

(d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;

(e) authorisation for the collection of the child;

(f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;

(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 10 children's records were assessed and reviewed.
- (a) All records assessed contained the name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) All records assessed contained the date on which each child first attended the service.
- I All records assessed had the capacity to record the date on which each child will cease attending the service.
- (d) All records assessed had a record of the names and contact numbers of parents and guardians if required.
- I All records assessed had a record of those authorised to collect each child.
- (f) All records assessed contained details of any illness, disability or allergy each child may have.
- (g) All records assessed had a record of the name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner.
- (h) All records assessed had a record of immunisations, if any, received by each child.
- (i) All records assessed had a record of written parental consent for the service to provide emergency medical treatment if required in the event of a medical emergency.

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)

Basic needs:

- Breakfast is provided by the service and consisted of cereals and toast. All snacks and the main meals had been prepared by the parents and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed to eat fruit, crackers, yogurt, sandwiches and cheese for snack time and beef, carrots, potatoes and spaghetti bolognaise for a hot meal. The food was stored in the refrigerator. The service has alternative food available if required.
- Individual drinking water bottles were readily available to the children on a low accessible shelf.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before food and after using the sanitary facilities.

- The layout of the care rooms supported the children to move freely within their environments and to actively engage in their chosen tasks.
- Children in the care room were observed accessing the toilet area independently and staff were available to provide assistance if required.
- Adults were noted to carry out nappy changing at regular intervals and as required.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care room. An example of this was children selected their own lunch boxes and drinks for snacks from the refrigerator.
- The care room had a rest area with soft floor mats and cushions. Books were stored within access.
- Outdoor games and activities were promoted and observed, with the children accessing the outdoor area twice on the day of inspection.
- A child was observed using a tissue, dispose of the tissue and wash his hand afterwards under the encouragement of the staff.

Supporting relationship:

- Throughout the day, and particularly at snack time and lunch time, staff in the care room were heard engaging in social conversation with the children, which helped to promote a relaxed and happy environment.
- A variety of communication methods were stated as being used to communicate with parents/guardians. Including a parent handbook, email, text messages and meeting parents at drop off and pick up.
- Throughout the morning, a notably calm atmosphere was evident in the care room, as the adults engaged in activities with the children while assisting them with their individual needs. The inspector observed activities being carried out such as artwork, treading and using magnetic shapes.
- The inspector observed positive interactions between the adults and children. For example, the adults sat at the table at the children's level completing artwork, observing block building and engaging with the children.
- The adults promoted positive behaviour among children encouraging gentle voices and the use of the word please as observed in the care room.

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

- An adequate amount of waste high tables and low-level chairs were provided for the children for indoor use.
- The care room was suitable resourced with age-appropriate interest items, which were stored on low level shelving at the children’s eye level. Examples included jigsaws, connectable shapes, threading material and building blocks and a train set.
- The home corner was equipped with dolls, a pram, a kitchen and a shop. The art area was equipped with paint, brushes, colours and paper. Trucks, diggers and cars were observed to be available.
- All equipment and material assessed were found to be in good condition. The outdoor area had a selection of ride on toys and were observed to be available and utilised by the children.
- Three stackable beds, linen and a cosy rest area was available in the service.

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 door was an alarmed fire exit door which used a doorbell for entry. The adults could see from the care room window who had pressed the bell preventing the access of unauthorised adults.
- The windows in the care room were out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a press which was inaccessible to the children.
- The perimeter of the outdoor area was secured with a metal fence with closed secure gates.
- A tall shelving unit was anchored to the wall.

Infection control:

- Children and adults had access to thermostatically controlled hot water maintained at a temperature of 41.4°C to 42.8°C, paper towels, liquid soap and pedal operated bins for the disposal of paper waste.

- The adult performing nappy changes was observed to wear disposable aprons and gloves.
- A cleaning schedule was available in the service and was noted to be up to date and complete.
- Children's belongings were placed in individual cubby houses in a shelved area.
- A refrigerator was available in each room for the storage of perishable foods.

Administration of medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was available and was stored in the original containers and placed out of reach of the children. No child in the service was currently taking medication. A record was available for recording medication administration if needed.
- The medication inspected was in date.

Safe sleep:

- The designated sleep area was in the corner of the care room and the air temperature was 20.6°C which was maintained at the required temperatures of between 18°C and 22°C for the children above 12 months.
- The person in charge informed the inspector that no child currently sleeps in the service. A sheet was available for recording sleep records in relation to children's colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals during the sleep periods if needed. This was recorded in paper format.

Fire safety:

- On the day of inspection, fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- All fire extinguishers seen were wall mounted.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

The inspector observed two children having nappy changes on a mat which was torn. This mat was unable to be adequately cleaned between use and was an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

A new changing mat has been purchased and a new changing unit with steps has been ordered. The changing mat is to be checked regularly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

A receipt for the purchasing of a new changing mat and a new changing unit were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

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-

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

Compliance Information

(1) The inspector observed that all children has been checked in and out of the service. Previous days recorded also displayed this.

(3)

(b) Visitor's records were kept in writing of any person entering the premises and the inspector was asked to sign in and out of the premises.