

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023MH004
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Name of Service:	The Village Preschool Nobber
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Address of Service:	Nobber Community Hall, Main Street, Nobber, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A82 E2T5
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Name of Registered Provider:	Celine Govern
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna
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

The Village Preschool is located in a community hall on the main street in the village of Nobber. The service provides sessional, part-time, full day care to children from 2 to 6 years. The service operates from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12 midday. The premises consist of a large hall converted into a care room, a kitchen /dining area, sanitary facilities and a storage room. An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises. School-aged childcare is also provided.

Staffing

There are 11 staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider, who is not routinely based in the service. A total of eight staff members, including the registered provider and person in charge, are employed to work with preschool children. One staff member works with school-aged children, one staff member is employed for admin and maintenance duties, and one staff member works in a training capacity, who carried out cooking duties on the day of inspection.

Two students also attend the service for work experience, one of whom was present on the day of 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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and 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.

Acknowledgments

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

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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 designated person in charge, who is the service manager and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation, the designated person in charge or the named person in charge was on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster and staff information on display and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 11 staff and 2 students were reviewed.

(a) (b)

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A total of 14 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 12 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 11 staff and 1 student. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

Garda vetting is not required for the second student who is aged under 18 years.

(d) A review of the employment history for 11 staff, and 2 students demonstrated that no one had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. Therefore, police vetting was not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 6 staff employed to work with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

A qualification for 2 students and the one staff member employed in auxiliary duties is not required.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentary evidence available for review did not provide sufficient evidence that 2 staff members employed to work with the children held the appropriate childcare qualification. It is acknowledged that a provisional statement of results and a component certificate were on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

One staff member has sent her transcript to the Department of children for Validation. This email was sent on the day of the inspection and to date no respond has been received. QQI cannot issue a cert as she qualified before 2016. The second educator had completed her course and was waiting for her graduation and final cert, she is currently on sick leave and if she returns her file will be updated appropriately and within regulation.

Those who cannot get a replacement cert will contact the Department to validate their transcript of results.

Supporting documentation submitted

Screenshot of email to the Department to assess the component certificate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has not adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 9 (4). Final documentation demonstrating that the two staff members hold appropriate qualifications was not received; therefore, this non-compliance remains outstanding. The registered provider must submit the documents to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate when received.

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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 inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.
- The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance;
Three adults cared for 20 children aged 2 years 7 months to 5 years, of whom 12 attended on a part-time or full-day care basis.

Non-Compliance Information

- (8) The registered provider did not ensure that 2 adults were on the premises at all times while the service was in operation. Following a review of the staff rosters for weeks beginning 16 February 23rd February and 02 March 2026, and through discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that one adult cared for preschool children attending the service between 8am to 9am on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Roster has been changed to ensure there are always 2 educators on the premises. Two educators will always be rostered regardless of the number of children in the school.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated roster with two staff present during service operating hours.

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Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 11 (8).

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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

The service operates a free-flow environment curriculum which incorporates choice of play in the indoor play areas or outdoor play space. The children can choose freely where to play.

The service provides all meals to the children in attendance. During snack and meal times, the doors to the outdoor area, which is located directly off the dining area, were closed for children to relax and enjoy their snacks and meals. The children had ham sandwiches, yoghurt, cheese and watermelon for a morning snack, and a hot dinner of chicken curry, vegetables and rice was scheduled for 1 pm. The children's drinks were readily available on a trolley in the dining area during their time in preschool. Children were observed on many occasions to help themselves to their own drinks. Children were encouraged to be independent while using the toilet, with supports provided by staff when required.

The children were observed to be dressed suitably for the dry, bright weather outdoors on the day of inspection. A large rest area to include a sofa, child-sized low armchairs and a soft mat with cushions provided a cosy area where children could rest and relax during their time in preschool.

Individual care plans are in place where required. Staff demonstrated high levels of awareness of children's interests, preferences and needs through their interactions with the children present and by providing and assisting with play materials to the children.

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Staff were observed to provide for smooth transitions for children by communicating with each other and allowing children to know what happens next in their routine.

Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere upon the inspector's arrival was warm and welcoming; the staff and the student were observed to be engaged in conversations and play with the children throughout the inspection. The staff and student spoke in a warm and friendly tone to the children. Positive engagements between children, such as turn taking, were acknowledged and praised by staff. The children appeared familiar with those who cared for them and were observed to actively seek out the staff or the student for help where needed.

The staff and student were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes while also considering children's individual preferences and choice. The staff and student were observed to treat each child with respect and address each child by name. Discussions about the children's home life occurred, which demonstrates that the staff are familiar with the children's home life. The person in charge advised that viewings of the service have been assigned at quieter times for parents and new children. On the day of inspection, following the end of the ECCE sessional programme, parents and a preschool child due to attend later in the year visited the service and were shown around by staff. An open evening is also scheduled over the coming months.. Communication with parents is through in-person at arrival and collection times and through the use of a digital application, where observations and photos of children's activities and interests are recorded.

The preschool service is openly welcomed into the local village. The staff explained they take regular walks through the village and visit for example, the library and "Secret Garden" where residents have offered the use of the play park to the preschool service when they visit and have also left suitable play materials in the area for them to use, such as a slide. The staff advised that the local community spirit is one where both they and the children feel warmly welcomed and enjoy being part of the village community.

Physical And Material Environment

The indoor care room is large and spacious. Individual dedicated area for each child, displays on the walls of children's artwork, family photos, photos and comments from outings to local areas, children's birthday chart and colourful bunting decorate the large area. Designated interest areas to include a cosy area with books, a home play area with dress up materials and dolls and play equipment and small world toys were available. Additional areas included a creative area, chalkboards, bowling pins and ball, a theatre role play area, trucks and action

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figures and board games, table top toys to include jigsaws and magnetic toys, small world houses with play figures and furniture.

Materials were freely available and accessible on low-level shelves and boxes at children's level, nurturing independence to retrieve and self-care to return. The tables and chairs provided were suitable for the number and age of children in attendance.

The outdoor area was pleasant and safe and was well laid out to accommodate the needs of the children present. The area had a ground surface of tarmac and was secured by fencing and a gate. A slide with a mat, a play kitchen with water, a wheelbarrow, a planting area, dinosaurs and leaves, foam building blocks, plastic connecting pieces and ride-on trucks were provided for children's use in the outdoor area.

During the inspection, the children were observed to enjoy the free-flowing curriculum and engaged in play indoors and outdoors as they chose. When everyone was outside, two children were observed wanting to go indoors. They asked the staff if they could go inside, which was promptly facilitated, and staff then ensured they were located in areas where they could view all of the children at all times, with one staff member going inside and the remainder supervised between the outdoors and dining area. During the inspection, the children were observed to enjoy playing with board games, building magnetic toys, playing with small world materials, reading books, playing in the home play area with dolls, and engaging in outdoor play, including play with dinosaurs and leaves, playing on the slide, and playing with water.

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 was secured upon the inspector's arrival, ensuring no unauthorised person could enter the building or no child could leave the building unsupervised. Ground surfacing, both indoor and outdoor were maintained in a good state of repair with no trip hazards observed. Storage areas were inaccessible to children, and the kitchen area was cordoned off when cooking duties were being carried out. Cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children. Play equipment and resources were observed to be maintained in good condition. The children were adequately supervised throughout the inspection process. The outdoor area was surrounded by fencing and a secured gate where required, which prevents a pre-school child from gaining

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unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger, and to prevent unauthorised access to the garden or external play area. Risk assessments were completed for indoor and outdoor areas and were available for review.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

Handwashing was observed to take place after the children used the toilet and before meal times.

Thermostatically controlled warm water, hand soap, bins, and paper towels were available at each wash hand basin. The care room was well ventilated and maintained between the required temperatures of 18°C - 22°C. The service was notably well kept, with the care room and sanitary areas observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. Cleaning schedules were in place, up to date and completed by the relevant staff, which in turn was shown through the clean and hygienic presentation of the service. Tables were cleaned before and after meals. Non-perishable items were stored in the fridge. External waste bins were stored securely and were inaccessible to the children.

Outing:

Regular outings take place within the village of Nobber, for example, trips to the library and the "secret garden".

The adults explained the risk assessment process and the appropriate procedures that are in place for outings.

Written evidence with completed risk assessments were available for review.

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

(2) (a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on the premises and was stored in an accessible and conspicuous location in the dining area and was stored out of the reach of children.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A review of staff files and the staff roster for weeks beginning 23rd February 2026 demonstrated that a person trained in FAR (First Aid Response) was not available to children in attendance as follows;

Monday 8am to 9am, Tuesday 8am to 9am and Wednesday 8am to 9am. The roster for the week beginning 02 March 2026 detailed the same staff member had been rostered for the above hours, however it is

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acknowledged they were off sick that week, and the staff who replaced them had FAR(First Aid Response) in-date certificates.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The roster has been updated to ensure that there is always an educator present with FAR. More educators will be trained in FAR training in the summer of 2026, making Rosters easier to manage.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated roster demonstrating that the staff with FAR were present during full service operating hours.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 25 (1).

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 record of monthly fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 16 February 2026.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers and the smoke alarms was dated 12 September 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the premises, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 44 pre-school children attending the service on a full-time basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.