

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024CC003				
Name of Service:	Cherryblossoms Creche Kanturk				
Address of Service:	Church Street, Kanturk, Co Cork				
Eircode:	P51 F654				
Name of Registered Provider:	Christina Dunstan				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	12/01/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>44</td> <td>PM</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table>	AM	44	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51 DD5Y				
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and S O Brien				
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

N/A

Description of service

Cherryblossoms Creche Kanturk commenced operation in April 2024. The service is operating out of the old primary school building located beside the Catholic Church in Kanturk. The service can operate from 07:00 to 18:30 Monday to Friday and is currently open from 07:30 to 18:00 and can cater for up to 105 children aged between 0-6 years of age, in full day care, part-time day care and sessional care provision. The service operates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year and is registered to provide school age childcare.

The service is currently operating out of four care rooms. The service has an additional two care rooms, one which is in operation for school age and the other is a baby room which was not in use on the day of inspection. There were also two dedicated sleep rooms, with one in use currently, toilets, nappy changing rooms, an office, kitchen, a staff room and a large hall where the children can play in poor weather conditions. The pre-school service can use the hall in the mornings, and it is used by the school age care service in the afternoons.

There is an outdoor area onsite which the children have access to. This registered provider operates multiple services.

Staffing

There is a total of 28 staff employed by the service which includes the register provider. The registered provider is service based. On the day of inspection, 14 staff members were present in the service, which included 11 staff working directly with the children, 1 kitchen staff, 1 office administrator and the registered provider. Four students are currently on work placement in the service. On the day of inspection, three students were present.

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 children, registered provider 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*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the person in charge and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
- (b) The deputy was on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived and the staff roster indicated that either the registered provider or the deputy was on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that one new staff member had been employed since the previous inspection which was carried out on 08 September 2025. Five recruitment files were reviewed which included one staff member and four students.
- (a) Four of the references available were from a past employer and were validated.
- (b) One of the references available was from an alternative source and was validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were obtained and were on file for the five adults. The service was aware of the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required for any adult as they had not lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) One adult who worked directly with the early years children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The four students on work placement did not require qualifications.
- (7)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and where necessary training.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b) Five references were not available in respect of three adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

References were received and saved on file.

The service will ensure all staff files are maintained on digital format.

Supporting documentation submitted

Five references and validations received.

Photographic evidence of files for staff and students set up on digital format received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2).

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:

- Policy on healthy eating.
- Policy on managing behaviour.

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

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 of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The adult to child ratio were observed to meet the minimum requirement over the duration of the inspection. The ratio was as follows:

- The Wobbler room had 11 children being cared for by 4 staff members and 1 student in the morning and 11 children being cared for by 4 staff members in the afternoon.
- The Toddler room had nine children being cared for by three staff members and one student in the morning and nine children being cared for by three staff members in the afternoon.
- The Baby room was not in use for the duration of the inspection.
- The Full day care preschool room had 15 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the morning and 10 children being cared for by 3 staff members in the afternoon.
- The Preschool room had nine children being cared for by one staff member and one student in the morning and was closed in the afternoon.

- (8)
- (a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the 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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

One hundred and twelve minor to moderate accident and incident records were available for review since the last inspection dated 8 September 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

Two records did not contain the parent/guardian signature. This could impact the safety of the child as there was no evidence that the parents/guardians were informed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Accident and incident forms will be signed by parents.

A new system was introduced of recording accidents and incidents with instructions for use put in place for staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of signed forms.

Photographic evidence of new book in use and instructions for staff received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 16(k).

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

Basic needs:

- The service provides all meals and snacks except for the first morning snack in the two Preschool rooms. Food was facilitated for the children at regular intervals throughout the day; the mid- morning snack was observed shortly after 10:00 in the Preschool room and Full Daycare Preschool room. Lunch was observed to be served in the Wobbler Room and Toddler room at 12:30.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day in all the care rooms.
- Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development as observed in both the Wobbler and Toddler room and were assisted as required.
- Children in the Full Daycare Preschool room, Preschool room and Toddler room were observed accessing the toilet area independently, staff were available to provide assistance, if required.
- While outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately in coats and hats, with waterproof suits provided for the younger children.
- A quiet space was incorporated into the care rooms which allowed children to rest if needed. Children who wished to rest while they attended the service could avail of a couch area or floor mats.
- Sleep was facilitated throughout the day in the Wobbler room with each child's sleep needs met when they indicated the need for same and at a scheduled time in the Toddler room with the use of stackable beds.
- During discussion with staff, the inspector was informed that nappy changing was carried out at designated daily intervals and as needed. Each child's dignity and privacy were observed to be respected.
- Appropriate seating was available in the form of low-level tables and chairs in the service.

- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care rooms. An example of this was children self feeding, putting on their own coats, tidying up after play and obtaining their own lunch boxes from the refrigerator.
- Children were observed washing their hands before snack time and after nappy changing and using the toilets.
- Indoors, low-level open shelving units ensured children could freely access materials and resources from the shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based and Montessori materials were offered throughout the service, such as dolls, kitchens, chalk boards, cars, dress up costumes, puzzles and art material.
- All the care rooms in the service were observed to have outdoor play during the inspection and some rooms availed of the indoor hall also for play where children were observed driving toy cars.

Supporting relationships:

- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care rooms at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- The inspector observed an upset child to be comforted by a staff member in the hall who responded positively to the child.
- Family photos and birthday calendars were displayed on the walls in the Preschool room which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- Staff in each care room were observed to engage with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact while discussing and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example with staff assisting children with peg boards, artwork and playing with the kitchen and slides in the outdoor area. Group discussion was observed on hibernation in the Preschool room. The staff were also observed releasing bubbles and drawing pictures with chalk in the outdoor area which the children visibly enjoyed.
- Staff were observed encouraging positive behaviour. This was observed when staff encouraged children to take turns when children were using toys in the outdoor area such as the see saw and slides.
- In conversation, the staff stated that the service communicated with parents and guardians by phone, text message, email or face to face at drop off or collection.

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 door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevented the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care rooms were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children with a metal gate and concrete walls. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The blind cords were in restrictor devices.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes observed to be accessible to the children.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available in each care room for the storage of perishable foods.
- The children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams were maintained in clearly labelled storage area.

Administration of medication:

- The registered provider informed the inspector that no regular medicine was being administered to a child currently in the service and no medication was observed to be administered the day of inspection.
- Temperature reducing medicines were stored out of reach of the children and were in date.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Stagnate water was observed in the following outdoor areas:
 - On a plastic chair in the preschool outdoor area.
 - In the wobbler and toddler outdoor area, it was observed that bowls in the outdoor kitchen contained stagnant water. This posed a risk of infection as it was easily consumable by the children. It is acknowledged that when brought to the attention of the staff, the water was removed. The staff informed the inspector that a risk assessment was carried out that morning in the outdoor area, however this was not effective as the water was not removed when the risk assessment was carried out.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

The water was removed on the day of inspection. Staff were reminded to this and a poster was put up.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Photographic evidence of the poster received.

Summary Comment

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

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Fire drill records were reviewed. Evidence was available to show fire drills were practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drill was completed on 15 December 2025.
- (b) The certification of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated this was carried out on 02 April 2025. The certification of servicing for the smoke alarms indicated this was carried out on 20 December 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The services fire evacuation procedure was clearly displayed throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that adequate insurance was in place for the service. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2025 and expired on 27 March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(d) A cleaning schedule was in place at the service for the care rooms and sanitary facilities, which appeared clean.

All examined materials were maintained in good working order.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) In the Preschool room, it was observed that warm water was not available in the two children's sinks in the bathroom at one time as when one flowed the other appeared to stop. One sink is required for every 11 children and the Preschool room caters for a maximum of 12 children which requires two sinks to be available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The plumber inspected the concern and a new pump was put in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of a new water pump.

A copy of the report and invoice from the plumber received.

Photographic evidence received of flowing water from the tap.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29.

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:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the 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);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*
- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

Compliance Information

On discussion with the registered provider, no notification of incidents had occurred in the service since the last inspection which took place on 08 September 2025. The registered provider was aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a notification of incident occurring in the service.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.*

Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) The registered provider had written records of complaints made in relation to the service. The registered provider outlined that no complaint had been received since the last inspection of the service on 08 September 2025.
- (3)
- (a) The written records included the nature of the complaint and how it was dealt with.
- (b) The written records were available to the inspectors for review during the inspection.
- (4) The registered provider was aware that the written records were required to be retained for a period of two years from the date on which the complaint had been dealt with.