

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC366
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Name of Service:	Shournagh Childcare (Ballyneety)
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Address of Service:	"Ballyneety", Shournagh Road, Blarney, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T23 TY75
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Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Lyons
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue & M Burke
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).

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Description of service

Shournagh Childcare (Ballyneety) is a registered early years sessional service providing education and care to children aged from 2 to 6 years and for children attending the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE). The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08.45am and 12.00pm. The service provides a school age service and also operates multiple services.

The service is located in a rural area in Blarney, Co Cork. The service operates from a converted premise with a total of three playrooms in operation in the main building. This includes two children's sanitary and nappy changing areas and a separate staff toilet area. An additional playroom operates from a stand-alone building to the rear side of the existing building. The children have access to an enclosed, secure, spacious outdoor play area located beside the premise. The four playrooms in operation were named the green, red, blue and yellow playrooms. The green and red playrooms are located on the ground floor, and the blue room is located on the first floor. The yellow room is the new build located to the rear side of the existing building.

Staffing

There were 13 adults attached to the service on day of inspection. This included the registered provider and service manager who are not service based, person in charge, deputy person in charge, five early years educators, two Access and Inclusion model (AIM) workers and two school age only staff.

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

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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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 19, 23, 25 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

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(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 and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service. This was evident from a review of the staff roster.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, early years educators and relief early years educators.

(2) There were 13 adults attached to the service; all 13 adult files were open to inspection.

(a) Of the 26 references required, 21 validated references were available from past employers.

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(b) Of the 26 references required, 5 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 13 adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for 3 of the 13 adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the three adults.

(3) All procedures specified under 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) All nine staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the Blue room, there was 2 staff working with 10 children aged between 3 years and 2 months and 4 years and 11 months, all were attending sessional care.

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- In the Red room, there was 2 staff working with 10 children aged between 3 years and 3 months and 3 years and 9 months, all were attending sessional care.
- In the Green room, there was 1 staff working with 11 children aged between 3 years and 4 months and 3 years and 7 months, all were attending sessional care.
- In the Yellow room, there was 2 staff working with 16 children aged between 4 years and 6 months and 5 years and 1 month, all were attending sessional care.

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) Thirteen children's records were inspected and were completed in adherence to the information required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i).

Part IV – Information and Records

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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, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The records required under Regulation 16 (a) to (j) were reviewed and deemed to meet the necessary 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

Basic needs:

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- During mealtimes, a relaxed social environment was evident. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at snack time. Children were supported by staff with the opening of their snacks.
- Children had access to their water bottles throughout the day and staff regularly replenished the children's drinks as required.
- In the pre-school rooms, children were observed to be eating healthy and nutritious foods, that were portion sized to their age groups. This included a variety of food which included apples, strawberries, bananas, grapes; ham sandwiches, crackers with hummus.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it. On the day of inspection, no child was observed requiring nappy changing. Staff were observed cleaning children's faces after mealtimes.
- Good handwashing routines were evident on the day of inspection. Staff supervised children to wash their hands before snack and after playing outside.
- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills for example, putting their own coats on and staff supported children when required.
- The staff outlined to inspectors that the children in attendance did not require sleep but had access to adequate rest and quiet areas appropriate to their age group, which included a cornered off seating area for reading books and comfortable seats.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff in the playrooms were observed to be caring and kind towards the children and other adults in the room. Staff used soft tones when speaking with the children and spoke to them at child level.
- Staff were observed sitting with children during free-play and during mealtimes. Staff and children spoke about their families and activities they had completed over the weekend.
- Teamwork between staff and children was evident when the children were observed to be assisting the staff with cleaning up after snack times and putting their rubbish in the appropriate bins.
- A good relationship between the staff was seen in each of the pre-school rooms, when staff members seamlessly assisted with tasks without needing direction and were very clear about what needed to be done and how.

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- Communication with parents was via mobile application, where children's progress throughout the day was regularly sent. Parents, who did not have the application and where English was not their first language, were informed of their child's achievements with printed out photos of 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:

- Access to the main entrance door was adequately secured to restrict unauthorised access to children and prevented the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The side entrance was securely locked from the carpark with a secured high wired fence and had a magnetic electronic lock to allow for an emergency evacuation. The patio doors leading from the downstairs care rooms were unobstructed to allow for an emergency evacuation.
- The internal doors in the care rooms leading to the hallway and stairs were secured to prevent unsupervised access by children.
- Windows in each of the care rooms were safely secured with window restrictors and no blinds were fitted in the downstairs care rooms.
- The toys, art and play equipment assessed were in good condition and were stored appropriately.
- Electrical flexes were safely secured to the wall and electronic devices were secured out of reach of children.
- The outdoor space had a high wired fence with a gate lock to prevent children leaving unsupervised. The outdoor area was observed to be in good condition and well maintained. The sandpit was covered when not in use to mitigate the risk of access by rodents.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and individual cloth towels. Staff informed the inspectors that laundry was cleaned on site.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before eating and after outside play.

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- The sanitary facilities were appropriately stocked with toilet roll, nappy bags, extra nappies, soap and wipes and clean individual cloths.
- Windows in the pre-school rooms and the downstairs sanitary room were open and the rooms were well-ventilated at the time of inspection.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground on individually labelled hooks or on a shelf.
- Perishable foods were stored in a refrigerator in each care room.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff demonstrated staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire equipment was accessible to staff in the event it was required.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. An application had been made in respect of the adult, however a disclosure had not been received.
2. The children had access to cleaning materials in an unsecured press in the yellow room and the downstairs children's sanitary facility. This posed a safety risk to the children accessing these areas.

Infection control:

3. There was no foot operated bin available in the downstairs children nappy changing facility. This posed a risk of cross contamination to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. A garda vetting disclosure had been received. The service will apply for garda vetting in advance of the expiry date to ensure disclosures are received on time. This will be monitored going forward.

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2. A new safety lock has been placed on the yellow room press and downstairs children's sanitary facility. The cleaning materials have been removed and placed in an alternative press which is not accessible by children. Staff have been reminded to ensure presses are secured and cleaning materials are stored appropriately.

Infection control:

3. A new foot operated bin was placed next to the changing unit. This bin will remain in this area and monitored going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. The garda vetting disclosure was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.
2. Video and photographic evidence was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Infection control:

3. Photographic evidence was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance's identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A member of staff with current First Aid Response (FAR) training was not available to the children at all times. On discussion with the person in charge, training dates for this staff member and additional staff to be trained had been organised.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

First Aid Response training had been scheduled for staff to attend. A new staff member had been employed who had completed the training. The person in charge stated that a staff member will be sent to attend training annually to ensure a staff member is present with FAR training at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

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Evidence of the new staff member's FAR certificate and evidence of the staff training day had been forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 25 has been adequately addressed.