

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD003
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Name of Service:	ABC Minard
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Address of Service:	Knockmartin, Newtownforbes, Longford, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 NN93
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Name of Registered Provider:	Collette Brennan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	67	PM	62
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan and F. Maher.
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

ABC Minard is registered as a full day care service with a capacity for 85 pre-school children aged between 0 – 6 years. The service is open from 8:00am – 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday. The service is part of a multiple operated by an independent provider. A registered school age childcare service is also provided at the service.

The service is located in two adjacent detached premises, in the rural location of Minard close to the village of Newtown Forbes, Co. Longford. There are six care rooms, a sleep room, laundry room, a kitchen, an office and a staff room at the rear of the premises. Spacious outdoor play areas are at the rear of the premises. On the day of the inspection five of the six care rooms were operational.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. Twenty three staff are employed by the service.

On the day of the inspection, nineteen staff members were present. Fifteen, including the adult designated to provide support to the care rooms as needed were working directly with the children, the designated person in charge, the regional manager and two cook's and were also present.

All staff working directly with children hold a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well- being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance 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 (1)(a), (b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 20(1)(a), (b) – Facilities for rest and play.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a), (b) – First aid.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 29(c) – Premises.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby, Junior Toddler and Senior Toddler and ECCE 2 rooms.

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.

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Acknowledgments

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

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN 1708	25/05/2026	The entrance door to an area of the service accommodating Junior Toddler, ECCE 3 and Senior Toddler rooms was not secured to prevent unauthorised entry.
Status	Action was taken by the person in charge immediately and the door was secured. The written corrective and preventive action response submitted was reviewed and accepted.	
Improvement Notice IN 1701	25/05/2026	The environmental temperatures in the Sleep room, Baby, ECCE 2 and ECCE 3 rooms were not maintained between the required parameters despite the corrective measures put in place by the staff members.
Status	The written corrective and preventive action response submitted was reviewed and accepted.	

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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

(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)(b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that three adults had been employed since the previous inspection. The files of three staff including the registered provider were reviewed.

(2)

(a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of four adults employed whose staff files were reviewed.

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(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. 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 available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose record was reviewed.

(4) Two adults employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications whose records were reviewed.

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) There were sixty seven children attending the service and they were supervised directly by fifteen adults. This included the adult available to provide relief to the care rooms as needed.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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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-

(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

(1)(b)

The adults working with the children spoke and interacted with them to in a kind and respectful manner. Their first names were used; appropriate eye contact and gentle vocal tones were observed being used during all interactions. The adults were familiar with each child and their personality.

Freshly prepared food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. As it was a very warm day the staff ensured that the children were encouraged and reminded to drink water frequently. Young children had the opportunity to feed themselves and their drinks were within their reach throughout the day should they feel thirsty. The staff members sat with the children at mealtimes and encouraged social interaction and conversations. The staff members in the two care rooms were observed nursing young children and comforting other children who were upset.

Children's toileting and nappy changing requirements were completed regularly and promptly when required. This area of practice was managed in a sensitive and positive manner.

Needs led sleep was available for any child requiring sleep in Preschool room 1 however the children needing sleep, slept at a designated time during the day and were provided with as much time as they needed to sleep.

Older children were encouraged to be independent as they managed their personal belongings and got dressed for outdoor play assisted by adults as needed.

Transitions were well managed throughout the day by the staff members in the service. There was a predictability to the children's day, and the routine was unhurried and paced to suit the needs of the children. The children responded positively to this.

As it was a very warm day all children were given an opportunity for daily outdoor play during the morning when it was cooler. There were three areas with plenty of toys and equipment available to the children.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. Face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary and email and telephone contact are used as an alternative method of contact.

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Non-Compliance Information

1. Milk was not offered as a drink to the children at mealtimes in the ECCE 2 and Baby rooms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Milk is offered milk to the children attending ECCE 2 and Baby room. The cook will put milk on the tray alongside the dinner. All staff have been informed that milk must be given to children during meals.

Supporting documentation submitted

No submission.

Summary Comment

The written response submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 19(1)(b). This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The care rooms were equipped with age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and resources. Areas of interest were evident in the care rooms with toys and equipment grouped together and available on low level shelving accessible to the children to support child led play, choice and independence.
- (b) The rest areas in the pre-school rooms consisted of sofas, cushions and soft flooring. Comfortable seating was available in baby and Junior Toddler room for staff to sit, hold and nurse the younger children.
- Fifteen low level beds and four floor beds were available for any child aged 2 years and above wishing to avail of a period of sleep when attending the full day care service and Junior Toddler rooms transitioned into a sleep room in the afternoon for this purpose.
- One cot room was equipped with eleven standard cots to provide for the sleep needs of children less than 2 years old attending the service. Appropriate bed linen was in place for the cots and low-level beds.

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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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The outdoor area in the service was secured. Staff members in each care room advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them. The staff members were aware of the potential choking risks that grapes posed when asked by the inspectors. There was documentary evidence available that daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed by the person in charge to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Facilities were available for nappy changing. Cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be clean and tidy.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required practices when administering medication in the service. Temperature reducing medication was safely stored and available in the service. A health care plan was in place for a child requiring medicine to be given as needed.

Safe Sleep:

The staff members demonstrated knowledge of the care of sleeping children in response to questions asked by the inspector. It was observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children. This included the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care.

Fire Safety:

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Monthly fire drills had been completed, and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The internal fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 1708 served.
2. Garda vetting was available for all staff members however; one 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'.
3. The fixings which attached two slides to a wooden activity frame in the outdoor area were loose and could cause an injury to a child if they came became detached causing the frame to become unstable.

Infection Control:

4. The nappy change practices required to be reviewed as it was observed that the single use disposable apron and disposable gloves were not removed following the bagging up of the soiled nappy. Soiled nappies used aprons and used disposable gloves need to be disposed of at the same time following removal of the old nappy for best infection control practices.
5. Wipes were used to clean the children's hands in the Baby room after mealtime rather than soap and water. This posed an infection control risk as the children's hands were not adequately cleaned.
6. Soothers were observed stored in sterilisation solution rather than removed after the correct period of immersion, air dried and then placed in a clean labelled container.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Corrective action received and accepted for IAN 1708 served.
2. The Garda Vetting disclosure was received. A new check system for Garda Vetting renewals has been introduced.
3. The slides have been repaired and are very stable. A maintenance and safety checklist is now in place to check equipment.

Infection Control:

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4. We have gone through the nappy changing policies with all staff. We have asked all staff to complete a nappy change with the manager observing. Nappy changing will be spot checked on random days and at random times by the manager to ensure that the nappy changing is being completed correctly.
5. All babies wash their hands now with soap and water.
6. A new steam steriliser has been purchased, and staff will use it at the end of each day to sterilise the children's soothers.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

2. Garda Vetting disclosure document.
3. Maintenance check list.

Infection Control:

6. Photograph of steriliser unit.

Summary Comment

The written response, photographic and documentary evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*
- (a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*
 - (b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Compliance Information

- (1) One staff member present was trained in first aid response (FAR) and was immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care room.
 - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2027. The insurance provided cover for 110 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IAN 1701 served.