

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018CC507
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Name of Service:	Cherry Blossoms Kilbrin
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Address of Service:	Kilbrin National School, Kilbrin, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P51 Y223
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Name of Registered Provider:	Christina Dunstan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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Description of service

Cherry Blossoms Kilbrin is a private early years care and education service operating from a classroom in Kilbrin National School in the village of Kilbrin. This multiple service provider offers fulltime, part-time and sessional care and accommodates children aged from 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 7:00 until 18:30, 50 weeks of the year but currently operates from 7:30 to 17:30. The service facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme from 9:00 until 12:00 during term time. A school age care service is available. The service has access to one classroom, two children's and one adult sanitary facility, a nappy changing area, an entrance hallway and an outdoor play area. A dedicated kitchen area has been cordoned off within the main care room.

Staffing

There is a total of four staff employed by the service including the register provider who is not based in the service. On the day of inspection, three staff members were present in the service who were working directly with the children.

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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9: Management and recruitment, Regulation 11: Staffing levels, Regulation 15: Record of a preschool child, Regulation 19: Health, welfare and development of a preschool child, Regulation 21: Equipment and materials, Regulation 23: Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and Regulation 24: Checking in and out and record of attendance, however on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 29: Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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.

Additional Information

A referral was made to the fire officer to assess fire safety in the service. Further information is available under Regulation 23 of the report.

Acknowledgments

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

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

(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 registered provider had appointed a person in charge and a deputy.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived and facilitated the inspection process.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that one staff member's file had not been reviewed on the previous inspection. A total of one file was reviewed.
- (a) Of the two required written and validated references, two had been provided by past employers.
 - (b) Of the two required written and validated references, none had been provided from a source other than previous employers.

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- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for this staff member. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required for this one staff member.
- (4) One staff members qualifications were reviewed. The staff member held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 service maintained the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The eight children attending the service were supervised directly by three adults.
- (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 on digital application.

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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

The service had 13 early years children registered and all records were available. A sample of 10 records were reviewed. They were found to contain the required information as listed (a) through to (i).

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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-

(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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- The main hot meal was provided by the service and snacks were provided by the parents and guardians. These were observed to be healthy and nutritious. A one-week menu was posted on the reception wall outlining the variety of options each day.
- Children were observed eating a hot meal which consisted of pasta, vegetables and beef in the form of beef ragù. Children were offered extra food if they wished. Examples of snacks were filled sandwiches, fruit, yogurts, crackers, rice cakes and cheese. The service had alternative food to offer to children if needed on the day of the inspection.
- Cutlery and crockery were available in the kitchen area and provided to the children.
- A relaxed unhurried atmosphere was evident at snack time and staff interacted with the children and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care room. Examples of this were when children tidied up after play and cleaned away plates after mealtime.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of two couches and an armchair. These were located in a quiet corner that was equipped with age-appropriate books to read.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff were observed to show positive regard for the children in the care room on the day of inspection. The staff were observed to sit with the children at their level, encourage and praise them during tasks in a warm and caring manner, for example when children played with magnetic bricks, completed artwork and played with toy animals and cars.

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- Staff were observed to partake in group activities with the children through circle time, playing music and singing along to songs.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care room at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- Family photos and birthday calendars for the children were displayed on the wall in the care room promoting a sense of belonging.
- The person in charge stated that the service communicated with the parents through email and text messages or verbally at drop off or collection. Parents can request to have an individual meeting about their child if required.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service consisted of one large preschool room which was well equipped with a range of toys, materials and furniture suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service. An adequate number of low-level chairs and tables were provided for the children for indoor use. The care room had low-level open shelving units which displayed materials and resources which children could freely access. Children were observed to choose what to play with, which promoted independence and decision making.

Examples of toy items available were construction toys, toy animals, dolls, dress up costumes, toy kitchen and a shop for imaginative play. Stored boxes of categorised magnetic bricks, blocks, toys, peg boards and puzzles were available to support sensory and fine motor skills. The care room had a cosy rest area for children to relax as required. Examples of the equipment available in the outdoor area were bikes, scooters, a playhouse, a sand pit, tractors and a mud kitchen.

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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 windows were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children in the care room.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children in a locked cabinet.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and were stored safely on the shelves.
- A restrictor was in place on the blind cords.
- The outdoor area was accessible from a door in the care room of the service. It was a safe and secure space for the children with metal railings and a metal gate surrounding the area. One small area was partitioned off with timber fence. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children, and they were observed to wash their hands before eating and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Staff were observed to clean the tables prior to food time and swept the floor in the care room after snack and lunch time.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground in individually named compartments on a shelf.
- A refrigerator was available in the care room for the storage of perishable foods. On the day of inspection, perishable items were stored in the fridge before snack time.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were in use in the service for the disposal of waste.

Administration of medication:

- The staff present on the day informed the inspector that two children had prescribed medication to be administered in the case of an emergency in the service. The medication was available in the service and was in date and care plans were in place for each child.
- Temperature reducing medication was also available, in date and stored out of reach of the children.

Safe sleep:

- The air temperature of the care room was recorded at 19.5°C. The service had two stackable beds, linen and a sleep record page in relation to the children's colour, breathing and position available for use in the service. The person in charge informed the inspector that no children currently sleep in the service.

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Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction on the day of inspection.
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets were secured to the walls.
- A referral was made to the fire officer to review the securing mechanism on the fire door.

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection. The person in charge informed the inspector that the service went on one outing this year with a risk assessment completed prior to this occurring. The risk assessment was reviewed and had a number of strategies in place to mitigate identified risks to the children.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The front main entrance door was not secured; this posed a risk of unsupervised exit by a child. This practice was found to be non-compliant on the previous inspection on 8 October 2024. The corrective actions submitted following those inspections failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Infection control:

2. On the day of inspection, the staff toilet was observed to be used as a storage area and contained a children's vinyl chair, cloth cushions and pieces of timber. This posed an infection control risk.

3. The inspector noted that the outdoor sand pit was unable to be covered properly as the cover was in poor repair, posing a risk to the children from contaminants. This practice was found to be non-compliant on the previous inspection on 8 October 2024. The corrective actions submitted following those inspections failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance. It is acknowledged that the registered provider stated that they had replaced this cover since the last inspection.

General safety:

1. Hooks and eye in place were removed, and an alarm was fitted to both doors.

Infection control:

2. The items have been removed, and a sign has been put in place.
3. The outdoor sand pit has been removed, and a covered sand tray is installed instead.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence received.
2. Photographic evidence received.

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3. Photographic evidence received.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

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

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was kept in the children's check in and out book. The inspector was requested to signed in and out from the service.

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) Cleaning records were maintained by the staff on a daily tick sheet in a book. The service appeared clean on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) Thermostatically controlled hot water was not available in the both the children and adult sanitary areas on the day of inspection. Water temperatures were recorded between 14.6°C and 15.4°C.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A water heater has been installed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of a receipt for installation and photographic evidence of the water temperatures was received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29. This will be reviewed again on the next inspection.