

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020LD001
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Name of Service:	ABC Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Drinan, Ballymahon, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 RF85
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Name of Registered Provider:	Collette Brennan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	n/a
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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
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

ABC Childcare Ballymahon is a privately owned and operated early years' service. The service is registered to cater for 44 children and provides a morning sessional service for children aged between 2 – 6 years.

The premises consists of an entrance lobby, one large playroom and sanitary accommodation on the ground floor and two preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation provided on the first floor. The service has access to an enclosed outdoor area at the rear.

Some parking and set down facilities are provided.

Staffing

ABC Childcare Ltd. employs seven childcare staff. The registered provider does not work directly in the service and has employed a manager as the person in charge.

On the day of inspection there were seven adults present including the manager who was working directly with the children. The regional manager arrived after the inspection had commenced and remained for the duration of the inspection.

All adults working in the service have completed a major award 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, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

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

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

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

(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.

(c) There is a clear management structure in place in the service, and the staff members were familiar with specific roles and responsibilities of the various staff members in the service.

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that one new staff member had been employed since the previous inspection.

(2)

(a) Two written and verified past employer references one adult whose records was reviewed.

(b) Not required as all references were from past employers.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every

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three years. An in date garda vetting disclosure was available for one staff member which required renewal since the last inspection on 19 March 2025.

(d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(4) One adult working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education 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) There were thirty-four children attending the service being supervised directly by seven adults during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day of the inspection.

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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)

Children were observed to enjoy the play activities during the morning session in all care rooms and this included free play, tabletop activities, and also preparation for the upcoming graduation day in the Superstars room.

Children enjoyed a healthy lunch provided by their parents which consisted of sandwiches, crackers and cheese, fruit and yoghurt with water to drink.

Children went to the toilet independently and washed their hands supervised by staff.

Children were encouraged to be independent preparing for home time and were assisted by staff as needed.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities.

The physical and material environment of the three rooms were constructively planned, considered and presented from a child's perspective. They were well resourced with equipment, toys and resources. The indoor environments had interesting play and learning spaces which provided developmentally appropriate, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences that facilitated child led play.

The three care rooms were bright and colourful with children's artwork and family photographs displayed.

Areas of interest were evidence and included a home area, construction area, reading and library corner, mark making, arts and crafts area, puzzles, jigsaw's, magnets, blocks and bricks and sensorial area. All equipment and materials were accessible on low shelving to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. There is an open door policy, and information is shared at the drop off and collection point as the parents were collecting their children. A closed electronic messaging system was in place with parents sharing the children's daily play and work activities on a weekly basis.

The service had close engagement with the teachers in the local primary schools to support the children's transition from preschool to primary school.

The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

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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 entrance to the service was secured and the gates to the outdoor area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. There was documentary evidence available that daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed by the manager weekly 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. Nappy changing practices were consistent with the nappy change procedure for the service. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal and containment of used tissues.

Children's lunches were refrigerated on arrival at the service.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the three rooms which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition

Administration of Medication:

Medication 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 the required practice when administering medication and documentation of same in the service. Medicine was safely stored in the service. A written health care plan was in place for a child with a health condition that required additional care and /or required medication to be administered on a regular basis.

Safe Sleep:

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Comfortable rest areas were available for the children in each care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest.

Fire Safety:

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed. Fire drills were carried out and records maintained.

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

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) Staff members present was trained in 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 rooms.

(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2027. The insurance provided cover for 42 children.