

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC406
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Name of Service:	The Bessborough Centre Creche
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Address of Service:	Bessborough, Blackrock, Cork, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 EN29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dr Calem De Búrca
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Day 1 of Inspection:	10/08/2026
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Day 2 of Inspection:	11/08/2026
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No of pre-school children Day 1:	AM	42	PM	39
No of pre-school children Day 2:	AM	48	PM	48

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Building, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork, T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	Deirdre Cotter
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

The Bessborough Centre Creche is registered to offer a choice of sessional, part time, or full day care to children aged 0 to 6 years, along with school age care. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday through to Friday, over a 38-week annual period. The service is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily and operates 51 weeks of the year.

The early years service is provided from a single-storey, purpose-built premises and two adjacent buildings, on the grounds of Bessborough, in Blackrock. There are eight care rooms in total, namely; Caterpillar, Ladybird, Butterfly, Bumble Bee, Grasshopper 1, Grasshopper 2, Starling and Humming Bird rooms. Each of which is equipped with adjoining sanitary facilities. On the days of inspection, only four of these rooms were in use which were the Ladybirds, Bumblebee, Butterfly and Grasshopper 1. Three designated sleep rooms are accessible for children's use and the building also includes an office, a computer room, a staff room and staff sanitary facilities. There are two main outdoor play spaces onsite, as well as several smaller fence-enclosed outdoor play areas.

Staffing

There are 29 staff attached to this service including the registered provider who is not service based. This includes one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. Both the person in charge and the deputy person in charge are office based. There were 17 staff present on the days of inspections, 16 of whom were working directly with 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

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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.

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, 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*
- © 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,*
- © 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 had ensured that a designated person in charge and a deputy designated person in charge were assigned to the service.

(b) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived on both days and remained available throughout the inspection process.

© A clear management structure was in place in the service. Outside each care room, staff pictures were displayed along with their role and responsibilities. A room leader had been appointed in each room and was clearly identifiable, as was the Inclusion coordinator for the service.

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(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that 5 new staff had been employed since the previous inspection. All 5 of these staff work directly with the children. A total of 5 files were reviewed. In addition, it was also determined that Garda vetting for 8 staff, 7 of whom work directly with children, were due for renewal and required review. The following information was noted:

(a) From the total 10 required written and validated references, 6 had been provided by past employers.

(b) A further 4 of the required 10 written and validated references were from a source other than a past employer.

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Of the 5 new staff Garda Vetting disclosures required, all were available for review. In addition, the 8 staff whose staff files were previously reviewed at the last inspection, Garda vetting disclosures were obtained for all staff. 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) Documentary evidence was reviewed for the 5 new staff which indicated that 1 staff had lived outside of the jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years. International police vetting was available, along with a certified translation, for this staff member.

(3)

Recruitment files inspected evidenced that all vetting procedures had been carried out prior to these staff having access to children.

(4)

Records demonstrated that all 5 new staff had achieved at least a Major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7)

(a) Documentation on file confirmed that the 5 new staff were provided with sufficient training, instruction and induction in the policies and procedures of the service.

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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 examined:

- Healthy eating policy.
- Safe sleep policy.

These policies were found to contain the necessary elements to aid staff in the safe care of children.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 – Staffing levels

(8) 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)

The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

(2)

On both days of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations.

The rooms were in operation as follows:

On day 1:

- The Ladybirds room had 9 children between the ages of 1-2years being cared for by 3 adults in the morning.

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- The Ladybirds room had 8 children between the ages of 1-2years being cared for by 3 adults in the afternoon.
- The Bumblebee room had 10 children between the ages of 2-3years being cared for 3 adults in the morning and the afternoon.
- The Butterfly room had 11 children between the ages of 4-5 years being cared for by 3 adults in the morning.
- The Butterfly room had 10 children between the ages of 4-5 years being cared for by 3 adults in the afternoon.
- The Grasshopper 1 room had 12 children between the ages of 3-4 being cared for 4 adults in the morning.
- The Grasshopper 1 room had 11 children between the ages of 3-4 being cared for by 3 adults in the afternoon.

On day 2:

- The Ladybirds room had 11 children between the ages of 1-2years being cared for by 3 adults in the morning and afternoon.
- The Bumblebee room had 11 children between the ages of 2-3years being cared for 3 adults in the morning and the afternoon.
- The Butterfly room had 12 children between the ages of 4-5 years being cared for by 2 adults in the morning and afternoon.
- The Grasshopper 1 room had 14 children between the ages of 3-4 being cared for 4 adults in the morning and afternoon.

(8)

The registered provider has ensured that there was a minimum of two staff at all times on the premises. This was evidenced through the staff roster and discussion with staff on the day

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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

Basic Needs:

- Mealtime routines were observed to be social occasions, which took place in calm, unhurried environments. For example, during the mid-morning snack in the Butterfly room, the children and adults sat together and chatted freely. In the Ladybird room, the children were appropriately assisted by the adults, according to their age and stage of development.
- Nappy changing was handled sensitively, as was noted when a staff member chatted warmly to one of the children. The independent use of the toilet by the older children was observed to be positively encouraged and supported, as appropriate, by the adults.
- Sleep times were observed to be child led and staff were responsive to the children's cues of tiredness.
- As the weather on the day of the inspection was warm, staff members were observed to apply sunscreen to the children before going outdoors.
- Jugs of water and cups were brought outside when the children visited the outdoor play area. This ensured that children could freely access drinking water, while they played in a warmer environment.
- On the day of inspection, all children had the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor play space, which was noted to include a variety of play materials.

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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)

- There were adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and outdoors.
- The indoor environment of each room was laid out in defined interest areas.
- There were ample resources and equipment for each child in attendance.
- The equipment in each care room was tailored to the age group attending. For instance, in the Ladybird room, push along toys were available, while in the Butterfly room, Montessori equipment was available to the children.
- The outdoor area was also laid out with a range of developmentally appropriate toys and materials to offer stimulating and challenging opportunities for play and learning.

(b)

- Each care room was equipped with a rest area should a child need to rest during their day.
- Floor mats were available for the children over two years. In addition, there were two designated cot rooms available with 18 cots. There was also a floor bed available for a child over two who required a sleep.
- Sleep equipment was maintained in a proper state of repair.
- Cot mattresses were clean and fitted correctly in each cot and floor bed.
- A minimum space of 50cm had been spaced between each cot
- Staff were observed to physically check sleeping children every ten minutes and record these checks on a digital application.
- Sleep rooms were dimmed and not completely dark as is best practice. This allowed staff to complete sleep checks safely.
- Bed linens were clean upon inspection. It was reported to the inspector that bed linens were laundered onsite once a week, or more regularly as required.

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- Temperatures in the sleep rooms were within the required range. These temperatures were recorded at 21.7°C while children over 12 months were sleeping.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- A menu was made available to the inspector which outlined the planned meals for each day. All food was provided by the service, and the main meal of the day is brought into the service from a local supplier.
- The snacks and meals observed were suitable, adequate, and varied. On both inspection days, the mid-morning snack was yogurt and fruit. The main meal on the first day of inspection was Shepherd's pie, while the main meal on the second day of inspection was beef, potatoes and vegetables. On both days, a vegetarian option was available, along with an alternative protein source for children who did not like the meal. Extra portions were also available.
- There was a weekly menu plan available on the notice board. It was reported to the inspector that this plan was sent to parents via the digital application.
- Water was readily available to the children with snacks and between snack/lunchtime.
- It was noted that mealtimes could be amended to suit children's needs with regard to sleep and rest.
- Food was available outside of mealtimes with a supply of crackers, cereals and rice cakes observed being stored in the care rooms.
- Children's dietary and cultural needs were catered for. Food was available in different consistencies, for example, food for the younger children was available in a smoother consistency.
- Mealtimes were spread evenly throughout the day.
- Crockery was offered to children at each mealtime.

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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 main entrance had been secured, and this ensured no unauthorised entry to, or exit from, the service.
- All play equipment appeared to be in a clean state and of good repair.
- The outdoor area had been securely fenced to prevent unauthorised entry to or from the area.
- The children's bags and coats were stored safely off the floor.
- Windows in each care room had been made safe to prevent children from exiting or falling.
- Blind cords observed had been secured.
- Low level storage cupboards were secured with child proof locks.
- Heavy furniture had been anchored.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Pedal operated bins were in use throughout the service.
- Each bathroom and nappy changing area were fitted with liquid soap, paper towels and warm running water. Water was thermostatically controlled within the required ranges. Water temperatures within the service measured between 35.5°C to 38.1°C.
- Nappy changing areas were supplied with disposable gloves and aprons.
- The nappy changing areas observed were equipped with clean and intact nappy changing mats with the surrounding areas maintained in a clean condition.
- Barrier creams were individually labelled for each child who required them.
- Windows were open in the care rooms to aid natural ventilation.
- Cot mattresses were fitted with waterproof mattress protectors.
- Perishable foods were refrigerated.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff stated they were familiar with the procedure for administering medication.

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- A detailed care plan was available for one child along with an in-date adrenaline auto-injector. Staff stated they were aware of the signs and symptoms to look out for as well as the procedure to follow in the case of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

- Wall tethered firefighting equipment was available throughout.
- Fire doors observed were free from obstruction

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, one of these vetting disclosures 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'.
- A wooden platform in the outdoor area was worn and damaged in places. The area at the top of the platform had two holes with exposed wooden splinters accessible to children. This posed a risk of injury to a child.
- Holes had been dug in areas of the outdoor play area, particularly to the rear close to the trees. These posed a risk of children tripping into them while outdoors.
- The wall around the rest area in the Butterfly room was damaged with paint flaking at child height. This posed a risk of children ingesting paint flakes.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing practices were not routinely established throughout the service. For example, the inspector observed a staff member changing a nappy who did not wash their own hands or the hands of the child immediately afterwards. Children from the Bumblebee room returned from outdoor play and the staff member wiped their hands with a wet cloth without soap. The children ate their snack directly following this. Failure to correctly wash hands when required may pose a risk of infection control.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In their written response the registered provider stated:

- The required vetting application had been submitted, and a more robust system would be put in place to ensure all vetting was up to date.
- The wooden platform had been repaired, and staff had been reminded of the importance of reporting resources in need of repair.

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3. Holes had been filled in and these areas had been added to the outdoor risk assessments to be checked each morning.

4. The walls had been repaired and staff reminded of the importance of reporting areas in need of repair to management.

Infection Control:

5. Staff have been reminded of the importance of hand washing. Posters have been placed around each sink to prompt children and remind staff to do so. The service has also updated their handwashing policy and circulated to staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of the submitted garda vetting application.
2. Photographic evidence of the repaired platform.
3. Photographic evidence of the repaired areas.
4. Photographic evidence of the repaired area.

Infection Control:

5. Photographic evidence of new posters around wash hand basins along with the updated hand washing policy.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 from points 2-5 have been adequately addressed. The non-compliance in relation to point 1 remains outstanding. The registered provider is required to furnish the Inspectorate with a copy of the completed Garda vetting upon receipt.

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 the service was insured, with insurance for 144 children until 24 December 2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was full day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- The registered provider has ensured clear and adequate floor space for children to play. During the process of the inspection the following measurements were observed:
- Ladybirds room-this room was found to be 75sqm. This room was being used to care for 21 1–2-year-olds which was within the required space requirements.