

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY019
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Name of Service:	Ballinderreen Community Childcare & Education Centre
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Address of Service:	Ballinderreen, Kilcolgan, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 P3Y5
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Name of Registered Provider:	David Hardiman
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	17/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	19
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency Unit 2, First Floor, Loughrea Shopping Centre, Athenry Road, Loughrea, Co. Galway. H62 XR82
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin & F Kelly
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

Ballinderreen Community Childcare & Education Centre provides a range of services including full day, part-time and sessional care. Operating hours are from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday for 49 weeks of the year. The service operates a summer camp programme for the summer months.

The service is located in the village of Ballinderreen in south County Galway, between Kilcolgan and Kinvara. It operates from a purpose-built childcare facility which has been in operation since 2005. There are 4 care rooms, 3 of which were in operation on the day- Toddlers, ECCE 1 and ECCE 2. The Baby care room was not in use. There is a large bright reception area, an office, staffroom, kitchen and dining room. Adult and children's sanitary areas are available and outdoor play areas are accessible from the three care rooms in operation.

Staffing

There are 12 staff employed in the service, a cook and 2 relief workers. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 the child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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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.

Additional Information

The inspection was triggered from information received to the Inspectorate.

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.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN Code: 2621	17/07/2026	Police vetting was not on file for a staff member who had lived outside of the jurisdiction for longer than six months.
Status	Closed	
Improvement Notice IN Code: 2622	17/07/2026	Police vetting was not on file for a staff member who had lived outside of the jurisdiction for longer than six months.
Status	Closed on 24/08/2026 as police vetting was provided for both staff members to the inspectorate on 10/08/2026 and 19/08/2026.	

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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.*

(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.

(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;*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the manager and deputy manager were on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that there were 18 members of staff employed in the service and 1 registered provider who did not work in the service on a daily basis. On the day of inspection, 10 of these files were reviewed as the rest of the staff files were reviewed on the previous inspection dated 13/11/2025.

(2)(a) Of the required 20 written and appropriately validated references 18 were from a previous employer.

(b) Of the required 20 written and appropriately validated references 2 were from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting for staff members every three years.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were available for the four adults working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.

(4) There were eight adults working directly with children that had obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification that the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality has deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to any adults being appointed and having access to the children attending the pre-school service and may pose a risk to the children attending.

(7)(a) Through review of records and discussions with staff and the person in charge, it was evident that staff had not received appropriate documented supervision. There were no records available and the person in charge told inspectors that no formal supervision meetings had been carried out. This was at variance with the staff supervision policy which stated that all staff members must have regular, consistent and uninterrupted supervision. It was noted that the person in charge said that there was a suggestion box where staff are

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encouraged to give suggestions and identify needs. Staff consult with the management team regularly. There are annual recorded performance review meetings with all staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) will be carried out prior to any adults being appointed and having access to the children attending the pre-school service.

(7) (a) The service has mechanisms and systems to discuss practice issues and the need for additional resources and supports. Evidence of this has been supplied to the inspectorate. The documentation of the ongoing supervision given to staff will be carried out.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and documentation evidence submitted to the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative action together with the evidence submitted adequately address the non-compliances found on inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that the following policies and procedures were in place as per schedule 5 for the service.

- (a) Statement of purpose and function
- (b) Complaints policy
- (e) Policy on managing behaviour
- (j) Accident and incident policy
- (t) Staff training policy
- (u) Supervision of staff policy

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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.

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working with the children attending the preschool service.
- There were five adults working directly with children on the day of inspection. In addition, the person in charge and deputy manager provided relief cover for breaks.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Junior toddlers: Two adults cared for 9 children aged between 1 and 2 years of age.
 - ECCE/Preschool 1: Two adults cared for 9 children aged between 4 and 5 years of age.
 - ECCE 2: One adult cared for 2 children aged 5 years of age.

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

(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.

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Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

(1)(a)

- Drinking water was available on low tables in each playroom to all children throughout the day.
- The service provided all meals and snacks for the children. In the morning there was breakfast available of toast and wheat-based cereals. A snack is served mid-morning and the main meal of the day, which was turkey korma, rice and vegetables was served at 12pm. An additional hot meal was served in the afternoon.
- Care and attention were taken during mealtimes to eat at the child's pace and staff encouraged and supported children to feed themselves independently according to their age and stage of development.
- Children from ECCE/Preschool 1 room have their lunch in the service dining room. The children sit at child sized tables and chairs.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner during meal and snack times.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting practices.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in these areas for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- The children had access to the outside areas throughout the day. Children were observed to play, explore, climb and swing in the outdoor area to the rear and sides of the service. Children were mostly in the outdoor areas on the day of inspection.
- The children were wearing clothing appropriate for the weather and sunscreen was reapplied regularly.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service was operating a summer camp type programme with a variety of daily activities from baking, jewellery making, board games, arts and crafts, sensory and water play.

Supporting relationships

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways- discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating and initiating games and activities.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.

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- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times and through a bespoke childcare application.
- The childcare application showed details of sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing/toileting, special activities, accidents and incidents, medication administration, a child's likes, needs and preferences, general observations and comments.

(1)(b)

- The inspectors observed care practices carried out by staff members to be in line with policies within the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the inspection the person in charge and staff ensured that the preschool children were adequately supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments.

The adult child ratio was maintained in each playroom and in the outdoor play area. This was evidenced by the staff roster and observations by the inspectors on the day.

It was observed on the day that the staff ensured that children were supervised during sleep, mealtimes, in the playrooms, in the outdoor play area, while children used the sanitary areas and during nappy changing. The staff were observed to supervise children by sound and by sight.

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Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;

Compliance Information

(c) The person in charge did notify the agency within the required timeframe of a closure to the service due to power outage in the area.

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Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b) (c)

The service complaints policy sets out the procedures to be followed when making a complaint, the manner in which the complaint will be dealt with and the procedures for keeping the complainant up to date.

(2) (a) (b)

The person in charge informed the inspectors that there had been two written complaints made to the service in the previous two years. The complaints were dealt with in accordance with the service complaints policy.