

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE097
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Name of Service:	Chatterboxes Childcare Celbridge Ltd
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Address of Service:	Backweston Lab Campus, Stacumny Lane, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 VW2C
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Name of Registered Provider:	William McMickan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	28/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & E. Mulhern
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Chatterboxes Childcare Celbridge Ltd. opened in 2005 and is one of two private services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day, part time and sessional care for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:00, Monday to Friday. Sessional care is provided from 09:00 to 12:00.

The service operates from a purpose-built single storey premises situated within the campus of the State Laboratory close to Celbridge, Co Kildare. There are four care rooms in the service. The Baby room caters for children aged 7 months to 1 year. The Toddler room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Pre ECCE room caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. The ECCE room caters for children aged 3 to 5 years. The service also has a separate cot room. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 13 staff including a manager and a chef. There were 10 staff working directly with the children during the inspection who were supported by the manager. The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present during the inspection.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(c)(d),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,
- 11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- 19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
- 25 – First aid,
- 26 – Fire safety measures.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under regulation 8 (1),(3) – Notification of change in circumstances.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations:

- 19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby and Toddler rooms and the outdoor area.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 IN0921	28/05/2026	There was no police vetting in place for one employee who commenced working in the service on 07 October 2025.
Status	Action was taken immediately by the registered provider following service of the Notice and the registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(3)

The registered provider did not notify the Agency in advance of implementing changes to the service's registered details. The service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 43 children. On the busiest day of attendance 53 children are present.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Response letter was sent to SOORS.

We are also submitting a Change in Circumstance application to allow for extra numbers.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The Change in Circumstance application was submitted by the registered provider and is in process. The regulatory requirement has not been met at the time of publishing this report.

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,*
- (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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The inspection focused on the full recruitment records for two adults employed since the last inspection on 31 July 2024. In addition, Garda vetting for seven adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows.

(a)

Four validated, written references were available from a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for nine adults. 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 required for two staff members and was available for one staff member who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for the two staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN0921 served.

(3)

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to one adult commencing employment in the service. The adult commenced their employment on 07 October 2025. One reference was dated and validated after the adult commenced employment. A second reference was validated after the adult commenced employment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3)

The references were obtained after the employee commenced employment. Sometimes it can be difficult to make contact with a past employer or sometimes the candidate requests that we do not contact the employer in case they do not get the job. We make sure that we explain that if the candidate is offered the job, it will ultimately depend on a positive verbal reference from previous employers.

Management have been reminded to make every possible effort to validate references in advance of employing a candidate. If this is not possible for some reason, it is explained to candidates that an unverified reference will mean that the job offer will be declined.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 42 children attending the service being supervised by 11 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)

Meals were provided at regular intervals, and drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the day. Dinner was served at 11:50. Younger children were given bibs for dinnertime. Staff sat with children during their dinner and children were encouraged to feed themselves. Staff supported younger children who needed assistance with their meals. All children were given water regularly throughout the day.

Children's wet clothing was changed promptly. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. There was a designated nap time for older children attending the Baby room and the Toddler room. Younger children from the Baby room were placed to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness. Suitable cots and low-level beds were provided appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff soothing the children as needed.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. They displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Children were addressed by their name, and staff used gentle tones and praise and interacted with children in a positive manner. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection times and how they record daily information on food, sleep and nappy changes for each child.

The children moved freely, exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff throughout the inspection. Play materials and equipment were positioned at an accessible level which facilitated choice.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the side and rear of the premises and had shock absorbent surfacing. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. Children attending the Toddler room were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors during the inspection and were dressed appropriately to the weather. Staff were observed applying suncream to children before they used the outdoor area.

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 door to the service was controlled by a keypad system to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- All cables were out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the service policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were carried out and documented every 10 minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that they were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
- Two planks of wood on two wooden play structures in the outdoor area were observed to be splintered and broken in places posing a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

- Some nappy changing practices observed during the inspection were inadequate for infection control purposes and at variance with the service's nappy changing procedure as follows.
 - Staff were observed repeatedly handling the lid of the bin throughout all stages of nappy changing including after washing their hands.
 - Staff were observed handling items within the room while wearing the same gloves used for nappy changing.
 - Staff were observed applying cream to children with the same gloves used for nappy changing.
 - A staff member was observed redressing a child while wearing the same gloves used for nappy changing.
 - A staff member cleaned a child's face after they handled the lid of the bin.
- Some handwashing practices observed were inconsistent and at variance with the policy in place in the service posing a risk of the transmission of infection as follows.
 - In the Baby room children's hands were not washed before mealtimes.
 - Children's hands were not consistently washed following nappy changes.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Children in the Toddler room were observed to have their faces cleaned after meals with the same cloth posing a risk of the transmission of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- On realisation that the employees Garda Vetting was out of date, we immediately applied for her re-vetting. She sent in all the relevant details and we are waiting for the documents to be sent back to us. This employee was processed by the service before her vetting was out of date, but she forgot to reply to the Garda Vetting Bureau. Management has been asked to check the dates on the staff Garda Vetting documents to make sure they are all in date. Also follow up with staff to make sure they reply to the Bureau.
- We have contacted a carpenter to come to fix the wooden planks. Management and staff have been asked to be more vigilant if there is any equipment that needs attention.

Infection Control:

- All staff have been spoken to by management about the importance of nappy changing practices. There are procedures in place up on the wall and in our Policies and Procedures manual. Some staff members mentioned about being very nervous when they were being inspected. This is not an excuse. Management regularly speak to staff about the importance of nappy changing, however we have decided to inspect the staff more formally and get them to sign off on the nappy changing document that they understand all the procedures at least quarterly. We have seen very experienced staff getting very nervous in these situations and make mistakes, but if we do our own inspections more formally, hopefully this will be easier for them.
- Same as above but for handwashing. We have procedures in our policies, and the staff members have been asked to study these procedures again. As above with nappy changing, staff will be inspected more formally on a regular basis, so they do not forget what to do.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The staff in the Toddler Room have been spoken to about using separate cloths for face and hands and cleaning surfaces. Management will inspect on a more formal basis these practices and make sure they are done correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.
- Photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Infection Control:

- Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.
- No supporting documentation submitted.
- No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)

A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the care rooms.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a)

A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out on 20 April 2026.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were no records available to demonstrate that annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had taken place. Records available demonstrated that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had last taken place in February 2025. There were no records available to demonstrate when maintenance of the firefighting equipment had last taken place.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

Management contacted the campus immediately on realisation that these documents were going to be inspected. All these documents are kept in the main campus building and the inspections are done regularly every year. For some reason there was a delay in the campus sending us over the documents. Management have spoken to the campus manager, and we have requested that any fire safety documents are sent over to us as soon as possible so that we have them on file for inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.