

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY088
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Name of Service:	Milltown Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Lyre Road, Milltown, Killarney, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V93 A335
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Name of Registered Provider:	Robert Coffey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	06/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork, T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	J Russell and M Burke
Title:	Inspection Registration Manager and 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

Milltown Childcare Centre is located in the rural village of Milltown, Co Kerry. It is a community-based early years service in operation since 2003, providing full day, part-time and sessional services. The hours of operation are from 7.30 am until 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated for 38 weeks of the year. The ECCE scheme was not in operation at the time of inspection. The service accommodates children aged between 0 and 6 years of age and is opened 51 weeks of the year. It is also registered as a school age service.

The service operates from a purpose-built two storey building, consisting of three care rooms located on the ground floor, namely the Creche, Toddlers and Junior pre-school rooms. The office and three sleep rooms are also located on the ground floor. The first floor consists of two care rooms; Senior Pre-school one and Senior Pre-school two along with a sensory room. The care rooms on the first floor were not in operation for early years children on the day of the inspection. There are sufficient adult and child sanitary areas available along with nappy changing areas. The service has its own kitchen where the children's meals and snacks are prepared daily. There are separate outdoor play areas on the ground floor accessible from each of the care rooms and parking is located at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are 33 staff attached to the service. This included the registered provider who is not service based, the person in charge, 2 adults employed under the Community Employment Scheme (C.E.), one office administrator, one cook and one kitchen assistant. The remainder of the staff worked 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

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- 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.

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 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 IN3184	06/08/2026	Evidence of required Garda vetting was not available for one staff member who had direct access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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Improvement Notice IN3185	06/08/2026	Evidence of required International Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had direct access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

Non-Compliance Information

The service appointed a new registered provider and a new person in charge. A change in circumstance application had not been submitted to and approved by the Agency prior to this change taking effect.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge stated in their written response, a change in circumstances notification template has been devised to record the details of a change in management details in the service. In addition,

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence was submitted of a change in circumstances of management checklist template.
- Photographic evidence was submitted of a screenshot of tracking reference numbers to the Tusla change in circumstances portal for applications to register the new registered provider and new person in charge.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. Whilst the change in circumstance application for the person in charge has been completed, the change of circumstances application for the registered provider is still in process. The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 8 remains outstanding. This will be reviewed at the next 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*
- (c) 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-

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- (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 ensured that a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge was assigned to the service.

(b) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived and was available to assist throughout the inspection process.

(c) A wall display in the main reception area clearly set out the names and roles of staff members and included individual photographs. There was a clear line management structure in place, and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(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. Of the total 5 staff employed, 4 worked directly with the children and the remaining staff member was not on-site. A total of 5 files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for 17 staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review. The following information was noted:

(a) Five of the written and validated references available were from past employers.

(b) Five of the written and validated references available were from sources other than past employers.

(c) Of the 5 new staff where Garda Vetting disclosures were required, 4 were available for review. Of the 17 staff who required Garda Vetting renewal, 16 Garda vetting disclosures were available for review. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring

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services to renew Garda vetting every three years for one staff member. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report

(d) Police vetting and verified translations records were available for review for 2 staff members, who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years.

(4)
Records demonstrated that 2 of the 5 staff members 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. The remaining 3 staff members did not require qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
(c) See statutory notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN3184 served.
(d) See statutory notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN3185 served.

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,

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Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were available to the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were maintained as per the regulations.

There were three care rooms in operation on the day of the inspection: The Creche room, Toddler room and the Junior pre-school room. In addition, the school age room was in operation upstairs.

Creche room

In the morning, there were 4 staff members caring for 9 children, aged between 11 months to 2 years 6 months attending on a full-time basis. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff members caring for 9 children attending on a full-time basis.

Toddler room

In the morning, there were 3 staff members caring for 8 children, aged between 2 to 3 years attending on a full-time basis. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff members caring for 7 children attending on a full-time basis.

Junior pre-school room

In the morning, there were 4 staff members caring for 11 children, aged between 3 to 5 years attending on a full-time basis. In the afternoon, there were 4 staff members caring for 9 children attending on a full-time basis. In addition, there was 1 school age child attending.

(8)
(a) According to the staff rosters inspected, the service operated with at least two adults present during operation hours. A minimum of two adults were also on duty throughout the inspection process.

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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

(1) 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

- Breakfast, morning snack, hot lunch and afternoon snack were prepared on site by the kitchen staff in the service. The meals were observed to be healthy and nutritious. The dinner menu was posted on the reception window.
- Children were eating a hot meal which consisted of lasagne served with mashed potatoes and garlic bread. Staff offered children extra servings if they wished. In the Creche room, children were eating servings of fruit during the morning snack.
- Children were observed using appropriate cutlery and crockery in the Junior pre-school room.
- A relaxed unhurried atmosphere was evident at snack time in the Creche room. At lunchtime in the Junior pre-school room, children were observed sitting in groups of five and six happily chatting to each other, while waiting for their lunch.
- Staff interacted positively with the children during snack time and lunch time in the Creche and Junior pre-school rooms. Children in the Creche room were encouraged to self-feed and assisted as needed.
- Water was accessible to the children throughout the day. Water stations were noted to be in all care rooms and in the outdoor play areas.
- The children from the Toddler room and the Creche used outdoor play facilities. Children were observed climbing ladders, using slides and balance bikes, crawling in the tunnels and hopping between recycled tractor tyres.
- Each of the care rooms were well resourced to cater for a variety of age-appropriate activities. Examples of materials available in the Junior pre-school room were an indoor treehouse, various play areas for construction, art and a play kitchen. Stored boxes of categorised art equipment, miniature blocks, toys and puzzles to support sensory and fine motor skills were available for use.

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- Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and as required. Each child's dignity and privacy were observed to be respected with one child being changed at a time. Supervision and assistance were provided for the children who accessed the sanitary facilities.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a couch, cushions and mats in each care room. There was a quiet corner that was equipped with age-appropriate books to read in the Junior pre-school room. The Creche room had colourful decorated walls with designated areas to accommodate their different stages of development, from crawling to walking. The room was equipped with plenty of stimulating toys.

Supporting relationship

- The staff showed positive regard and care to the children in all the care rooms on the day of inspection. For example, staff comforted children who fell off their bikes or needed extra reassurances.
- During nappy changes, staff interacted calmly and warmly to infants and staff spoke to children at their level using soft calm tones.
- All care rooms 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. For example, a group of children were playing with jigsaws, while others had free play outside.
- Transitions between children's activities were seamless and it was evident that children were familiar with their daily programme of activities and routine. After lunchtime, children from the Junior pre-school room went to play outside.
- Good relationships and teamwork among staff were evident when they assisted each other with routine tasks.
- Family photos and birthday calendars for the children were displayed on the walls in all the care rooms. An inclusion area was in the Creche room, showcasing pictures of the children and their families, encouraging a sense of belonging and identity. Features of the upcoming local Puck Fair festival were noted to be celebrated in the service. For example, drawings of the goat were on display on some walls in the Junior pre-school room.
- The service communicated with parents at arrival and collections times, by email and phone calls. Staff uploaded photographs and detailed logs of their children's daily progress on the digital app.

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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 door to the service was secured upon arrival, preventing unauthorised entrance into the building.
- External doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- Windows were safely secured to prevent children from exiting.
- Blind cords in the sleep rooms were secured and not in reach of children.
- The stair covering was non-slip and in good condition.
- Indoor and outdoor toys were observed to be in good condition.
- The outdoor perimeter of the play areas was secured with high metal fencing, and each individual area was secured with metal and wooden fencing and gates with sliding bolts with padlocks.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary rooms had thermostatically controlled hot water, dispensing soap and paper towels from a dispenser.
- Handwashing was observed after toileting in the Junior pre-school room.
- Cleaning checklists in the care rooms and sanitary areas were completed and noted to be up to date.
- Staff in the Crèche nappy changing area were observed wearing disposable gloves and aprons between each nappy change and sanitising the mat and changing station after use.
- The nappy changing areas were clean and there was cleaning equipment. The nappy changing mats were intact. There was a sealed, lidded foot pedal bin used for the disposal of used nappies.
- Barrier creams and nappies were individually labelled.
- Cots were separated 50cm apart in each of the 2 sleep rooms. Each cot was fitted with clean bedlinen and waterproof mattress protectors. Bedlinen was laundered on site by the service's own laundry facilities.
- Windows in the care rooms were open to aid natural ventilation.
- Sweeping brushes and dustpans were stored off the floor areas, inaccessible to children.
- Highchairs in the baby room were in a good condition and had been fitted with safety harnesses.
- Flexes and cables were out of reach of children.

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Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was in date and stored safely out of reach of the children in the Creche and Junior & Senior pre-school rooms.

Safe Sleep:

- Adequate sleep and rest areas were provided for each care room.
- Physical sleep checks were conducted in each sleep room every 10 minutes in the Creche room. The sleep check record included information on the child's position, colour and breathing.
- Children over 15 months were observed sleeping on floor beds in Sleep room 3. A staff member remained in the room while children were sleeping.
- The sleep room was appropriately darkened to create an ambient environment to aid sleep.

Fire Safety:

- All emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- The fire evacuation signs were over the doors in each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure 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'.
2. The storage press under the washbasin was not secured in the Toddler room. It contained cleaning agents and tins of paint, which posed a safety risk to children accessing hazardous material.

Infection Control:

3. Mechanical vents in the Toddler and Junior and Senior sanitary rooms were noted to be unclean. This increased the risk of poor ventilation and posed a risk to the spread of infection. This was found non-compliant at the last inspection. The corrective action submitted following the last inspection on 25 July 2024 failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
4. Two lidded foot pedal bins were positioned on the counter near the washbasin in the Junior pre-school sanitary room. Children were using their hands to open the bins, which posed a risk to the spread of infection.
5. The toilet paper dispensing units in the sanitary rooms, serving the Toddler room and Junior pre-school room were not working properly. Children were unable to pull toilet paper from the dispensing units to

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clean themselves, as the toilet paper was entangled inside the units. This posed a risk to the spread of infection.

6. The foot pedal operated bin in the Toddler room had no lid. An exposed rubbish bin with no lid increases the risk to the spread of infection to children.

Administration of Medication:

7. Prescribed medication for children attending the service was not stored appropriately. In the Junior pre-school room, various prescribed medications, some unlabelled, were stored in a box on a shelf, with other medication. This posed a risk that staff may not be able to locate the medication easily, if a child required it.
8. A care plan was unavailable for a child in attendance who required emergency prescribed medication. Not having an updated care plan, to give guidance to staff on the administration of prescribed medication, posed a safety risk to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The person in charge stated in their written response:

1. The staff member's garda vetting has been renewed and the updated garda vetting disclosure was submitted to the Early Years Inspectors for review. In addition, a template for garda vetting checks for all staff has been devised to ensure vetting is renewed before expiry dates.
2. A child proof lock has been fitted to the storage press located under the washbasin to prevent children accessing hazardous substances.

Infection Control:

3. Staff have been instructed to include cleaning ventilation units in their cleaning schedules, and this will be monitored on a monthly basis by management.
4. The foot pedal bins have been placed on the floor near the sink, instead of the counters.
5. Toilet paper dispensers have been repaired to ensure they are working properly and a sign is displayed to remind staff to check the dispensers regularly.
6. A foot pedal bin has been purchased for the Toddler room and staff have been reminded to carry out a daily cleaning inspection to ensure waste bins are maintained properly.

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Administration of Medication:

7. A review of all prescribed medications has been completed to ensure that all medications are individually labelled and stored separately in a medication box. In addition, an inventory has been devised listing all stored medications that needs to be regularly monitored by staff and management.
8. Parents have submitted an updated care plan to the service, and staff have been given guidance on the administration of medication. In addition, a review of care plans has been scheduled for regular checks or where there is change of medical circumstances.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence was submitted of the updated garda vetting disclosure and the garda vetting reminder checklist.
2. Photographic evidence was submitted of the child lock on the storage press doors.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence was submitted of the clean ceiling and wall ventilations.
4. Photographic evidence was submitted of the relocation of the foot pedals bins.
5. Photographic evidence was submitted of the repaired toilet paper dispensers and the sign to remind staff to check the toilet tissue dispensers regularly.
6. Photographic evidence was submitted of the newly purchased waste bin for the Toddler room.

Administration of Medication:

7. Photographic evidence was submitted of the individual stored and labelled prescribed medicine.
8. Photographic evidence was submitted of the updated care plan.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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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) There were 15 staff members with First Aid Responder (FAR) certifications. Seven of the staff present on day of inspection had current First Aid Responder (FAR) certification. It was evident through examination of the staff roster that at least one of these staff members was available at all times.

(2)

(a) On the day of inspection, there were sufficiently stocked first aid boxes available in the service to cater for the children.

(b) The First Aid boxes were accessible to staff and safely stored out of reach of children in the rooms.