

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW036				
Name of Service:	Scallywags				
Address of Service:	Woodglade, Fenagh, Co. Carlow				
Eircode:	R21 C958				
Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Doyle				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	26/03/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>24</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	24	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.				
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton				
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Scallywags is a registered sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) service, which is in the village of Fenagh, in northeast county Carlow. The service operates from two outdoor classrooms at the back of a purpose-built childcare facility. The indoor building is comprised of three classrooms in the main building and a fourth classroom, located in a prefabricated building at the back of the building. While all four classrooms contain physical environments prepared for the children, the service has transitioned to operating outdoors in two designed outdoor classrooms, since 2022. The two outdoor classrooms are located at the back of the main building in the outdoor play area and have been specifically designed with a 'L' shaped overhang, which acts as a wind breaker and also provides shelter.

Staffing

There were five staff members employed in the service including the registered provider. All five staff members held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations, 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 24,25, 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 15,19,23,24.

As a result, the scope of the inspection both outdoor classrooms and the outdoor physical environment.

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 registered provider, 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*
- (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-

(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 was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The roster demonstrated that the designated person in charge and the deputy designated person in charge were both rostered to be onsite during the inspection and are onsite daily.

(c) The inspector observed that there was a clear management structure in place in the service and each staff member was aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Staff files for the five staff members, who as part of their role in the service were employed to work directly with the children, were reviewed by the inspector and the following observations found.

(a)(b) There were two validated references available in each of the staff member's files from either a past employer or reputable source in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Garda Vetting certificates were available on file for each of the five staff members.

The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or longer.

(4) Certificates of accredited qualifications were available in each staff members' files demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national framework of qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional preschool service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) The inspector observed that there was always an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.

(3) There were four qualified staff members present on the day of inspection with the 24 preschool children attending the ECCE session between the hours of 09:00 to 12:30 hours.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 preschool records available for children registered to attend the service, the inspector was assured that all particulars (a) to (i) were recorded in detail by the registered provider.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) The inspector observed that both outdoor classrooms contained appropriate interest areas as well as suitable child sized tables and chairs.

The "Cabin Outdoor Montessori" classroom and outdoor play space had a bark mulch surface and contained play equipment such as a climbing frame and slide, a crawling tunnel, sensory garden, art area, large sand pit for messy and construction play, and a wooden outdoor kitchen which was well resourced with open ended materials such as a microwave, pots, pans and cooking utensils to support children's practical life skills and imaginary play.

Outdoor seating was provided with cylindrical slices of a tree trunk around a wooden cog wheel as a table. A designated area of the outdoor area was secured for the children's pet rabbit "Robbie's" house and their two very healthy hens "Penny & Daisy", whom the children took turns daily in feeding and petting.

The inspector observed that the children's daily schedule was displayed on the wall and that there was creative and artistic work by the children displayed which correlated with the curricular topic of the week, Spring and what Spring brings- flowers and baby animals on the farm.

Children in the "Big Room Outdoor Montessori" classroom enjoyed discussing the Spring season, the weather and how the days were getting longer at circle time. The children proudly demonstrated to the inspector how they had

made a cow out of a cardboard box, painting it in the black and white typical 'Friesian' colours and had learned how to milk a cow with a four fingered glove full of water improvising as the cow's udder.

The children also eagerly told the inspector that they had planned visits from a horse and lamb to the service that morning.

The larger outdoor classroom had a soft play surface and artificial grass which helped define the interest areas inviting the children to play and explore. Areas of interest included a rest and reading area with a child sized couch and bookshelf to provide children with an area to opt out of activities and relax. Additional interest areas included an outdoor kitchen resourced with open ended play materials such as kettles, brushes, a food mixer, toaster and pots and pans to develop practical life skills and imaginary play. There was also a construction area, picnic benches, climbing frame, playhouse, ride on fire engine and bouncing frame promoted the children's physical development and social skills.

Large vinyl covered soft shapes invited the children to build a soft play area and use their imagination.

Children's individual photos and birthdays were displayed in a train of carriages.

A "Community Wall" depicting local landmarks such as the school, shop, church and prominent professional members of the community such as the local shop keeper, farmer, fireman, teacher, lorry driver, doctor and many more were displayed next to circular mirrors, where the children saw their own faces reflected, promoting the understanding of their own identity and belonging in the community.

Both classrooms had shelves which contained a variety of manipulative and connective materials, magnets, bricks, blocks, peg boards and jigsaws as well as a variety of Montessori equipment. Children had freedom of choice of what activity to choose knowing that a staff member was always close by if they need support in accomplishing the task.

All the children were observed to have appropriate warm coats, hats and footwear and had the independence to remove the outer layer if they got too warm from physical activities.

Children's snacks were stored in a fridge in the main building and at snack time brought out to the children in baskets which children took turns daily to distribute.. A table next to each of the handwash basins provided a liquid hand soap dispenser and a paper towelling dispenser box.

At approximately 12:00 hours the children had a visit from one child's family horse and another family's pet lamb. The service manager organised that the children met with the animals in two designated areas just outside the service boundary fence. Children took turns in going to pet the horse or lamb with one of the early years educators and were overheard asking questions about each animal. Children were afforded the opportunity to just observed with the rest of the class inside the boundary fence if they did not wish to pet the animals. The

children learned about how horses were measured in hands high, about baby foals, fillies, colts, mares and stallions as well as what wool from sheep is used for and learned how to bottle feed the lamb.

The inspector observed the partnership between parents, a grandparent, the staff and children in providing this wonderful experience in a safe comfortable way as well as noting that an especially well-mannered mare had been chosen to visit the children.

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 service was located at the end of a cul de sac to the left-hand side of the Woodglade residential estate. A large parking area was provided in front of the main building. The service was secured with a ten-foot-high metal wire fence. Entry to the service could only be gained by authorised entry from a staff member. A keypad security system was in place for staff members to gain entry. Parents were observed to drop and collect their children at the side metal gate entry to the service which was also secured to prevent any unauthorised person from entering the premises.

Infection Control:

There were as adequate number of toilets and handwash basins available to the children in the main building and in the prefabricated building. In each of the outdoor classrooms there was an outdoor hand wash basin with warm running water, liquid hand soap and a paper towel dispenser box. The children and staff were observed washing their hands post toileting, messy play, handling their animals, (a rabbit, chickens, visiting horse and lamb) and prior to snack times.

Children had access to face tissues for nose -blowing and were observed to be supported by staff to blow their noses into the tissues, disposing of the soiled tissue in the pedal operated bins provided and washing their hands afterwards.

The service's chickens and rabbit were housed in the two different secure areas within the smaller outdoor classroom. Cleaning schedules were in place for the maintenance and cleaning of all classrooms and for the care of the service's animal's homes.

Administration of Medication:

Staff informed the inspector that medications were generally not required to be administered in the service. However, staff were well informed of the service's administration of medication policy and the procedures to be followed if a child required anti-febrile medication or a prescribed medication while attending the service.

Fire Safety:

Monthly records of fire drills were maintained as well as annual and quarterly maintenance checks for the firefighting equipment and fire alarm were recorded. A fire assembly point was clearly signposted in the carpark and all fire exit doors in the main building were observed to be unobstructed.

Outings:

There was a suitable outings policy available in the service for staff to follow if they decided to take an outing away from the service. In general staff reported that all activities took place in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that staff checked all children in and out of the service with the individual child's name time of arrival and departure recorded daily.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that-
- (a) No unauthorised person could enter the premises without that person's entry being approved by a staff member or the registered provider.
- (b) A visitors' book was maintained recording the entry of any persons other than those referred to in paragraph 3. The inspector was requested to complete the written record upon arrival at the service, detailing the date, name, contact number, reason for entry, name of person who approved access and check in and exit times.
- (4) The inspector observed that a record of all visitors to the service had been maintained for the last two years.

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) The four staff members present in the service on the day of inspection all held current First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The registered provider ensured that there were at least two staff members accredited with FAR training, present in the service for the ECCE session while the preschool children were in attendance.
- (2)(a)(b) A first aid box was available in the service, stored in a conspicuous position in the staff room. The first aid box was observed to be adequately supplied and was always available to the staff for the children in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance certificate was displayed on the parent's notice board in the entrance hall of the main building.

The certificate detailed insurance cover for a sessional childcare service for up to 40 preschool children. The date of renewal for the insurance certificate was the 27 March 2025.