

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY293
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Name of Service:	Apple Blossom
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Address of Service:	10 Leinster Square, Rathmines, Dublin 6.
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Eircode:	D06 A500
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Name of Registered Provider:	Una Fitzgibbon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	40	PM	39
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and L. A Webster
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Apple Blossom is a full day care service located in Rathmines, Dublin 6 and is operated by Kids Inc Creches. The service is registered to care for children up to six years old from Monday to Friday between 7:45-6pm. The premises is a converted residential premises with four care rooms. The Wobbler room, a designated cot room and a kitchen is located on the basement level. The Toddler 1, Toddler 2 and Preschool room are on the first floor. A fully enclosed outdoor area is available to the children at the back of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs 21 staff to work in the service including the designated and deputy persons in charge, head office support staff member, curriculum and compliance manager, 17 early years professionals who work directly with the children 9 of which are relief staff. On the day of the inspection 14 adults were present including the designated person in charge, deputy person in charge, curriculum and compliance manager, 10 adults working directly with the children and 1 student.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 27 Supervision. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler room and Toddler 1 room.

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

This inspection was triggered as a result of information received to the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, curriculum and compliance manager, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise if required.
 - (b) A designated person in charge was available on the premises on the day of inspection for the operating hours of the service.

- (c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with management showed there are 17 new staff members since the last inspection. The full files of 1 student and 17 staff members were reviewed. In addition, garda vetting disclosures for 2 existing staff were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks.
- (a) Thirty-three written and validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Three written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for twenty adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for fifteen adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that seventeen staff members who worked directly with the children held 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) A sample review of ten staff training and supervision records and discussion with management demonstrated that staff employed in the service had:
- been provided with appropriate information and had received training on the policies and procedures in the service required under Schedule 5
 - been provided with appropriate supervision, information and training on topics including infection control, key person approach, and promoting positive behaviour. Management staff reported and demonstrated how a log is maintained of induction, training and details of staff supervision.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs. There were 11 adults caring for 40 children present on the morning of inspection.

(2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The designated person in charge and curriculum and compliance manager was available in a supernumerary capacity to assist in the care rooms as required.

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 entrance was secure when the inspectors arrived unannounced with a video doorbell in operation. Staff attended the door to allow access.
- An exit door of the care room at the basement level was adequately secured with a latch lock positioned out of children's reach and easily accessible for staff following an incident which occurred the previous week.
- Toys and resources were maintained and suitable for use.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, hygienically dispensed soap and handtowels and a foot pedal operated bin were all available in the sanitary areas to support effective hand hygiene practices.
- Openable windows in care rooms provided ventilation and allowed fresh air to circulate.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed care plan was available for a child with emergency medication.

Safe Sleep:

- No toys were observed present in cots with sleeping children supporting safe sleep practices.
- There was documentary evidence available that physical sleep checks were completed for sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Up to date attendance records were maintained; accurately reflecting the number of children present. This assists with the safe evacuation of children in the event of an emergency.
- Emergency exits were observed clear of obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A small hole in the flooring of the outdoor area posed a potential trip hazard.

Infection Control:

- Two cots observed with stained sheets were used during sleep time. This is not in line with service procedure detailing that linen is changed when visibly soiled and that all hygiene procedures and routines must be strictly adhered to. This non-compliance was observed on the previous inspection on 15 February 2024. The preventive action has not been carried out in line with the information provided to the inspectorate following the last inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The maintenance work was carried out on covering of the ground in the garden on the 3 January 2026. The outdoor area will continue to be monitored by health and safety officer. All defects will be reported to the manager who will report it to head office.

Infection Control:

- Following the inspection a meeting was carried out with staff. All staff members have been reminded about the importance of following correct procedure in relation to the use of clean linen and that linen is laundered each week or more often as necessary. The manager and deputy manager will continue to observe hygiene and infection control practices across the centre.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.
Health and safety checklist.

Infection Control:

Staff supervision form.
Safe sleep policy.
Template sleep room daily cleaning record.
Template sleep mats daily cleaning record.

Summary Comment

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

The service did not ensure adequate supervision of the children in the wobbler room on Friday 5th December when an incident which required notification to Tusla occurred. It is acknowledged that on the day of inspection staff members were observed to adequately supervise the children attending the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

An internal investigation was carried out following the incident and all HR procedures were followed and appropriate action taken.

Retraining in Health and Safety for Early Years provided to all permanent staff during December 2025 - January 2026.

An external safety review was conducted by a childcare consultancy company. This review focused specifically on access and egress arrangements within the centre following the incident. The audit confirmed that safeguarding measures were now in place.

Internal access and egress reviews are ongoing as a part of the Health Safety checks carried out by Health and Safety Officer and reviewed by manager weekly.

Management team continuous to monitor daily practices to ensure compliance with TUSLA regulations.

Supporting documentation submitted

Training tracker.

Health and Safety checklist.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been addressed.

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:

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

(e) The registered provider ensured that the procedure specified under Regulation 31 was completed within 3 working days regarding a recent notifiable incident.

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

The registered provider ensured the following:

(1) There was a complaints policy maintained which outlined the following:

- (a) The procedures to be followed when making a complaint.
- (b) The way complaints would be dealt with.
- (c) The procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.

(2)

- (a) The registered provider ensured a mechanism was in place to maintain a record of any complaints received.
- (b) A sample of records were reviewed dating back to August 2025. This demonstrated complaints were managed in line with service policy.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School