

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL264
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Name of Service:	Scope to Grow
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Address of Service:	Castleknock Rise, Laurel Lodge, Dublin 15
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Hinkson
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	07/08/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson
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

Scope to Grow is located in a residential area of Dublin 15 and provides full day care to a maximum of 56 children aged 0 – 6 years from 07:30am – 06:00pm, Monday to Friday. The service comprises of 6 care rooms, on the day of inspection, four care room were in use; the Nursery, catering for children from 11 months to 2 years, the Toddler room, catering for children aged 2 – 3 years, Preschool 2 which was in use by school aged children aged 5 – 6 years and Preschool 4, catering for children aged 3 – 4 years. On the day of inspection, Preschool 1 and Preschool 3 were not in use.

There are two cot rooms, located off the Nursery room, a kitchen, an office, a staff room and sanitary accommodation on the premises as well as two fully enclosed outdoor play areas to the front of the building. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme, providing morning sessions from 09:00am – 12:00pm, 38 weeks of the year and is registered to provide school age care.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs thirteen adults to work in the service to include the manager, the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, nine early years practitioners to work directly with the children and a chef, who also provides support in the care rooms when required.

On the day of inspection, the deputy person in charge, six early years practitioners and the chef were present when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service. The manager and person in charge arrived at approximately 10:25am and remained in the service for the remainder of 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

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 9(1)(2)(3)(4) Recruitment and Management, Regulation 16(1)(j)(k) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service, Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. Regulation 11 was inspected in all rooms that were in use on the day of inspection. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Nursery and the Toddler 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, the person in charge, the deputy 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.

(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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The person in charge and deputy person in charge were rostered to be present at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on and when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

- (2) The full staff files of five adults employed to work in the service since the previous inspection, dated 19 February 2024, were reviewed along with the Garda vetting disclosures of eight staff members whose files were reviewed on the last inspection.
- (a) Three written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Seven written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the thirteen adults employed in the service. 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 two adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to five adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the four adults 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) Documentation was not available to demonstrate that one adult who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. It is acknowledged that documentation was on file, however, it could not be established that this was an approved qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (4) The staff member has successfully completed the first year of a level 8 degree course and has applied for qualification recognition. The staff member has returned to full time education and is not currently working in the service. Management will ensure that all staff files are complete with the correct documentation for each employee including qualification recognition if required.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (4) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9.

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) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection. There were seven adults caring for thirty-five children throughout the day of the inspection. In addition, the manager, the person in charge and the chef were available to provide support in a supernumerary capacity where required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff members were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) Twelve medication administration records were available for review, and all information was completed in full.

(3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(k) A sample of twelve accident and incident records were reviewed. Seven of the fifteen records did not include the following information:

- One record did not include the parent's and manager's signature.
- Six records did not include the date that a parent signed the form.
- One record did not include the date that a manager signed the form.

A full record in writing is required in order to prevent any miscommunication around incidents involving children which could potentially hamper appropriate care following an injury.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (k) All staff have been retrained on the accident and incident policy and procedures, emphasising the requirement to obtain dated signatures from both parents and a manager in the accident/incident book. Staff were also instructed to ensure signatures are recorded on all three pages for complete record-keeping. Management will perform regular checks to verify that signatures and dates are correctly recorded on all copies of the accident/incident report.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (k) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 16.

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) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:
- Staff members engaged in positive interactions with each other and the children on the day of the inspection. Staff members used soft tones, giving subtle reminders and offering support during transitions between activities, toileting and mealtimes.
 - The children were supported to follow their own interests. Decision making was encouraged by staff members who were observed to join the children in play while actively supervising and guiding them throughout the day.

- Mealtimes were observed to be a sociable and pleasant event, with staff members sitting alongside the children, engaging in meaningful conversations and offering support and encouragement to the children. Additional portions of food were available if required.
- Staff members were attentive to the sleep needs of the children. During sleep time, the blinds were closed and soft music played in the background, creating a relaxing environment for sleeping children.
- Appropriate and respectful nappy changing procedures were observed on the day of inspection. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by staff.

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 leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A buzzer system was in place which was managed and monitored by staff members.
- Flexes and cords were secured safely out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Soap, dispensed hand towels and toilet roll were available in the sanitary areas.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to ensure the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The windows were observed to be open to allow for circulation of fresh air in the care rooms.
- Cots and stackable beds were observed to be in good condition and positioned 50cm apart. All cots had waterproof mattress covers.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored safely out of reach of the children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed to physically check and record the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes.

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years old in care rooms and between 16-20°C for children under one years old in the cot rooms.
- Detailed and comprehensive risk assessments were carried out in cooperation with parents for children under two years of age who were observed to sleep on floor beds.
- Appropriate bed linen was in use for sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed on the day of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Cleaning products were observed to be stored in a low-level press in the Toddler room sanitary accommodation, accessible to the children. It is acknowledged that the cleaning products were moved to a high shelf when the inspector brought this to the attention of the staff.
2. The door on a low-level press in the Nursery sanitary accommodation was observed to be broken, posing a potential risk of injury to the children.
3. Child-proof locks on low level presses in the Nursery sanitary accommodation were observed to be broken and not in use on the day of inspection. Items such as plastic zip lock bags, which stored children's spare clothes, were accessible and posed a potential risk to the children's safety.

Infection Control:

4. The water temperatures in the Nursery and Toddler sanitary accommodations were not conducive to promote effective hand washing. On the day of the inspection, the water temperatures measured as follows:

Nursery sanitary accommodation	21.7°C
Toddler room sanitary accommodation – WHB 1	19.1°C
Toddler room sanitary accommodation – WHB 2	19.1°C
Toddler room sanitary accommodation – WHB 3	20.3°C

5. The skirting boards in the Toddler room sanitary accommodation were observed to have a build-up of dirt, increasing the risk of cross contamination. Cleaning records were not completed for the week of the inspection, dated 4 - 8 August 2025.

Safe Sleep:

- Comforters were observed to be in the cots with two sleeping children. This posed a potential risk that the comforter could cover a child's face and cause overheating or restrict their breathing. This is not in line with safe sleep guidance or the service's policy which states that toys will be removed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- All cleaning products in the toddler room are now stored safely and are not accessible to children. Signs have been placed in all care rooms to remind staff to store cleaning products correctly. Management will carry out regular physical checks in all care rooms to ensure all cleaning items are correctly stored and secure out of the reach of children.
- The door in the nursery sanitary accommodation has been fixed. Management will ensure that regular risk assessments are conducted to verify that all building fixtures are safe and promptly repaired when necessary.
- Child proof locks have been replaced in the Nursery sanitary accommodation. Management will ensure that regular risk assessments are conducted to verify that all building fixtures are safe and promptly repaired when necessary.

Infection Control:

- All taps in the service were tested and the temperature was adjusted to ensure water for handwashing is at a safe, warm temperature while not exceeding 43 °C. All staff were retrained on the service's Infection Control Policy. Management will ensure water temperature checks are conducted at regular intervals throughout the day.
- The skirting boards have been thoroughly cleaned to remove all dust and debris. All staff have received retraining on the infection control policy to ensure proper cleaning of skirting boards and consistent completion of the daily cleaning record forms. Management will conduct a weekly audit of the cleaning records and a visual inspection of all rooms to ensure the cleaning schedule is being adhered to and standards are being maintained.

Safe Sleep:

- All staff have been retrained on the safe sleep policy, with a specific focus on the items permitted in cots and the importance of maintaining a clear cot environment. Management will conduct daily checks on the physical sleeping environment to ensure adherence to the clear cot protocol.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
2. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
3. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Infection Control:

4. Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
5. Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

6. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for three staff members and their rostered attendance in the service. In addition, four staff members held in-date paediatric first aid training.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises.
 - (b) First aid boxes were available for the children in attendance in the event of an emergency.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated and staff members reported that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 10 July 2025.
 - (b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment in March 2025 and the smoke alarms on 16 December 2024.
- (2)
- (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency 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 registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 27 March 2026.