

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015LD010 | | | | |
| Name of Service: | Scallywags | | | | |
| Address of Service: | Silver Birches, Stonepark, Longford, Co. Longford | | | | |
| Eircode: | N39 EW44 | | | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Anne Igoe, Bernie McLoughlin | | | | |
| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional | | | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 22 September 2025 | | | | |
| No of pre-school children: | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>35</td> <td>PM</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </table> | AM | 35 | PM | 20 |
| AM | 35 | PM | 20 | | |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC. | | | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | Therese Duignan | | | | |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable. |
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Description of service

Scallywags is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional services to children aged from 1 to 6 years of age. The service opens from 8:30am to 18:00 hours with sessional services provided from 9:30am - 12:30 hours. The service is registered to provide school aged care. There are four care-rooms, a kitchen, office, staff room and sanitary facilities in the premises that was purpose built for the provision of childcare services. The children have access to a number of enclosed outdoor play areas with play equipment and planting areas to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered providers work in the service daily. Nine staff including the registered providers work in the service. The staff working directly with children hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent qualification.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under.

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1)(2)(8)(a) – Staffing Levels.

- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 (1) (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the ECCE room 2, ECCE room 3 and Playroom.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

The files of nine staff including the registered providers were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of nine adults employed whose staff files were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for nine adults working 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) Not applicable, as no adult had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(4) Eight adults employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) There was no documentary evidence available that one adult employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) An application has been submitted to Department of Children, Disability and Equality for qualification equivalent recognition on the 10/10/2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

(4) Evidence of application.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered providers has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is not met for Regulation 9(4) as the application process is ongoing. The outcome of the qualification equivalence recognition must be submitted to the inspector once processed. This Regulation will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

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

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1) There were thirty-five children attending the service and they were supervised directly by eight adults. This included the adult available to provide relief to the care rooms as needed.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- The individual sleep needs of some children in the Playroom were not promptly responded to on the day of the inspection as evidenced by the following observations.
 - The staff members did not recognise the signs of tiredness that the children were displaying which included crying and falling asleep in the staff members arms.
 - At 12:07 two children were observed asleep in a bouncer and a buggy rather than in cots which were available. Sleep observations were not maintained.
- In the Playroom, the transition during the period of lunch time, nappy changing and preparing children for sleep was observed to be disorganised and pressurised as evidenced by the following observations:
 - some children were still eating their lunch, some children had finished lunch and were playing, a staff member commenced tidying and cleaning of tables, some children were observed to be crying and were being carried by staff while they waited for their nappy change and the sleep room to be prepared, nappy changing had commenced.
 - The noise level was raised in the room.
 - Two young children were observed self-feeding finger food while not being under the direct observation of a member of staff in case they choked or inhaled a piece of finger food.
 - A preschool child was observed lying in a bouncer self-feeding a bottle milk. A staff member was requested by inspector to sit and nurse the child while feeding to ensure the child's safety.

3. There was no armchair in the Playroom for staff members to sit with children who may require nurturing or comforting.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1. Following the feedback meeting with inspector room leaders were immediately spoken to regarding the importance of ensuring all children were given the opportunity for sleep in their cots even if they only need a short nap and not in buggy or bouncer. A staff meeting was then held where we reviewed our sleep policy to ensure that everybody was up to speed with it and an emphasis on the importance of sleep for children, signs of tiredness and the non-use of bouncers/buggies for sleep. We will ensure our sleep policy is up to date, understood by all staff members and carried out correctly through supervision by management.
2. The dinners in the Playroom are now staggered with the youngest children been fed first ensuring that they are supervised at all times. Foods such as fish fingers are now chopped finely and mashed into the youngest children's dinners. The older children continue with their activities/play with other staff members and then have their dinner in a relaxed environment. Clean up does not start until all children have eaten. Cots are made up first thing in the morning. An armchair has been added to the room. At the staff meeting all staff received training on the correct bottle-feeding procedure. We have reviewed our settling in policy to ensure that children are settled in on an individual basis.
3. An armchair has been added to the Playroom.

Supporting documentation submitted.

1. Sleep Policy attached.
2. Updated Bottle Safety policy attached.
3. Photograph of armchair.

Summary Comment

The written response, documentary and photographic evidence submitted by the registered providers has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 19(1)(b). This area of practice will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service.

During conversations with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately removed or cut the food into smaller pieces. The staff members also advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the toys and equipment in the indoor environment and the safe storage of cleaning agents which were placed out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Facilities were available for nappy changing. Cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be clean and tidy. Children's snacks containing perishable foods were stored in the fridge on arrival to the premises.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required practices when administering medication in the service. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if required.

Safe Sleep:

Six cots and four low level beds were available for children who required sleep. The staff members demonstrated knowledge of the care practices required for sleeping children in response to questions asked by the inspector. It was observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children. This included the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care.

A rest area was available for the children in each care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The internal fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was no documentary evidence available that daily indoor room and outdoor environmental risk assessments were completed to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff.

Fire Safety:

2. The firefighting equipment was not serviced yearly as the maintenance record for firefighting equipment was dated May 2024.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The risk assessment policy now in place as well as daily risk checklist for each room and outdoor areas. Management will ensure risk assessments are carried out for each room and outdoor area everyday

Fire Safety:

2. The fire equipment has been serviced in October 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Risk assessment Policy and checklist attached.

Fire Safety:

2. Photographs of service record.

Summary Comment

The written response, documentary and photographic evidence submitted by the registered providers has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for Regulation 23

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (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)(a) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a)(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors' visit to the service was documented in the visitor's book on arrival.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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) Staff members present were trained in in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care rooms inspected. Further supplies were stored in the office on the ground floor.
 - (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 16 September 2025.
 - (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was services in May 2024, and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 14 August 2025.

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

The children were observed being supervised during the inspection by the adults caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, while using the sanitary area, on the stairs, during transitions to the outdoors and in the outdoor area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 45 children.