

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK152
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Name of Service:	Silver Apples Creche
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Address of Service:	University of Limerick, Castletroy, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 X920
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Name of Registered Provider:	Oliver Moloney
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/05/2026
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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, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne and J Ryan
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This full day service is located on the grounds of the University of Limerick.

The opening hours are from 08:30 – 18:00 hours, Monday – Friday for 51 weeks of the year.

It caters for children from zero to six years of age. The premises is a single storey purpose built childcare facility. It has 4 playrooms in operation, a multipurpose room, two dedicated sleep rooms, a kitchen, nappy changing and sanitary facilities for children and adults, an office and outdoor play areas to the back of the premises.

Staffing

There were 18 staff members documented on the staff roster.

On the day there were 17 staff members present including the registered provider, the person in administration and the cook.

There were 13 staff members working directly with the preschool children across 4 playrooms who had a childcare qualification. One additional staff was available to assist in the playrooms as required.

The registered provider works in the service each day and is available to cover for breaks and office work.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 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,*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 who was available on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.

(2) There were three new staff members employed since the last inspection dated the 16th of September 2025. The complete files of each of the new staff member were reviewed and the Garda vetting only for all the other staff members was reviewed.

(a) There were 4 written and verified references from past employers on file.

(b) There were 2 written and verified references from sources other than past employers on file.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of 18 staff members (staff roster) working in the service. Garda vetting for 17 of the 18 staff members was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from Jan 01/01/2024. Please refer to Regulation 23 for further details.

(d) Police vetting was on file for the 3 new staff members that had lived outside the jurisdiction.

(4) There were 13 staff members including the registered provider working with the children who held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff members were working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 12 staff working across 4 care rooms with 40 preschool children present in the morning and 8 staff members caring for 39 preschool children present in the afternoon.

During the period of inspection, the minimum ratio of staff to children was maintained and an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children in each care room.

1. Baby room – There were 9 babies (0-18mts) and 3 staff.

2. Toddlers room – There were 7 toddlers (1-2yrs) and 2 staff.

3. Senior preschool room – There were 15 children(3-5yrs) and 4 staff.

4. Junior Preschool room - There were 9 children(3-4yrs) and 3 staff.

The registered provider and the supervisor were available to relief staff for meal breaks and office management.

One additional staff member studying for a childcare qualification was available to assist where required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)(a) Relationships:

The service uses a child centred approach creating an inclusive and diverse learning environment where each child has equal opportunity by a variety of means. Routines, experiences, materials and activities within the service reflect diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, family structure, language, culture and additional needs in a positive way which help children to learn and become aware of and be respectful of differences.

A key person was assigned to each child to support children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with the adults. Staff were observed to be actively involved in the children's play where appropriate. The staff created a positive atmosphere by having frequent conversations, many moments of laughter and showing affection. The staff used soft tones of voice, the child's individual name and got down to their level and making eye contact when talking with the children.

The children and staff were observed in outdoors play environment for long periods throughout the day enjoying the opportunities for fresh air, physical exercise and play, discovery, exploring, engaging and experimenting with nature.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The sleep and rest facilities and equipment provided by the service were suitable for the ages, development and individual needs of the children using the service.

The sleep rooms were quiet and restful away from activity and noise.

The standard cots and mattresses were in good condition and had the recognised safety standards.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for 18 staff members working in the service.

However, vetting disclosure for 1 staff member 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'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated in the Corrective & Preventive Action form (CAPA) the following:

General Safety:

The service has submitted a new application to update the expired Garda vetting for the 1 staff member. The service will review all existing Garda vetting on file and establish detailed chart outlining vetting renewal dates.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

This remains outstanding until a copy of the Garda vetting for the 1 staff member has been submitted to the Early Years for review.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d) In the outdoor area work remains outstanding since the last inspections dated the 16th of September 2025 and the 5th of March 2026 and actions as stated by the registered provider to address them have not taken place.

- The section of the roof where the leak occurred has been replaced however the additional work on the internal ceiling and walls remains outstanding. The ceiling and walls in the Toddler playroom were stained and damaged due to a leak in the roof.
- In the outdoor area the maintenance work and the painting of the fence and wooden structures remains outstanding.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated in the Corrective & Preventive Action form (CAPA) the following:

Outdoor area work has commenced and will be completed before July 31st.
The ceiling and walls in the Toddler playroom stained and damaged due to leak in roof:-
The service has obtained a commitment from the Maintenance Department in the University that this work will be carried out and completed during the closure period first two of August.

The service will endeavour to continue with regular maintenance and upkeep.

Supporting documentation submitted

None

Summary Comment

These points (d) remains outstanding until confirmation that the outstanding works on the outside and internal areas have been completed.