

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WH023			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Scallywags Childcare Centre			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Garrycastle, Athlone, Co. Westmeath			
<b>Eircode:</b>	N37 NP29			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Keaney, Shelley Welton			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	05/06/2025			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	33	PM	32
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Shane Faherty and Fiona Joyce			
<b>Title:</b>	Inspection and Registration Manager and National Inspection Manager			
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>				
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).				
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	NA			

### Description of service

This privately owned full day service is located in a dormer bungalow style building in the residential area of Garrycastle in town of Athlone. Downstairs there are three care rooms; the baby room, the wobbler room and the toddler room, and one sleep room. The wobbler room also serves as a sleep room. Upstairs are two care rooms; the junior preschool room and the senior preschool room. There is a large outdoor play area to the rear of the building with a range of outdoor toys and play equipment.

### Staffing

There are eight staff employed in the service, including the two registered proprietors, caring for a maximum of 40 children. One of the registered proprietors is available as a floating staff member while the other works in the kitchen but is also available as a relief staff member.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations  
9(1)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment

11(1)(2) Staffing Levels

19 (1)(2)(3) Health Welfare and Development of Child

23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

28 Insurance

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child And Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler and Senior Preschool rooms.

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(s) wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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)(b)(c) They were clear management structures in place. Both registered providers work in the service and were observed to undertake management responsibilities in addition to providing relief to staff as required.

(2)(a)(b) All staff had written validated references form a previous employer or other reputable source as appropriate.

(2)(c) All staff had Garda vetting, however, one staff member's Garda vetting was not updated within the three year timeframe required by Tusla's regulatory notice. See noncompliance under Regulation 23.

(2)(d) No member of staff had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All required processes had been completed before the staff member commenced employment.

(4) All staff 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.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were at all times an adequate number of adults working with children in the service.

(2)(4) The minimum ratios were met at all times. There were eight staff working with 33 children, including the registered providers who provided cover as required.

### 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.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

Appropriate care practices were observed at all times in the early years service. Staff interacted in a caring and respectful manner with children and provided comfort and support as required. Staff knew children well and were able to discuss their interests, pets, parents' professions etc. with them easily.

Children were engaged in a range of activities throughout the day and practised a variety of arts and crafts and participated in story time. There were a wide variety of age-appropriate toys available to children and during free play time they were observed to utilise these.

Children's art work was displayed on walls, as were family photos and birthdays.

Transitions were well managed with staff informing children appropriately of all transitions. Children demonstrated independence in tidying up and, hand washing etc.

Children were provided with meals cooked on site by the registered proprietor and expressed appreciation and enjoyment of the food provided, both verbally and by their enthusiastic consumption of it.

In the junior preschool room there was a mesh basket with a caterpillar in it and in the senior preschool room there was a cage with four young chickens. Children were able to discuss the life cycle of these animals and showed interest and engagement in animals and nature.

### 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 premises was well maintained and no risk items were identified.

##### Infection Control:

The premises was clean and good hygiene practises were observed. Nappy changing was carried out in a hygienic manner and children washed their hands as appropriate.

##### Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection and no child had a medication requirement.

##### Safe Sleep:

Staff remained in the sleep room while children were sleeping and carried out regular checks.

##### Fire Safety:

Fire exits were unobstructed.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

One staff member's Garda vetting was not renewed within the required three-year timeframe as per Tusla's regulatory notice.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

Applied for and received Garda Vetting for staff member. Will be keeping a close eye on Garda Vetting expiry dates and will apply for renewal in good time going forward.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### General Safety:

Copy of Garda vetting submitted

## Summary Comment

Following submission of this CAPA, the service has met the regulatory requirement.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

The service had an insurance certificate demonstrating that it was appropriately insured.