

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015DR068 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Once Upon A time Nursery & Montessori |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Harbour Square, Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | A96 T6N6 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 19/05/2025 |
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| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 70 | PM | 70 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | 1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | Sarah Quigley & Olivia Quill  |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | 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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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not applicable |
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### Description of service

Once Upon a Time Dun Laoighre is a large full day care service located in an urban area of Dun Laoighre South County Dublin. Care and education are provided to children aged between 1 and 6 years and the service currently operates from Monday to Friday between 07:30 - 18:30pm.

The service is purpose built and located on the ground floor of a multi-purpose apartment complex. Care is provided across six rooms, and a dedicated sleep room is available. An outdoor play area is available to the children to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The service currently employs twenty staff members, not including the registered provider who does not work directly in the service. On the day of inspection, seventeen of these adults were present, sixteen of whom worked directly with the children and one adult who is employed to carry out domestic duties in the centre. The operations, training, and area manager were also present in the service during the inspection and worked directly in the care rooms with the children during 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler One, Wobbler Two, Toddler One, and Toddler Two 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the centre managers, auxiliary managers, 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.*

*(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

(2)

Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that twelve adults commenced working in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The following records were available for the twelve adults:

(a) (b) There were two references each available for the twelve adults which had been appropriately verified.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the twelve adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all adults.

(d) Twelve of the new employees required International Police vetting, the required documentation was available for the twelve adults.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures detailed above in paragraph (2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing employment in the service.

(4) Four of the adults held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One of the adults did not require a qualification as they were engaged in a work placement program. Seven of the adults who did not hold a recognised qualification held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were not working directly with the pre-school children attending the Montessori room on the morning of inspection as the minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained at all times, as outlined below under (2). It is acknowledged that once this was brought to the attention of the operations manager, an additional staff member was placed into the Montessori room.

(2)

The registered provider did not ensure that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service throughout the day of inspection as follows:

- Staff members confirmed that the service currently provides full day care only. An insufficient number of adults were available to the children who were all attending on a full day care basis in the Montessori on the day of inspection. From 10:18am to 11:15am, two adults were observed caring for twenty-one children aged three to four years. The required minimum adult to child ratio is 1:8.

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

##### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

Another staff member was immediately directed to the Montessori room to work and continued to work there with two other staff members for the day.

All management and staff have been retrained to ensure the correct ratios are met at all times throughout the day and that sessional ratios are not used anymore as the service provides full day care only.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation was submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The regulatory requirement has been met.

**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**

Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed to be in place. Meals and snacks were offered to the children regularly throughout the day. Self-feeding was promoted in younger care rooms and staff assisted children where required. Staff supported the children in managing their personal care, cleaning faces and hands as required. Children's nappies were changed routinely and as needed. Staff spoke to the children in gentle, positive tones and children were comforted promptly if they became upset.

Children were all given the opportunity to play outside. An area with matting and cushions was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. Babies were placed to sleep in line with individual care needs and younger children were provided with the opportunity to sleep at a designated time after lunch.

### 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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff, and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

##### General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised. There were no hazards identified in the indoor or outdoor play environments.

##### Infection Control:

Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste. Staff were observed to have good hand hygiene and supported children to wash hands at appropriate times. Cleaning schedules were in place and the care rooms were observed to be clean.

##### Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required. Care plans were in place for children who required regular or emergency medication, and staff were familiar with these plans.

##### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and placed babies on their backs to sleep. Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated sleep room and the younger care rooms, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.