

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR117
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Name of Service:	Oakmount Creche Ltd
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Address of Service:	UCD Campus, Belfield, Dublin 4
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Eircode:	D04 EW81
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Kinsella
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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	82	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland, R Duff
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Oakmount Creche is a private service located on the grounds of University College Dublin, Belfield Dublin 4. The service operates from a purpose-built single storey building and comprises of nine care rooms. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 7.45am to 6.15pm and a full day care service is provided for children aged 0 to 6 years. The service has a large outdoor play area at the rear of the building which has been subdivided to accommodate different age-groups of children.

Staffing

There are 36 adults currently employed in the service, including the registered provider, assistant manager and a cook. On the day of inspection there were 26 adults caring for 82 children. The registered provider does not work directly with the children and was present for the duration 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, safety and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9 (1) (a-c) (2) (a-d) and (4) Management and Recruitment
11(1), (2) Staffing levels

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19(1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

25(1), (2) (a, b) First aid

26(1) (a, b), (2)(c), (4) Fire safety measures

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child and 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Rainbow room, Caterpillar room, Butterfly room, Montessori 1 and Busy Bees.

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

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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 three named persons to deputise as needed.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. A review of the staff roster showed that a designated person is on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

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Following review of documentation, it was confirmed that twenty-five adults had commenced employment in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 7 November 2022. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these adults as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for all adults employed to work in the service.

- (2)
- (a) Thirty-eight written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Twelve written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 36 adults. 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 in respect of 24 adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than 6 months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the 25 adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the 25 adults who work 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, a letter of eligibility to practice or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

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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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
There were 26 adults available to 82 children.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained for the duration of the inspection in accordance with the children's ages and type of service delivered.

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)

During the inspection a warm welcoming atmosphere was observed in the service. Staff reported that parents of babies under the age of one provided meals and bottles and the service provides breakfast, snacks, a hot dinner and tea for older children. On the day of inspection the children were provided with chilli con carne for their dinner. Younger children were provided with bibs to protect their clothing during mealtimes and self-feeding was encouraged with staff offering support where needed. Mealtimes were observed to be a calm, unhurried and social experience. Children engaged with staff who sat alongside them and staff held and engaged with babies during bottle feeding. Additional portions of food were available for children requesting more and staff reported that alternatives such as fruit, cheese and crackers were available if a child chose not to eat their meal. Drinking

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water was accessible at all times during the inspection and staff were observed to offer drinks during mealtimes and outdoor play. Children were encouraged to develop self-care skills suitable to their age and stage of development. For example, cleaning their faces after meals, hand washing before meals, after toileting and nappy changing and following outdoor play. Nappy changing was carried out both on schedule and as needed, with staff using this time to engage warmly with the children.

Babies were placed to sleep according to their individual needs, while older children slept at a designated time after dinner. Staff reported that opportunities were available for children to sleep outside of these times should they display signs of tiredness. Comfortable spaces with rugs and cushions were available in the care rooms for children to take a break from activities. All children had the opportunity to spend time outdoors during the inspection and staff were observed to encourage children to wear sunhats during this time. Staff used verbal cues to let children know a change in activity was approaching and transitions were observed to be smooth and unhurried. Play was led by children's interests with staff responding and joining in as appropriate.

Adult child interactions were observed to be warm, respectful and playful. Staff positioned themselves at children's level and engaged in meaningful conversations. The inspectors observed that parents were provided with opportunities to discuss information about their child's day during handovers and parents of new children settling into the service were sensitively supported with the settling in process. The service used posters on the entry door to share information with parents. For example, posters were on display advising parents of an animal visit and a teddy bears clinic, both of which arrived on the day of inspection.

The indoor environments were laid out with a range of developmentally appropriate materials for children. Materials included small world, mark making areas, library areas, sensory baskets, role play materials, puzzles and materials to support construction play. Materials were stored within children's reach to support independence and displays such as birthday charts; family walls and visual routines were displayed throughout the care room supporting children's sense of identity and belonging. Short term plans and group books displaying images of the children engaged in activities were displayed outside the care rooms and staff described how they plan children's learning experiences based on their emergent interests. The outdoor area provided opportunity for challenge and safe risk with climbing frames, bikes and slides while sand and water tables provided opportunities for sensory exploration and cooperative play.

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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 doors into the service were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of reach of children.
- Staff were aware of children's food allergies and adequately described how allergies are managed in the service.
- Individual care plans were in place for children who required emergency medication and displayed in a prominent position in the care room.
- Daily inspections of indoor environments take place within the service which was evidenced by documented risk assessments.

Infection Control:

- Care rooms were visibly clean and well maintained. Cleaning schedules were displayed in each room outlining cleaning tasks.
- Pedal operated bins were in use in the sanitary areas to support effective hygiene practices.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff adequately detailed the services procedure for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and administration of medication forms were available for review.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes.
- Standard cots, mats and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's developmental needs.
- A sleep log was available for review, detailing the room temperature, breathing pattern, colour and position of the child.

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Outing:

- The service had a policy for outdoor walks on campus detailing the procedures to be followed when taking children on walks on campus.
- Records, including signed parental consent for children to take walks on campus were available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. During discussion with the inspector staff reported that a child attending the service had a serious allergy and may require the administration of an auto adrenaline injector in an emergency. The inspector requested to view the storage location of the medication. The staff member reported that the medication was stored in the staff room however, when the staff member went to retrieve the medication, it could not be located and was found to be in the staff room ten minutes later. A delay in the retrieval of a child's medication may pose a serious safety risk to the child in the event of an emergency.
2. The safety restrictor was not in use on a ground floor window in the Busy Bee room that opened out on to the college campus posing a risk of unauthorised entry or a child leaving unsupervised. The inspector highlighted this with a staff member who attempted to close the window but struggled to get it to close. The inspector acknowledges the window was closed upon reinspection. This risk was also identified on the previous inspection on 7 November 2022.
3. A blackboard attached to a fence in the outdoor area was broken, leaving rough edges that posed a potential risk of injury to a child.

Safe Sleep:

4. During discussions with the inspector a staff member in the Rainbow room described practices they use to help settle babies to sleep. The staff member explained they use a latex glove filled with rice and place it on a babies back to give the impression that a staff member was still beside them. The staff member also stated that they remain in the room and settle other children and remove the glove once the baby has fallen asleep. The inspector was informed that the method was not used with the children present on the day of inspection as they did not require it. This practice poses a series risk to babies safety and is at variance with the services safe sleep policy.
5. The temperature in a sleep room where children between the age of one and two years were sleeping was recorded at 23°C which is outside the recommended range for safe sleep. Although efforts were made by staff to reduce the temperature such as placing two fans into the room these measures were

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ineffective and the temperature increased to 23.5°. The inspector acknowledges that a staff member remained in the room with the children when the increase in temperature was brought to their attention.

Outing:

- On the day of inspection staff in the Rainbow room were observed taking two children for a walk on campus. Although the outings book had been completed prior to the walk, no risk assessment was carried out. This was at variance with the services safety statement and poses a potential safety risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Auto adrenaline injectors are now stored in an easily accessible place in the office with a clearly displayed label.
- The safety restrictor has been replaced and will remain in use on the window.
- The blackboard was removed from the garden.

Safe Sleep:

- The safe sleep policy was reviewed with the team and the glove is no longer in use.
- On days where the cot room temperature cannot be maintained, an alternative cooler room will be used. The service is currently reviewing air conditioning systems to use in the sleep rooms going forward.

Outing:

- A risk assessment has been developed and will be carried out monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence of storage submitted
- Photographic evidence restrictor submitted
- No evidence submitted

Safe Sleep:

- No evidence submitted
- No evidence submitted

Outing:

- Risk assessment submitted

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) There was evidence to show that six adults hold certification in First Aid Responder training and five were available for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in the service.

(b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available 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 fire fighting 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 detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill took place on 23 July 2025.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers were serviced in March 2025 and the smoke alarms were serviced on 3 June 2025.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in prominent positions around the service. For example, in the care rooms and the hallways.