

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR162
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Name of Service:	Once Upon A Time Nursery & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Carrickmines Manor, Glenamuck Road, Carrickmines, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 V802
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Name of Registered Provider:	AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	64	PM	66
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate- Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, County Dublin, A96P3Y6.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill and Sarah Quigley
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

This private childcare facility is one of ten services operated by the registered providers in the Dublin region. The service is registered to provide a full day care for pre-school children aged 1-6years and operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 07:30 -18:30. The early years service is located at ground floor level and operates from a purpose-built premises within an apartment complex in a residential area in Carrickmines south county Dublin. There are six care rooms available for the pre-school children namely: Junior Wobbler (1 year), Senior Wobbler (1year), Toddler (2 years), Pre-Montessori (2- 3 years), Junior Montessori (3 - 4 years), and Montessori room (4 - 6 years). An outdoor play area for children is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

In total eighteen adults were employed in the service including a domestic worker. On the 22 April 2025 fifteen adults worked directly with the children including the designated person in charge. The operations manager was also present in the service and while not part of the adult: child ratio worked directly with the children. Two additional managers, the area and training manger, arrived after the inspection had commenced and proceeded to support staff by working directly with the children throughout 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

The inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, information and records, health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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), (b), (2) (a)-(d) and (4) Management and Recruitment

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels

15 (1)(a)-(i) Record of a pre-school child

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

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1)(a) -(i) and regulation 19(1)(a) and 23.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Junior Wobbler, Senior Wobbler, Toddler and Pre-Montessori rooms and did not include the Junior Montessori and Montessori 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 person in charge, the operations and area managers, 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

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2) The inspection included a review of twelve staff files for adults who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 02 and 03 May 2024 and included a review of Garda vetting disclosures for all staff. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Twenty-four written and validated references were available from a past employer.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Each of the twelve new employees required international police vetting, the required documentation was available for the twelve adults.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the twelve adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Six of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. Six of the adults who did not have a recognised qualification were in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the department.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were sixty four children attending the service being supervised by fifteen adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of twelve records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.

- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) The record available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
- (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
- (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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)

Meals and snacks were offered to the children at regular intervals during the day. Lunch was served at 11.30. Drinks of water were available within the rooms and were offered when children were eating. Younger children were provided with bibs for mealtime. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance with their dinner.

The service had a designated sleep time after lunch. Staff told the inspector that they provide for the children to sleep outside of these times if they show signs of tiredness. The children were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing their shoes and outer clothing and providing soothers to those who used them.

Children's nappies were changed regularly and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently. The pre-school rooms in the service were laid out with age-appropriate equipment. Suitable Low-level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms for mealtime and tabletop activities. Developmentally appropriate toys and materials were accessible

to the children from open low-level shelving in the rooms. Children enjoyed freedom of movement within the pre-school rooms and children were observed in the outdoor area.

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 door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Child proof locks were in place on low level cupboards. The kitchen and all storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- The environment was clean and the service maintained a record of cleaning.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Staff were observed to follow the nappy changing policy of the service.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers, and they were stored in individual labelled containers.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the service's policy on medication administration.
- A sample of medication records were reviewed and completed correctly.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.

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- Staff maintained a record of the temperature of the rooms where children were sleeping, and they were noted to maintained within the required temperature.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly marked and unobstructed.