

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY155

Name of Service: Oak Tree Creche

Address of Service: Rear of 5 Cardiffsbridge Road, Finglas West, Finglas West, Dublin 11.

Eircode: D11 X3HV

Name of Registered Provider: John O'Neill

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 13/11/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	3	PM	Non-Applicable
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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 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Oak Tree Creche is one of three services operated in North Dublin by the registered provider. The service is located at the rear of a small shopping centre in a residential area. The service is registered to provide care for up to 22 children aged between 2 to 6 years old, on a sessional basis Monday to Friday from 9am to 12 pm and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The service is currently operating a service for up to 11 children from 9am to 12pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service consists of a kitchen, a hallway and two care rooms one in which is currently in use. There is access to staff and children's sanitary accommodation. There is an enclosed outdoor play area to the front of the service.

Staffing

The Registered Provider does not work in the service and employs three adults to work directly with the children in the service. This includes one person in charge, a deputy person in charge and one childcare staff who is employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). On the day of the inspection the person in charge and one childcare staff were present. The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection. The person in charge who also oversees the daily operation of the service facilitated the inspection process.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Record of a Preschool Child Regulation 15, 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 one care room which was in operation on the day of the inspection.

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 wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff member 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.

(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 named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge confirmed there are currently three adults employed by the registered provider to work in the service. The staff files of the person in charge,

deputy person in charge and one staff member were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) There were three written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were three written references available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three 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 not required as documentation showed that none of the three adults employed had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) The person in charge, deputy person in charge and one adult held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was an adequate number of adults working with the children. During the morning there were two adults caring for three children aged 2 to 6 years old.
- (3) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of the children.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) There are currently eight children registered to attend the service. The eight children’s registration records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured a record (1) (a),(b),(d),(e),(f),(g) (h) and (i) was maintained for each child. In addition, a space was available on the form to record the date the child ceased the service as required under (c).

(3)

- (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

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,

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The service had a healthy eating policy. Staff discussed how children are offered breakfast on arrival to the service. This included a variety of cereals and toast with a choice of milk and water for drinking. During the inspection children were observed to be served a mid-morning fruit snack. Children were observed to have access to drinks throughout the session.
- There was a cosy area with a child sized sofa, cushions, blankets and books for rest and relaxation. In addition, there was a bench for sitting and relaxation for use during outdoor play.
- The presence of a visual daily routine on display provided the children with a sense of stability, security, and predictability. Staff were observed to give children verbal reminders in advance of moving from one activity to the next activity and children were observed to be familiar with the daily routine.
- The children were observed to spend time outdoors during the inspection. This promoted gross motor movement and supported the children's social and emotional development.

Supporting Relationships:

- Children were observed to have the freedom to move freely in their care room and independently choose their activities and play experiences. Activities and materials available were suitable for the age and stage of the children in the care room.
- Children were observed to be familiar with the 'clean up' song and putting their toys away before snack time. This promoted independence.
- Staff were observed to interact continuously with the children. For example, at during snack time was observed to be a sociable event and staff chatted amicably with the children.

- There was a parent notice board in the hallway with relevant information for families. Staff discussed how they have an open-door policy where parents are welcomed into the service. The inspector observed staff to chat with parents at collection time.
- Staff discussed how they support children to transition from home by offering a settling-in period. Parents were also asked to complete in advance an 'All About Me' form providing essential details about their child.
- Staff discussed how they support children to transition to school. For example, staff showed the inspector a bespoke 'Transition to School' book developed by a local support agency. This book included colourful photographs of local schools and what is inside the classrooms. Staff spoke about the benefits of using this visual aid as a tool to help children to become familiar with their new school environment.

Equipment and Materials:

- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, providing a comfortable area to eat snacks and take part in tabletop activities.
- The care room had defined areas of interest with supporting equipment. Areas of interest included an art area which was accessible to the children throughout the inspection, a home corner including an office area, a costume dress up area, a library area, a music area, a building block area, a fine motor skills area, a sensory play area and a nature table. Each of the interest areas were well resourced with a wide range of props including real life home equipment and materials. This variety of materials and equipment facilitated a range of play experiences including creative, imaginative and language play and promoted exploration and curiosity. In addition, toys and materials were stored on low and accessible shelves and were themed and labelled which promoted spontaneous play opportunities.
- An outdoor play area was available for the children with a soft grass and natural bark surface and there was adequate space for movement. Equipment and toys available included a mud kitchen with supporting props, a wall water feature and ride on tricycles.

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspector, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The outdoor play area was securely fenced and gated reducing the risk of children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Blind cords were secured safely out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents and medication were observed to be stored safely out of the reach to the children.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, and hand drying facilities.
- Foot operated pedal bins were observed to be used by children and staff for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained throughout the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection. This ensured a safe evacuation of the children in the event of an emergency evacuation.

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 two adults hold certification in First Aid Response training, and one of the two adults was rostered to work daily and was available during the duration of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on a shelf in the care room.

(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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill took place on 20 October 2025.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced on 1 August 2025. Smoke alarms were serviced on 26 October 2025.
- (2)
- (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway and on the wall in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children attending the service on a sessional care basis with an expiry date of 27 March 2026.