

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK064
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Name of Service:	Oasis Childcare Centre CLG
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Address of Service:	Tobernapeastia, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 WN30
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helena Comerford
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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

Oasis Childcare Centre CLG is a registered community childcare service located in Freshford in north county Kilkenny. The service provides a sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE), part-time and full day childcare service.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises which is comprised of five pre-school classrooms, each with adjacent nappy changing and toilet facilities and three designated sleep rooms.

On the first floor there are an additional two pre-school classrooms for the older preschool children.

There are five separate spacious outdoor play areas onsite, each of which can be accessed directly from a classroom.

The service caters for children from birth to 6 years of age, operating between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the calendar year. The service closes for one week at Christmas and Easter and for two weeks for staff holidays during the summer.

Staffing

There were 23 staff employed in the service, including 2 cleaners, a designated chef and 2 business administrators. A student in early years care and education was also onsite during the inspection.

There were 17 staff members, who as part of their role in the service was to work directly with the children in attendance and one student in early childhood care and education.

All staff members employed to work directly with the children in attendance held qualification in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

The registered provider does not work in the service.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 24,25,26, and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19, 23 and 24.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included all the classrooms and outdoor play areas.

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 designated person in charge, 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) There was a designated person in charge in the service, who was present and facilitated the inspection.

(b) The designated person in charge confirmed that there was a named deputy designated person in charge, who was also present for the inspection.

- (c) A clear outline of the management of the structure was displayed in the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.
- (2) Staff files for 23 staff members employed in the service and 1 student on course placement in the service, were reviewed by the inspector.
- (a)(b) Two references were available on file for each of 23 staff members and the student, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member working directly with the children, for all ancillary staff and for the student. 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 for one staff member, who had lived outside of the state for a period longer than six months.
- (3) On review of staff files the inspector was assured that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any staff member commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Certificates of qualifications were available in each staff member's file, demonstrating that each staff member working directly with the children held qualifications in early childhood care and education at Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications (QQI) framework.

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) The registered provider ensured that there was always an adequate number of qualified staff members working directly with the children in attendance in the service.
- (2) On the day of inspection there were 63 pre-school children aged 1 to 5 years of age being directly cared for by 11 staff members and 1 student throughout the morning. From 14:00 hours there were 26 children aged 1 to 5 years directly cared for by 6 staff members.
- (8) The registered provider and designated person in charge always ensured that while children were in attendance in the service, that there were always at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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
 - (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

(1)(a)(b)

Basic care needs of the children.

The inspector observed that in each of the classrooms, childrens individual learning, wellbeing and development were supported. Staff were observed to respond promptly to children supporting them with activities and choices, as well as basic care needs such as toileting and nappy changing, and individual sleep requirements, according to each child's stage of development.

Each classroom had a designated drinks station, containing individual children's water bottles and a water dispenser with appropriate drinking cups.

In the younger children's classrooms, staff were observed to ensure that each child's beaker or water bottle were labelled with each child's individual names.

Each morning the service provided a selection of cereals and toast for any children attending the service from opening at 08:00 hours.

Children bought food for their morning snack from home which they ate at approximately 10:00 hours. Any perishable food items from bought from home was refrigerated in the fridges provided in each classroom.

The main hot meal of the day was served at 12:00 hours and was observed to be beef casserole which contained carrots and peas and mashed potato. A weekly menu plan was provided from a food company which supplied a variety of meals for dinner and an evening meal to the service weekly.

Meal options for dinner includes beef pasta bolognese, creamy chicken and tomato pasta, beef casserole and mash, Mexican rice, meatballs, broccoli and cauliflower. Evening meals included options such as fish cakes and mash, sweet and sour chicken and rice, Irish Stew and mash, chicken dinner and braised sausages in onion gravy and mash.

The inspector observed throughout the inspection that staff interacted respectfully and positively with the children, listening to the children actively, acknowledging and supporting children's different personalities and abilities. Staff encouraged and supported children in making choices, for example on choosing to go outside to play and in what games and activities to play. This supported the children's identities and sense of belonging in their classes and the service as they confidently showed the inspector their creative work, their classroom learning journals and the variety of activities that were available to them.

Indoor Physical Environment

Each of the five classrooms in operation on the day of inspection were observed to provide a physical environment which contained a variety of clearly defined interest areas which had been created to be inviting for the children to play in and which were resourced with play materials and equipment conducive and age-appropriate to the learning and development of the children in each particular classroom.

The variety of interest areas included a kitchen/home area, construction area, art and creativity area, reading/relaxing area and sensory areas.

Children's individual identity and belonging was incorporated into each child's classroom with visual photographs of each child's family, pictures of important landmarks such as the church, school and local shop in the community as well as well-known professionals who worked in the community.

Working in Partnership with Parents and Community

Photo Journals in some of the classrooms depicted how the service worked in partnership with parents and the community, with photographic evidence of activities such as nature walks through the village incorporating road safety and "Beep Beep Day" when one of the children's parents, a member of An Garda Síochána visited the

service and discussed the importance of road safety with the children. There was photographic evidence of the local fire service team visiting the service with the fire engine and demonstrating to the children how everything worked. The children dressed up in fire helmets and took turns sitting in the fire engine.

Outdoor Physical Environment

The service had five outdoor areas located at the back and side of the building with the perimeter secured with a high brick wall or metal fencing. The outdoor areas all had age-appropriate interest areas which included sand / water play, outdoor mud kitchens, gardening areas and play equipment such as crawling tunnels, swings and climbing towers, large natural tree trunks, logs and frames to physically challenge the children. Each classroom had access to an outdoor area which was appropriate to the age of the children in that classroom. Each outdoor area contained a covered over section, which provided both shade from the sun on hot days and from wind or rain. Although the weather on the day of inspection was sunny, the air temperature was recorded at 5 °C, and children were observed to dress in warm waterproof clothing to wear outside, which they were easily able to access.

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 main entrance to the service was secured with a call bell system and keypad system only accessible by the staff working in the service. Internally there were several keypad locks, with codes only known to staff which permitted access to the different areas of the service.

Only authorised staff working in the service could permit access at the main entrance to persons entering the building. This helped ensure that no unauthorised person could enter the building and prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised. The outdoor play areas were secured with a high wall and fence surrounding the perimeter of the outdoor area.

A daily risk assessment of the entire outdoor play area was observed to be carried out and records demonstrated that this was recorded daily.

The service cleaning materials and equipment were stored appropriately in a secure storage area inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

There were appropriate toilet and nappy changing facilities provided in the service to meet the numbers and needs of the children in each classroom. All sanitary facilities contained handwash basins, supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

Children were observed to use the toilet and hand washing facilities with ease, while staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly after using the toilet, after messy and outdoor play and before snack and mealtimes. Staff were observed to carry out nappy changing procedures in line with the service's nappy changing policy and in adherence with the service's hand washing and infection control policy.

Administration of Medication:

Staff were well informed and demonstrated knowledge of the service's administration of medication policy.

On review of past administration of medication forms, the inspector observed that procedures for administration of medications were carried out and recorded in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

Child centred plans had been developed for children with specific complex medical needs, which staff were well informed of.

Safe Sleep:

There were three sleep rooms available in the service containing a total of seven standard cots for children aged 1 to 2 years of age. A third sleep room provided stackable beds for children over 2 years of age to sleep in if required.

Staff were observed to ensure that the temperature of the sleep rooms were maintained within the recommended range of 16 to 20 °C. An air conditioning unit was provided in each sleep room.

Staff were observed to physically check and record the room temperature and each sleeping child's physical checks, which included colour, breathing and sleep position every 10 minutes.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy in place, to implement when taking children on an outing away from the service. The policy detailed the preparation, risk assessment and communication with parents/guardians prior to the outing, the precautions, and procedures to be taken prior to and during the outing and the procedures to be carried out in the event of an emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) The designated person in charge and staff in the classrooms demonstrated to the inspector that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out on a media application used in the service.

(3)(a)(b) The registered provider and designated person in charge ensured that no other person other than a pre-school child, person dropping or collecting a child, employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises without their entry being approved by an employee.

Any authorised visitors to the service were required to record the date of entry, their name, contact number, reason for entry, name of person who approved access and check in and out times on the visitors record book located at the reception.

(4) The visitors record demonstrated to the inspector that a record of authorised visitors to the service had been retained for the previous year and longer.

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 were 12 staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, the roster demonstrated that an adequate number of staff members with FAR training were present.

(2)(a)(b) A dedicated first aid cabinet was available on the main corridor of the ground floor and on the first floor, both of which could easily be accessed by staff. A first aid bag was also available on each floor located next to the first aid cabinet. Records demonstrated that its contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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) There was a designated staff member to ensure compliance with fire safety measures in the service. The following records were maintained.

(a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 31 January 2025.

(b) The registered provider maintained a record of the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last maintenance check for the fire-fighting equipment was recorded as having taken place on the 18 October 2024 and for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having taken place on 06 February 2025.

(2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.

(3) The designated person in charge demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.

(4) The registered provider ensured that a fire procedure notice was clearly displayed in the main entrance hall and on both floors. There were two fire evacuation cots available for the 1- 2 years old children, which could easily be accessed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate for the service displayed on a notice board in the main entrance hall. The insurance certificate detailed insurance cover for a full day care service provision for a maximum of 112 early years children and covered the period from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.