

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:	13/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	25
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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).

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Description of service

Oasis Childcare Centre CLG is a childcare service located in the village of Freshford in north county Kilkenny. The community service provides sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), part-time and full day childcare services to the surrounding community. The service operates from a purpose-built premises comprised of six pre-school classrooms, four pre-school classrooms on the ground floor and two pre-school classrooms on the first floor. On the ground floor there are three individual sleep rooms provided next to the younger children's classrooms, a reception area, manager's office and designated kitchen area and canteen area for staff. All classrooms have toilet facilities and nappy changing facilities directly adjacent to each classroom. The service had a large outdoor play area, divided into five different play areas ensuring that each class had outdoor play throughout the day. The service also provided a school age care service.

Staffing

There were 22 staff members employed in the service, including 17 early years educators, 2 business administrators, 2 cleaners and 1 cook. The registered provider does not work in the service.

All 17 staff members who as part of their role in the service was to work directly with the children in attendance held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) framework.

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

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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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 15 -Record of a Pre-School Child,

Regulation 16(1)- Record in relation to Pre-School Service,

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play,

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink,

Regulation 23 -Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

Regulation 24 – Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance,

Regulation 25 – First Aid,

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included five classrooms in operation on the day of inspection and the outdoor play area.

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 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 has a designated person in charge and a named deputy designated person in charge who can deputise as required.*
- (b) The designated person in charge was onsite for the duration of the inspection.*
- (c) There is a clear management structure visually displayed in the reception area of the service informing parents/visitors to the service of each employee's role and responsibility in the service.*
- (2) Four new staff members had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 25 February 2025.*

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- (a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the four new staff members from either a past employer or a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file for each staff member employed in the service and for the registered provider. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting disclosure certificates were not required as none of the four new staff members had lived in a state other than Ireland for longer than six months.
- (3) The registered provider demonstrated that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to the new staff members commencing employment in the service.
- (4) All four new staff members held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8, on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (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.*

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 62 pre-school children aged 11 months to 5 years of age being directly cared for by 15 staff members throughout the morning. From 14:00 hours there were 25 children aged 11 months to 5 years directly cared for by 7 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.

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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) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 registration records of pre-school children attending the service, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained on record for each preschool child attending the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*

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- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

On review of documentation presented to the inspector for review, the inspector was assured that the registered provider and designated person in charge ensured that records as required (a) to (k) were maintained in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The inspector observed that each classroom provided children with physical interest areas, play materials and resources appropriate to their ages and needs. For example, each classroom has kitchen/home corners developed according to the age of the children in attendance with smaller kitchen units and soft play materials available in the younger age classrooms while the older children's classrooms used materials such as metal sauce pans, tea pots, plates and cups and open ended materials such as empty clean food containers to further enhance the imagination in the areas. The children in the younger classrooms had treasure baskets of sensory materials and access to the soft play area in the baby room which was not in use on the day of inspection.

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Areas of interest in the indoor physical environment also included cosy rest and reading areas, art and creativity areas, construction and role play areas, all containing well maintained play resources and equipment.

Low level shelving in each classroom provided children with access to a variety of age-appropriate manipulative and connective play materials for creating and problem solving.

Each classroom had access to a designated outdoor play area, all which were designed to provide outdoor environments appropriate for the developmental stages and needs of the children in each classroom.

The younger children in the wobbler room enjoyed most of the morning in the service playing outside in their artificial grass surfaced play area equipped with two crawling tunnels, a swing, low balance beams which were also used as seating and a variety of raised sensory tables. The environment provided children with opportunities to explore and wander through the tall natural forest of willow trees which had been planned on one side, which also acted as a wind breaker and provided shade in conjunction with a covered arbour which extended from the exterior wall of the classroom.

As children progressed in age there were four other areas all of which had a variety of interest areas which included sheltered areas, outdoor kitchens, a wooden climbing tower, basket swing, opportunities for water, messy and sensory play, natural tree cuts and logs and ride on toys to provided physical challenge.

(b) The service had three designated sleep rooms, one adjacent to the baby room ("Oak Room") , one adjacent to the wobbler room ("Willow Room") both of which had air conditioning units high on the wall to ensure that the room air temperatures were maintained between 16 -20 °C. A total of seven standard cots with appropriate mattresses and bed linen were provided in both sleep rooms. A third sleep room was available adjacent to the Toddler ("Hazel Room") which was supplied with several stackable beds for children over the age of two years to sleep on. An additional supply of stackable beds was available on the first floor of needed for older children attending the full day acre service if the required to nap during their time in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

While there was a designated kitchen and dining area in the service, the service was supplied with catering from an approved food company. A four-week menu is provided with meal safely stored and prepared in the designated kitchen by a qualified chef.

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The menu plan includes a variety of meals which are displayed on the parents notice board in the entrance hall on a weekly basis to ensure children do not have the same meal at home as they do in the service.

Examples of the main hot meals offered at 12:15 hours included creamy chicken and tomato pasta, served on the day of inspection, beef casserole and mash, macaroni and cheese, meatballs, broccoli and cauliflower.

A second hot smaller meal is provided at 15:15 hours in the evening including meals for example such as sweet potato and chickpea curry, chicken bites and crispy potato cubes and lasagne.

The allergen contents of all weekly meals are also clearly indicated and displayed next to the meal menus on the parents notice board, for parents and staff information.

In discussion with staff in the service and the designated person in charge, the inspector was informed that children in the preschool rooms bought their own morning snacks while children in the full day care service were provided with a snack of fruit, crackers, cheese or yogurts at approximately 10:00 hours.

Children who arrived early to the service at opening time were offered a selection of wheat or rice-based cereals, milk and fresh warm toast. The inspector observed that there was a well-stocked fridge of food stuffs such as cooked ham, cheese, salad vegetables and yogurts as additional options for any children who didn't like the main meal options.

The designated person in charge explained that instead of sweet treats for celebrations in the service, the staff promoted healthy eating with food items such as fruit platters and oat and banana muffins for special occasions. On the day of inspection, the inspector observed that children enjoyed their meals and snacks and were offered additional servings if requested. Water stations were available in each classroom for children to access their individual water bottles or beakers as they wished. Staff in the wobbler and toddler rooms were observed to remind and encourage the younger children to take drinks of water throughout the day.

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. Any visitors to the service could be clearly observed through the toughened glass entrance doors as they approached the service. This ensured that only staff working in the service could authorise

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access at the main entrance and helped to ensure that no unauthorised person could enter the building while also preventing children from exiting the service unsupervised.

Internally coded keypads, only known to staff allowed access to the different corridors of the service where the classrooms were located.

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.

There was a designated secure storage area provided for the storage of cleaning materials and equipment and the inspector observed that in the classrooms that staff ensured any disinfectant sprays were stored on shelves or cupboards up high and out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Suitable toilet and nappy changing facilities were provided near each classroom, to meet the numbers and needs of the children in attendance.

All sanitary facilities contained child height handwash basins, supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children demonstrated to the inspector how they 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:

The inspector was assured that the staff in the service 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 specifically for individual children with complex medical needs, which staff were well informed of and familiar with storage of prescribed medications and administration of same.

Safe Sleep:

The three sleep rooms available in the service were all located on the ground floor. Each room was maintained within the recommended temperature range in line with ages of the children using the room, for example the children in the wobbler "Willow" classroom who were aged 11 months to 2 years had a sleep room temperature

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maintained at the recommended 16 to 20 °C. An air conditioning unit was available if required, in the sleep rooms to ensure the room temperatures were maintained within the recommended guidelines.

The inspector observed the staff physically checking and recording each sleeping child's colour, breathing and sleep position every 10 minutes, and the sleep room temperature.

Outing:

An adequate outings policy was available in the service should the management and staff in communication with parents decide to participate in any outing away from the service.

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 staff in each of the five classrooms in operation on the day of inspection, demonstrated to the inspector how each pre-school child attending the service was clearly recorded at checked in and out times on a media application used in the service.

(3)(a) The designated person in charge and staff in the service 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.

(b) 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. The inspector was requested to complete the visitors record upon entry to the service.

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(4) The visitors record demonstrated to the inspector that a record of authorised visitors to the service had been retained since the year 2022.

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 17 staff members employed in the service with current certification in the first aid responder (FAR) training for children. The staff roster demonstrated that an adequate number of staff members with FAR training were always present in the service while the children were in attendance.

(2)(a)(b) A dedicated secure 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 the first aid cabinets and bags were checked monthly to ensure all first aid materials were present, in date 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 fire fighting 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.

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(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) The registered provider ensured that 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 09 March 2026.

(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 in November 2025 and for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having taken place on 20 March 2026.

(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. A fire assembly point was clearly indicated in the car park at the back of the service.

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 2026 to 27 March 2027.