

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH147		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Oakleaves Pre-School		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unity Centre, Dunloe Park, Windtown, Navan, Co. Meath		
<b>Eircode:</b>	C15 FHD1		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Toni O'Rourke		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	23/01/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Cunningham		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable		

### Description of service

Oakleaves Pre-School is a childcare facility in operation since 2015, located in an urban area in Navan Co. Meath. The service is facilitated from a large room in a community centre (a second room was available but not in use this year). The service provides a sessional education and care service to pre-school children aged 2 years 6 months to 5 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 08:30 hrs to 11.30 hrs in the morning and an afternoon session from 12 midday to 15.00hrs, Monday to Friday and caters for a maximum of 22 children. The sessional service is located on the ground floor level, facilitated in one care room with sanitary facilities within the room and in the adjoining hallway. The service has access to an outdoor play area to the side of the service. The service has the sole use of the outdoor area.

### Staffing

The registered provider and four staff members are employed in the service. The registered provider and two staff members were present on the day of 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 registered provider, 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.

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

#### Compliance Information

- 1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.  
(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) Five files were reviewed, and the following was noted.  
(a)(b) Ten validated written references were available for the staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the staff members.

(4) All staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the access and inclusion model.

## Non-Compliance Information

(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

To ensure all future staff that have lived outside the country to have police vetting from that country, or staff coming to work in the service from another country to submit police vetting from their home country as part of the employment process. Added to recruitment policy check list.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 9.

### 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) On the day of inspection there were three adults working directly with 16 children attending the pre-school service. One staff member was providing AIM support.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct. Three staff members were present with 16 pre-school children (aged between 3 years and 5 years).

### 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 of Infants and Children

- A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents.
- The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings.
- An appropriate daily routine was in place which allocated times for child – initiated play and learning and adult planned and facilitated activities. The colour for the week was white, children found items in the

room during circle time that were white. Rectangle was the shape for the week and children found items in the shape of a rectangle in the room.

- Transitions were clearly announced and signalled by staff. Children were given time to complete activities at their own pace before starting the next activity. This approach respected the children’s learning engagements and resulted in a smooth flow in the routine.
- Snack time was a very social event with animated conversations and discussions. Staff encouraged children to be independent and to develop self-care skills at every opportunity.

### Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- Relationships between staff and the children were very supportive, warm, and consistently positive. Staff sat at the child’s level while assisting them with activities. Staff were overheard praising children for sharing toys or completing work. Children got the opportunity to be “helper”, where they helped to give out the lunch to their peers.
- The staff members engaged in play activities with the children with lots of enthusiasm and laughter observed. The children appeared confident and relaxed in their environment. Language development was facilitated through reading, songs, and conversation.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

Play equipment and materials were grouped together to create a number of well-defined areas of interest with all areas of the playroom set out for play. Each interest area was arranged to present an attractive play environment with a range of props to maximise the visual appeal and the learning opportunities in the area. Open shelving units were used to display many of the play materials which created visibility and easy access for children, giving them direct control in selecting items for play. Suitable sized tables and chairs were provided for tabletop activities. Considerable care and attention had been made to add visual appeal to the learning opportunities in the area. The outdoor area was accessible from the hallway off the care room. There was a soft and hard surface

area, and grass area was available. Equipment available included pebble box, blackboard, wigwam, wall activities e.g. water games, music board, planting area, diggers, sit on cars, and trucks.

## 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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

##### Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained on a daily basis.

##### Fire Safety:

The following Fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

## 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis

## 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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

## 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 of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service. the last recorded fire drill was 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 and the smoke detection alarms were last serviced January 2025.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 22 children at any one time. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.