

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022FL007		
Name of Service:	Once Upon a Time		
Address of Service:	Hollywood Rath Avenue, Hollywood Rath, Dublin 15.		
Eircode:	D15X6TE		
Name of Registered Provider:	AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	05/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	71	PM 69
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and T. Nelson		
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		

Description of service

Once Upon A time is a privately owned full day care service operating from a purpose-built building located in Dublin 15. The service is registered to accommodate 150 children aged 0-6 years and is one of ten services operated by the registered provider. There are twelve care rooms within the service located across two floors. On the day of the inspection, there were eight care rooms in operation with children present: Wobbler Room 2 (1-18 months), Wobbler Room 3 (14months-2 years), Wobbler 4 (18 months – 2 years), Toddler Room 1 (2-2.5 years), Toddler Room 2 (2 - 2.5 years), Pre-Montessori (2.5-3 years), Junior Montessori Room (3-4 years) and Senior Montessori (3-5 years). A lift is available to the first floor and the kitchen is also located on the first floor. A staff room and office are located on the ground floor. An outdoor play area is located at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs twenty- one staff to work in the service including the person in charge, two deputy persons in charge, sixteen early years professionals and two domestic staff members. Nineteen staff were present on the day of inspection. The registered provider also employs a management team to work across the ten services; an area manager arrived in the service during the inspection and worked within the care rooms guiding and directing the staff. The operations manager also attended the service to facilitate the inspection. The registered provider does not work directly with the children attending 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;

Regulation 9; Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11; Staffing Levels,

Regulation 16 (1) (h)(i)(j)(k); Records in relation to the preschool service,

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 23; Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of child,

Regulation 25; First aid,

Regulation 26; Fire Safety Measures,

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 21 Equipment and Materials and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and welfare of child as a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler 3, Wobbler 4, Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 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 the operations manager, area manager, 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) The service had a designated person in charge and two named persons to deputise if required.
 - (b) A review of the staff roster and discussion with management demonstrated that a designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises the week of the inspection for the duration of the opening hours of the service. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived.
 - (c) The service had a management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with management showed that there are currently 10 new staff employed by the registered provider. The files of 11 staff including 10 new staff who had commenced employment since the last inspection along with the file of one member of the management team whose file was not previously reviewed and who was present on the day of the inspection were reviewed as part of the inspection process. A review of records maintained by Tusla demonstrated that Garda vetting disclosures were dated within three years for all existing staff. The registered provider had completed the following checks:
- (a) Eighteen written and validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Four written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 11 staff members. 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 11 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to show that the procedures required under (2) has been completed prior to the start date of all staff members.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that ten staff members who worked directly with the children held 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.

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) There were 71 preschool children being cared for by 18 adults on the morning of the inspection. The person in charge was available to cover breaks and assist in care rooms as required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection.

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:

- (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

- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of children on a daily basis were maintained.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) Following a review of a sample of 18 records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for medication administration.
- (k) Following a review of a sample of 15 records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

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*

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Physical and Material Environment:

1. The layout and limited availability of supporting resources in themed areas reduced children's opportunity to engage in extended play opportunities. This was evidenced by the following:
 - The play kitchen in Toddler 2 did not have supporting resources available in the area. In another section of the room a small number of kitchen resources were placed in trays on a shelf.

- There were no supporting props adjacent to the kitchen in Wobbler 4. Kitchen resources were placed in another area of the room.
- The toy washing machine in Toddler 2 did not have any supporting resources available to encourage use and play.

Themed areas with grouped resources support engagement and play for children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Areas were enhanced with storage units moved closer and the purchase of more materials and equipment. The areas were also rearranged to make the materials more accessible and inviting for the children. The staff have been retrained on the layouts of the classroom ensuring each interest area is clearly defined with the correct materials and equipment. A full review of all role play areas and toys throughout the setting has been completed to ensure each resource is adequately supported. The manager will ensure more materials will be purchased as needed. A monthly checklist has been introduced to monitor that all toys are accompanied by the necessary materials to support quality play experiences.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been addressed.

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

- The furniture in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in attendance, it was appropriate for the age range and stage of development for the children present.
- The furniture was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The children had access to rest areas within the care rooms in the event they decided to take a break from activities.
- Low level shelving was available in the care rooms.
- The play equipment in the outdoor area included ride on toys, a sensory tray, cars and trucks which facilitated a range of play experiences including gross motor play, sensory play and construction play.

Non-Compliance Information

1. A ride on car which was present in the outdoor area accessible to the children was unsuitable for play due to a broken wheel.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The damaged ride on car was immediately removed from the outdoor area upon identification. It was replaced the following day with a suitable alternative to ensure continuity of safe and appropriate outdoor play experiences for the children. While a daily garden safety checklist was already in operation, all staff have now received refresher training highlighting the importance of thorough and consistent equipment checks.

Supporting documentation submitted

- No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 21 has been addressed.

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 service entrance was secured on arrival. A video bell allows staff to see who is at the door before opening it. This prevents unauthorised persons accessing the service without staff knowledge.
- The outdoor area was secure on the day of the inspection.
- Blind cords were adequately secured and out of reach of children.
- Finger pinch protectors were observed fitted on doors.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing was observed to be completed frequently throughout the day for example after garden time and before meals.
- Windows were open for ventilation allowing fresh air to circulate.
- Children's nappy creams were observed individually labelled.
- Nappy changing areas and mats were maintained and in a clean condition.
- Children had individual bed linen and staff advised that this is laundered weekly.

Safe Sleep:

- Cellular blankets were observed in use for children in Wobbler rooms three and four.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency evacuation routes were displayed within the service and fire exits were observed clear of obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A foot pedal operated bin in the sanitary area that can be accessed from the Toddler two room was broken. This posed a potential risk of cross infection. Foot pedal operated bins need to be working to allow hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.

Administration of Medication:

2. Medication was observed to be potentially accessible to children in the Toddler one and Toddler two rooms, this posed a potential risk of accidental poisoning. Although the medication was stored in a press

with a safety lock, the press did not have handles and instead had a design of a curved door creating a gap to hold when opening. The gap between the two doors was large enough to fit an adult hand through and medication box. Medication was stored directly behind the opening of these low-level presses in both rooms.

Safe Sleep:

3. A timely record of sleeping children was not maintained in a room for five children over the age of two. The sleep check record demonstrated checks had not been recorded for children who had been asleep between 22 to 48 minutes. The practice and recording of comprehensive timely physical sleep checks helps provide for children's safety.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The bin was replaced on the same day. During the morning risk assessment, the staff check all the bins, if this happens during the day after the risk assessment, they will inform the manager immediately.

Administration of Medication:

2. The medicine was moved to a higher shelf on the day of inspection. Staff have been informed to only store medicine on a high shelf in future, there is a sign on the cupboard door, so all staff are aware of the location.

Safe Sleep:

3. The staff member was retrained in the safe sleep policy and the importance of maintaining a live record of the sleep record. While staff are helping children to sleep, they have been retrained to ensure they also continue to complete the sleep record.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.

Administration of Medication:

- Photographic evidence.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff training record.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) A review of the staff roster indicated that a person qualified in First Aid Responder (FAR) was rostered to be on the premises during the operational hours of the service for the week of the inspection.

(2) (a)(b) An adequately equipped first aid box was available and easily accessible to staff if required and was stored out of reach of children.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) A record was maintained of all fire drills which occurred in the service. The record showed that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on the 4th June 2025.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. The certificates reviewed showed that the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had been serviced on the 9th January 2025.