

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: 11/09/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	48
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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 E. Finnegan Hayes
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 nine 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 seven care rooms in operation with children present: Wobbler Room 1 (1-1.5years), Wobbler Room 2 (1-1.5 years), Wobbler Room 4 (1-1.5 years), Toddler Room 1 (1.5-2 years), Toddler Room 2 (2 years 3 months – 2.5 years), Pre-Montessori Room (2-3 years) and Montessori Room (3-4 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

There are currently 19 staff employed to work in the service including the person in charge and a domestic staff member. The registered provider also employs a management team to work across the nine services. The operations manager, an area manager and a training manager were present in the service during the inspection and worked directly with the children in the care rooms guiding and directing the staff. The head office support person was present in the service when the inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service but provides oversight of governance and management to 9 services under her remit.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4, (7)(a) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2),(8)(a) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1)(i)(j)(k) Records in relation to the Preschool Service
- Regulation 17 Information for Parents
- Regulation 19(1)(a),(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 32 Complaints

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 16(1)(i)(j)(k) Records in relation to the Preschool Service
- Regulation 19(1)(a), (1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of the Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler room 1 and Wobbler room 2.
- Regulation (9)(7)(a) management and Recruitment.

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 head office support person, operations manager, area manager, training 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*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in their absence. The named person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived in the service.

(2) A review of the roster and discussion with management showed that there are currently nineteen staff employed to work in the service all of whom have commenced employment since the last inspection which took place on 13th June 2023. The files of all staff were reviewed along with the files of the head office support person, operations manager, area manager and training manager who were present on the day of the inspection.

- (a) Forty-two written and verified references from a previous employer were available in relation to 23 staff.
- (b) Four written and verified references from a source other than a previous employer were available in relation to four staff.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all twenty-three staff; and the registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for eighteen staff members who had lived in country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months.

(3) A review of available documents showed that the procedures required under (2) had been completed prior to the start date of nineteen new staff members since the last inspection.

(4) Evidence was available to show that twenty-two staff members 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.

(7)(a) Conversations with staff members and a review of a sample of eight records demonstrated that staff were aware of and provided with appropriate information in relation to the services policies and procedures. The

sample documents reviewed included a selection of induction programme checklists, policy and procedure questionnaires, performance evaluations and team meeting records.

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) There were 50 preschool children being cared for by 14 adults on the morning of the inspection. The management team were available to cover breaks and assist in the care rooms as required.

(2) Ratios were maintained during the inspection. The following was observed:

Room	Age Range	No. of children	No. of adults present	No. of adults required
Wobbler 1	1-1.5 years	4	2	1
Wobbler 2	1-1.5 years	6	2	2
Wobbler 4	1-1.5 years	6	2	2
Toddler 1	1.5-2 year	9	2	2
Toddler 2	1 year 10 months - 2.5 years	6	2	1

Pre-Montessori	2-3 years	7	2	2
Montessori	3-4 years	12	2	2

The area manager returned to the service to facilitate the inspection and assisted with covering ratios during staff lunches.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured there was at least two adults rostered to be on the premises during the operating hours of 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;
- (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;
- (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

(1) The registered provider ensured a record in writing was available in relation to the information in relation to the service

- (a) - (g) the information required was available and reviewed on the day of inspection.
- (i) The staff roster was reflective of the adults working in the service on the day of the inspection.
- (j) A sample of eighteen accident and incident records were reviewed all of which were completed in full.

Non-Compliance Information

- (k) A sample of 21 records were reviewed, 19 were completed in full however the following details were omitted from 2 records:
- One record did not include the signature of a second staff member confirming the dosage was checked and witnessed or the signature of a parent confirming they had been informed of the administration.
 - One record did not include the signature of a second staff member confirming the dosage was checked and witnessed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(k) **Corrective action:** Staff were retrained on how to complete the medication form correctly.

Preventive action: The staff have been retrained and the manager and assistant manager ensure they read the form completely before signing it. Spot checks will be carried out by the manager and area manager on these records.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Staff training agreement.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 has been addressed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the information required under (a) to (g) of regulation 16(1) was available to the parents of children attending the service. The following was reviewed:

- Staff advised that parents received a parent’s handbook through email.
- Service policies were available in a folder at the premises. Policies were also observed displayed throughout the care rooms within the service.
- Details of adult:child ratios, the type of care offered, facilities available and opening hours were included in the services statement of purpose of function. Service fees were available in the hallway.
- Details of staffing including photographs of the staff team was displayed in the hallway.
- The service Tusla registration certificate was displayed by the service entrance and detailed the service which they are registered to provide.

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) Physical and Material Environment

- Low tables and chairs allowed children to engage in mealtimes and table top play in a comfortable manner.
- Low level shelving in the care rooms enabled ease of access to resources for children.

- Equipment and resources within the care rooms were appropriate to age and stage of development of the children.
- The care rooms included rest areas with soft mats and cushions providing a space for children to take a break from activities if they choose during the day.
- Children’s artwork was observed on display in Wobbler Room and Wobbler Room 2.

(1)(b) The following practices were observed to be in place to support the children attending:

- Staff were observed to interact with the children using soft tones and a gentle manner. Staff joined children on the floor during their play and engaged them in conversation and songs.
- Staff were observed to give reassurance to children recently settling into the service offering comfort and encouraging them to play.
- Meals were observed to be served promptly to the children when they arrived to the care rooms. Children in the Wobbler 1 room were observed to be placed into their highchairs in a timely manner following the arrival of the meals and hand washing. Staff joined children at low tables aiding mealtimes to be a social experience and encouraged self-feeding.
- Staff were observed to bring drinks to the garden when children were present in the outdoor area encouraging regular drinking throughout the day.
- Staff explained how engagement with families is facilitated through daily conversation, noticeboards and the use of a software application to share information on the child’s day. Parents are invited to drop and collect the children directly to their care rooms within the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) Physical and Material Environment

1. The books in Wobbler Room 2 were observed to be in poor condition. Books were torn and had pages missing. Fully intact books are required to provide a full learning experience and support the learning of sequence and early exposure to printed text and pictures.
2. The available resources in the garden limited the variety of play opportunities. Equipment such as ride on cars, bikes and a seesaw provided for gross motor play however there was limited facilities to support other play types for example sensory and imaginative play. A playhouse and buggies in the garden did not

include any supporting resources to inspire and extend the children's play. Having a variety of resources and supporting props encourages children's creativity and provides for a wider range of play and learning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(a)

Corrective Action

1. New books were bought for the classroom and any books that were torn were removed on the day of inspection.
2. The service has introduced more materials to support the current toys in the garden, we added baby dolls for the buggy's, kitchen food and dishes for the playhouse, more blocks, sand and water tray.

Preventive Action

1. The service has bought extra fabric and hardback books to prevent the children from tearing them in future. The manager will spot check the equipment each week to ensure anything that is torn is removed and replaced with new books.
2. The manager will ensure the staff take the smaller pieces of equipment out from the storage room each day when setting up the garden for play. The manager will ensure if anything goes missing that this is replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have 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 secure on arrival. A video doorbell allows staff to see who is at the door before opening it. This helps prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service without staff knowledge.
- Cleaning products were observed stored out of reach children.
- The staircase was adequately lit with a suitable flooring. Two handrails were in place including a low-level handrail to assist the children.

Infection Control:

- Children were supported to wash their hands before mealtimes.
- Cot mattresses were observed to be waterproof and easy to clean.
- Children's soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed health care plan was required for a child who required medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to complete physical checks while children were sleeping, and records of these checks were completed in a timely manner.
- Cot sheets were observed to be tightly fitted to the mattresses for the cots in use in the Wobbler room 1 sleep room.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Nappy creams stored on the shelving in the nappy changing facilities accessed from Wobbler Room 2 and a second facility accessed from Toddler Room 2 were not consistently individually labelled with clear details of the children's names. There was a risk that the creams could be mixed up and used on the wrong child, increasing the risk of cross contamination. This was noted as a non-compliance in the last inspection report from 13th June 2023.

Fire Safety:

2. Attendance records were not maintained in a timely manner. A child who was observed present in the service by the inspectors at 9:50am was not signed in till 11:13am. This posed a potential risk of hindering safe evacuation of the premises in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. **Corrective action:** All creams have been rechecked and labelled as needed.
Preventive action: Parents have been reminded to label their children's belongings before bringing them to the creche, the staff have been reminded to check all belongings the parents bring before putting them out to be used and label if necessary.

Fire Safety:

2. **Corrective action:** Staff have been retrained on the tablet system to ensure children are signed in as soon as they arrive into the classroom.

Preventive action: The manager currently checks all attendance logs coincide with the children on the premises on the system up to 9:30am, they will now continue these checks up to 10am in the event children come in later. The manager will spot check these throughout the day also.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.

Fire Safety:

- Staff training agreement.

Summary Comment

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

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
- (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)(b)(c) The complaints policy was reviewed as part of the inspection process. The review showed the policy outlined the procedures to be followed by the person making a complaint, the way complaints are dealt with and procedures for keeping the person informed who made the complaint.

(2) (a)(b) Management advised that no complaints have been received directly to the service from parents. A sample complaint form was available and displayed at the entrance.