

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2023DR001
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Once Upon a Time
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 6, Cherrywood Town Centre, Grande Parade, Area TC2, Cherrywood, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D18 PA66
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	67	PM	67
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Sarah Quigley & Olivia Quill
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Once Upon a Time Cherrywood is a private full day care service located in an urban, residential area of Cherrywood, South County Dublin. Care and education are provided to children aged between one and six years and the service is currently registered to operate from Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 18:30 hours. There are six care rooms available in the service and a dedicated sleep room. An outdoor play area is available to the children.

### Staffing

The service currently employs fifteen staff members including a person in charge and an adult who carries out domestic duties. On the day of inspection, eighteen adults were present including the area manager, operations manager, and training manager.

### 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/ Information and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby (Wobbler 1), the Wobbler (Senior Wobbler), the Toddler, and the Junior Montessori (Pre-Montessori) 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.

### Additional Information

The inspection focused on a review of regulations which were found to be non-compliant on the last inspection of the service on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, and the subsequent corrective and preventive actions submitted following the inspection to address the non-compliances.

The registered provider made an application to increase the maximum number of children in attendance in the service from 75 to 80, with the proposed increase being facilitated within the existing five care rooms available. The proposed increase was assessed as part of the inspection process. The requirement has been met to accommodate 80 children at any one time, based on the children attending on a full day care basis, and subject to the floor space requirements being met for the ages of children in attendance.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the *person in charge*, senior managers, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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;*

*(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*

*(c) these Regulations.*

#### Compliance Information

(2)

Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that nine adults had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these nine adults as detailed below. The requirement of regulation 9(2)(c) was assessed for all adults employed to work in the service.

(a) (b) There were two references each available for the nine adults which had been appropriately verified.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Each of the nine new employees required international police vetting, the required documentation was available for the nine adults.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the nine adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Five of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One of the adults did not require a qualification. Three of the adults who did not have a recognised qualification were in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the department.
- (7) The registered provider demonstrated that they had taken reasonable measures to ensure that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with sufficient information and training to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with the regulations as follows;
- During discussions with the inspectors and observation of practice during the inspection, staff members demonstrated an awareness of the policies and associated procedures in place in the service.
  - Documentation reviewed evidenced that regular team meetings and one on one support and supervision meetings were in place in the service for all staff members.
  - Staff members confirmed during conversations with the inspectors that they had received formal induction training when they commenced employment. A sample of eight records of induction training were reviewed for staff who commenced employment in the service since the last inspection dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. These records included training on the policies, procedures and associated practices in place in the service.

### 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were sixty-seven children present in the service being supervised by thirteen adults during the inspection. The person in charge and the area manager provided relief cover to the care rooms when required and were rostered to do so. The operations and training manager provided support to the staff in the care rooms during the inspection but did not form part of the adult to child ratio.

### 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;*

#### Compliance Information

- (h) Details of the attendance of each preschool child was recorded on an online application in each care room on the day of inspection. Children who arrived late to the service and who left early were marked in and out as required.
- (i) A staffing roster was available in the service and was provided to the inspectors on arrival. The roster was reflective of the staff present during the inspection and adequately detailed the adults rostered to work directly with the children in each care room.

## 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)

Staff reported that regular meals and snacks are provided to the children in attendance daily by the service which are prepared on site, including a hot meal which is provided by an external catering company and re-constituted on site. Staff members sat with children during mealtimes and encouraged younger children to feed themselves. Drinking water was accessible to the children and rest areas were available in each care room. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff spoke respectfully to the children and demonstrated warmth and kindness during interactions observed by the inspectors. The children were observed to be content and engaged in their child led play during the inspection and staff demonstrated an awareness of children's individual needs during discussions with the inspectors. Staff members intervened early during minor disputes between children and promoted positive behaviour management. Children were encouraged to be independent in their care rooms including tidying up after activities and meals.

Babies were observed to be placed to sleep in line with their individual care needs and older children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after morning snack. Children who did not wish to sleep were provided with alternative activities. Staff made children comfortable for sleep removing shoes and outer clothing and provided comforters and soothers to those who used them

The programme of care in place in the service was observed to be play based and child led in approach. The care rooms were adequately resourced with a variety of play materials that were accessible to the children on low level shelving units, providing the children with choice in their chosen activities. An outdoor play area was available to the children.

### 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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

##### General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised. The care rooms and outdoor play area were observed to be safe and free from hazards.

##### Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

##### Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required. Individual care plans were in place for children requiring emergency medication and staff detailed the requirements of these plans during discussions with the inspectors..

##### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and detailed the safe sleep procedures in place in the service during discussions with the inspectors. Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated sleep room and the younger care rooms, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with

children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

**Fire Safety:**

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly 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)  
An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times during the opening hours of the service on the day of inspection.
- (2)  
(a)(b)  
A suitably equipped first aid box was observed to be immediately accessible to the children within the service and was stored in a conspicuous location on the day of inspection.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (2) The registered provider made an application to increase the maximum number of children in attendance in the service from 75 to 80, with the proposed increase being facilitated within the existing five care rooms available. The rooms were measured as part of this inspection as detailed below. The requirement has been met to accommodate 80 children at any one time, based on the children attending on a full day care basis, and subject to the floor space requirements being met for the ages of children in attendance.

Room	Baby room (Wobblers)	Wobbler room (Senior Wobblers)	Toddler room	Junior Montessori (Pre-Montessori)	Senior Montessori
Space available	47 square metres	42 square metres	45 square metres	40 square metres	42 square metres