

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DS005
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Name of Service:	Once Upon a Time
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Address of Service:	The Oaks, The View, Barnoaks Citywest, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 W31V
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Name of Registered Providers:	David McCormack, Anne Marie McCormack
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	09/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & F. Carty
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	NA
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Description of service

Once Upon A Time is a full day care service provided by the registered provider who operates 10 childcare services in Dublin. A full day care service is provided for children from 1 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday.

The premises is located in a purposely adapted unit in an urban, residential area of Citywest, south Dublin. It is located over two floors. On the ground floor, there are seven care rooms and two cot rooms, an office and a kitchen. There is one care room located on the first floor.

On the day of inspection, four care rooms on the ground floor were open. The Wobbler 1 room caters for children aged 1 year. The Wobbler 2 room caters for children aged 1-2 years. The Toddler room caters for children aged 2 years and the Montessori room caters for children aged 2 to 3 years.

There is a fully enclosed outdoor area to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 15 staff including an area manager. There were 13 adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection including the operations manager and the training and development manager who arrived following the inspectors' arrival. The service also employs a staff member who carries out domestic duties.

The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not 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/ records and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations;

9(1)(a)(b)(c),(2)(a)-(d),(4),(7)(a) Management and Recruitment,

10 Policies Procedures of Pre-school Service,

11(1),(2),(8)(a) Staffing Levels,

16(i)(k) Record in relation to Pre-school Service,

19(1)(a)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

32 Complaints.

However, on inspection, additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulations 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child and 29(c) Premises.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16(k) Record in relation to Pre-school Service.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate on 05 December 2024.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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)(c)
- The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection. A clear management structure was in place in the service.
- (2)
- The files of 16 adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:
- (a)(b)
- Of the 32 written, validated references that were required, 24 were available from a past employer and 8 were available from a reputable source.
- (c)
- Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the 16 adults. 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 required for 13 adults and was available for 12 adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (4)
- Records were available evidencing that 14 staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. One staff member held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Police vetting was required from two countries for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult. It is acknowledged that police vetting was available from one country in respect of this adult, however police vetting from a second country which was required was not available.

(4)

On the day of inspection, there was no evidence available to show that one adult who was employed to work directly with the children in the service held a relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)

Evidence that induction had been carried out in respect of one staff member was not available. This staff member commenced working on 25 November 2024, their induction training documentation was completed for their first day of employment and included a record of a 5-minute job chat at the end of week one. However, the remaining induction documentation was incomplete including sections on safety of children, food and nutrition and caring for children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The staff member was unable to retrieve the police vetting due to an issue with their ID. We have since terminated their contract and offered to rehire them when they get their other police vetting. Our recruitment manager will ensure they check all staffs police vetting from other countries where they resided for more than 6 months.

(4)

The staff member received their proof of payment from the college which proves they are qualified. Our recruitment manager will ensure we have the proof of payment for the qualification before the staff members start.

(7)(a)

The staff member finished their training within the month of their start date, we currently do not sign off on the training until we are satisfied that they understand all policies and procedures which we estimate takes one

month in our current policy. Staff are continuously being trained in all areas, instead of waiting for staff to be fully trained when we sign off, we've adjusted our policy and induction programme to sign when we start the training and when we're confident the staff member is observed to comply and work to a high standard following our policies and procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d)

No supporting documentation submitted.

(4)

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

(7)(a)

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the written policies, procedures and statements were in place relating to the following policies;

- Accidents and Incidents
- Behaviour Management
- Complaints
- Staff Training
- Supervision of Staff

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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 37 children attending the service being supervised by 13 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(i)

The staff roster was available on the day of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service.

(k)

A sample of 15 accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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 all meals are prepared on site and provided by the service. The service had a weekly meal plan which detailed a range of nutritious meals and snacks served to children at regular intervals throughout the day. Children were given water with their meals. Dinner was served at 14:40 and younger children were provided with bibs for dinnertime. Inspectors observed children who did not eat the main meal being provided with an alternative. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance with their dinner.

Children were encouraged and supported to be independent, older children were observed using the toilet independently. In the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms, children’s nappies were changed promptly. Staff in the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms were observed cleaning children’s noses as required. There was a designated nap time for younger children attending the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2 and Toddler rooms.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly.

Staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child using an online application detailing information on food, sleep, nappy changes and activities and at arrival and collection time.

The care rooms were arranged into areas of interest including small world toys, construction toys, rest areas with books and home corners providing children with the freedom to play and explore. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. The environments were laid out to support the children’s independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the side of the premises and had artificial grass surfacing. Children from the Montessori room accessed the outdoor area on the day of inspection and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The care practices as observed on the day of the inspection did not adequately meet the needs of the children, as demonstrated by:

- Example 1: A child was observed knocking cups of water and bowls of playdough onto the floor, climbing on a table, trying to bite a staff member and attempting to bite a child during the inspection. Through discussion with inspectors, staff confirmed that this child requires additional supports. Some strategies as

outlined in the service's Behaviour Management Policy were implemented but did not meet the needs of all children in the care room.

- Example 2: Nappy changing was not carried out in a timely manner as observed when at 11:42 in the Toddler room, a child had a wet nappy before they were put to sleep. The nappy was not changed until 14:08, after the inspector spoke to staff and requested that the child's nappy be changed when they awoke.
- Example 3: Personal hygiene was not attended to in a timely manner as demonstrated when a child in the Toddler room was observed with mucus coming from their nose. Staff were observed engaged with the child, but did not clean the child's nose. The child was observed to wipe their nose on their sleeve.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Example 1:

Staff have been retrained in our positive behaviour management policy and child supervision policy. Additional staff were provided for the child to ensure he had one to one care. The child referred to in the non-compliance no longer attends the service. When it is first observed a child needs additional supports, we will ensure to meet with the parents immediately and discuss how we can meet the needs of the child at an earlier stage and ensure our float staff are based in the room with the child if it's before their entitlement to an AIMS application.

Example 2:

All staff have been retrained on the nappy changing procedure and ensure they check children's nappies between scheduled nappy changes. We will continue to retrain staff to check nappies in between scheduled nappy changes.

Example 3:

All staff have been retrained on the infection control policy and the importance of cleaning a child's nose immediately and diligently looking at each child's face to ensure there's no runny noses. The domestic staff ensures all rooms are fully stocked with supplies and staff are retrained and reminded by the manager daily to diligently check each child's face at regular intervals.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

- In the Wobbler 1 room at 10:49, a child, aged 12 months, was observed sleeping in the rest area on cushions when the inspectors first entered the room on the morning of inspection. In discussion with inspectors, staff stated that the child had been asleep in the rest area for 5 to 10 minutes. This poses a risk to the safety of the child, is contrary to safe sleep guidance and is at variance with the service safe sleep policy which states that children who require a nap outside of the designated time will have access to the cot room.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

Staff have been retrained in the safe sleep policy and the importance of calling for cover as soon as a child shows signs of tiredness. The float staff member has been reminded to continuously check in on the younger rooms if they have children who are tired before their normal nap time and to ensure they prepare the cot as soon as the staff tell them a child is going to sleep so they can be transferred immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe Sleep:

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(c)
The registered provider did not ensure that the Toddler room was adequately heated on the day of inspection at the required temperature range of between 18-22°Celsius as follows;

- The room temperature was recorded at 14.9°Celsius at 11:20. At this time, the inspector requested that staff increase the temperature of the room.
- The temperature was recorded at 16.8°C at 14:22.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c)
The classroom temperatures have been set to the correct temperatures via the air conditioning units at a minimum of 18 and maximum 22 degrees. The control panels in the classrooms have been locked to avoid children pressing the button on/off.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

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 complaints policy was available in the service which specified the following:
- (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.
 - (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)(b)
- The Operations manager stated that no complaints had been made directly to the service since the service began operating.