

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR162
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Name of Service:	Once Upon A Time Nursery & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Carrickmines Manor, Glenamuck Road, Carrickmines, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D18 V802
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Name of Registered Provider:	AnneMarie McCormack, David McCormack
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	74
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Carysfort House, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	L Magee & O Quill
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).

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Description of service

Once Upon a Time Carrickmines is registered to provide full day care for pre-school children aged 1-6years. It is open from Monday to Friday between the hours of 7:30am -6:30pm. The early years service is located at ground floor level and operates from a purpose-built premises within an apartment complex in a residential area in Carrickmines, south county Dublin. There are six care rooms available for the pre-school children namely: Junior Wobbler (1 year), Senior Wobbler (1year), Toddler (2 years), Pre-Montessori (2- 3 years), Junior Montessori (3 - 4 years), and Montessori room (4 - 6 years). An outdoor play area for children is located to the rear of the premises. This private childcare facility is one of eleven services operated by the registered providers in the Dublin region.

Staffing

In total twenty-two adults were employed in the service including two domestic staff. On 27 May 2026, seventeen adults worked directly with the children including the person in charge and the designated person in charge. The area manager was also present in the service and while not part of the adult:child ratio, worked directly with the children. One additional manager, the operations manager, arrived after the inspection had commenced and proceeded to support staff by working directly with the children throughout the 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1b) Health, welfare and development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Junior Wobbler, Senior Wobbler, Toddler and 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.

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,*

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- (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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.
- (c) There is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability for each employee as outlined on the staff roster.

(2) Following a discussion with the area manager, it was confirmed that thirteen adults had commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 22 April 2025. In addition, Garda vetting for one staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal was reviewed. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of these thirteen adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a) Twenty-four written validated references were provided from a past employer.
- (b) Two written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for thirteen adults and renewed for one adult. The service did adhere 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 disclosures were available for adults who lived outside Ireland for a period of longer than six months as adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed for these thirteen adults evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to commencement of employment in the service.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to show that twelve adults who required a qualification and were employed to work directly with children attending the service, held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care

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and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children.

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 was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 76 children attending the preschool being supervised by 16 adults in the morning and 74 children with 16 adults in the afternoon.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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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

- (1)
- (h) Details of the attendance of each child in the Junior Wobbler and Pre Montessori rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i) The staff roster was available on the day of inspection and had a record of start and finish times of all adults.
- (j) A sample of nine medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.
- (k) A sample of twenty-one accident and incident forms were reviewed as part of the inspection. Details of accidents and incidents were recorded as required. The forms were signed by the parent/ guardian, member of staff caring for the child and the manager.

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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-

(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) (b)

Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed on the day of inspection as evidenced below:

Staff confirmed that all food is provided by the service. Additional food or an alternative food was available should any child ask for more or indicate that they were hungry. Individual water beakers were available to the children throughout the day. Staff sat with the children during mealtimes and allowed the children time to enjoy their food. Children were supported with toileting if needed and staff were observed caring for children in a respectful manner during toileting and nappy changing which took place on a scheduled basis and when required. Staff were familiar with the needs of the children. Warm interactions between the staff and children was observed and staff promptly comforted children when they became upset. The individual sleep needs of the children were met on the day of inspection. Children who required settling to, sleep were comforted as they tried to sleep. All children enjoyed time playing outside in the outdoor area. The children moved freely and engaged in different games with staff.

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:

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children as outlined below:

On the day of inspection, external gates and doors were secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. Equipment was appropriately maintained and items that could cause harm to children including medicines, loose cables and cleaning products were secured out of their reach. The fire escape routes were free from any obstructions to

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allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire. The outdoor play areas were safely enclosed by a surrounding fence.

Infection Control:

On the day of inspection, the children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, nappy changing and before meals. Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to support these hand hygiene practices. Children's nappies were changed in line with the service's nappy changing policy to reduce the risk of the spread of infection. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

Administration of Medication:

During discussions with staff, it was evident that they were aware of the procedures to take to ensure medication is given safely, including parental consent, the signatures of the staff member who administered the medication and the staff member who was present as a witness, making a record and sharing the record with the child's parent/guardian on collection. Documented care-plans were available for children who may require medicine in the event of an emergency. Staff caring for these children demonstrated a clear understanding of the signs to look out for and how to administer the medicine and subsequent actions to take if required.

Safe Sleep:

Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes. During discussions with staff, it was evident that they were familiar with the safe sleep guidelines and they were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes. Standard cots were available for younger children to sleep and low-level beds were available for older children to sleep or rest as required.

Fire Safety:

Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. A record of regular fire drills which were conducted was available in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The temperature of the Pre Montessori room was not maintained at the required temperature of 18-22 °C. At 10.33am while seventeen children aged 2 and 3 years of age were playing; the room temperature was recorded at 24.4°C. At 10.38am, the room temperature was 23.8°C. The inspector informed the operations manager of the elevated temperature. The operations manager confirmed two air conditioning units had been ordered and were awaiting collection. Throughout this time, windows were open and blinds were pulled however these measures were insufficient to bring the room temperatures to within the recommended optimum range for comfort and safety for the children. At

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11.54am, the room temperature was recorded at 24.7°C. Two air conditioning units were brought into the room at this time as the children were getting ready to sleep. At 12.15pm the room temperature was recorded at 21.2°C. Two additional fans were brought into the room at 12.28pm. the room temperature at 12.35pm was recorded at 22°C.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Three portable 5-litre air coolers were purchased and are now available for use in the Pre-Montessori room to help maintain the required room temperature within the recommended range of 18°C–22°C.

These units have been added to the room and are used throughout the mornings before sleep time to ensure the room is cool and within the required 18°C–22°C before the sleep time period to ensure the comfortable and safe environment for children. The service is planning to install a permanent air conditioning system in the pre-Montessori room to ensure the room temperature remains within the regulatory requirement of 18–22°C. In the interim, portable air conditioning units will be used, blinds will be kept down during warm weather, and all necessary measures will be implemented to maintain the room temperature within the required range.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the purchase invoice is attached as evidence of this corrective action.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been addressed.