

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015DS245 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Once Upon A Time |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Arena Creche, Whitestown Way, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin |
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|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Eircode:</b> | D24 K223 |
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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> | 02/06/2026 |
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|                                   |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 64 | PM | 64 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore<br>Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | R. Brien & E. Mulhern                                                                            |
| <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).

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### Description of service

Once Upon A Time is a full day care service provided by the registered providers who operate 11 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 service operates from a retail unit which has been adapted for use as an early years service in an urban area of Tallaght, Dublin. There are five care rooms in the service over two floors.

The Junior and Senior Wobbler rooms are located on the ground floor and cater for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Toddler, Pre Montessori and Montessori rooms are located on the first floor. The Toddler room caters for children aged 2 years. The Pre Montessori room caters for children aged 3 years, and the Montessori room caters for children aged 3 to 5 years.

A fully enclosed outdoor area is available on the second floor which can be accessed using a lift.

### Staffing

The service currently employs 19 staff including a manager and a staff member who carries out domestic duties.

There were 19 staff working directly with the children during the inspection.

The operations manager, area manager, and a staff member from another service operated by the registered providers, arrived following the inspector's arrival and were working directly with the children.

The registered providers do not work directly in the service and were not present during 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

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- Discussion with relevant staff

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

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Junior and Senior Wobbler rooms, the Montessori room and the outdoor area.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1) – Record of a pre-school child.

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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### 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*

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(a)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. The deputy person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The inspection focused on the full recruitment records for ten adults employed since the last inspection on 30 June 2025. In addition, Garda vetting for three adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows.

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(a)(b)

Of the 20 validated, written references that were required, 18 were available from a past employer and 2 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the 13 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 and was available for nine staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for ten staff members. Four of these staff members held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

### 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)-*

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*(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 were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 64 children attending the service being supervised by 19 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

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

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

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### Compliance Information

(1)

A sample of 10 records were available and were reviewed which demonstrated that a record was available in writing which contained the information required in (a) to (i) above.

### 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)

Meals were provided regularly and drinking water was available to children throughout the day. Dinner was served from 14:25. All children were given bibs for dinnertime. Staff sat with children during their dinner and children were encouraged to feed themselves. Staff were observed providing additional portions to children who requested more.

Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required and children's hands and faces were cleaned after meals. Children's nappies were changed regularly.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. There was a designated nap time for children. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during their interactions with the children. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff addressed children by their name, used gentle tones and praise and interacted with them in a positive manner.

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A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located on the second floor of the premises and had shock absorbent surfacing. Children were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

### 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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff and children were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

##### Administration of Medication:

- There was a documented care plan available for a child attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff working in the room with the child were aware of the treatment plan and demonstrated knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were carried out and documented every 10 minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.
- An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping on low beds.

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### 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 person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.