

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL236
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Name of Service:	Oaklands House Creche and Montessori
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Address of Service:	Oaklands House, Chapel Lane, Malahide Road, Swords, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 H003
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Name of Registered Provider:	Yvonne Donnelly
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	06/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	56	PM	53
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, 4/5 The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15.
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly & AM Coyle
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

Oaklands House Creche and Montessori is a full day care service registered to accommodate children aged 0-6 years during the hours of operation, 7:30am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from a converted domestic dwelling and separate two storey building located on the premises in Swords, Co. Dublin. The main building consists of the Wobbler 1 room, Wobbler 2 room and Playschool room, 2 rooms designated as sleep rooms and a kitchen. Montessori 1 room and Montessori 2 room are located in the two-storey building. An outdoor area is located to the side of the main building. A separate single-storey building located next to the premises is used for the provision of school aged care and has a log cabin in the garden of this site used as a staff room for all staff.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager who oversees the operation of the early years service. A further 21 staff members are employed in this service including a chef and a cleaner. One student on an Erasmus work experience programme was present in the service on the day of inspection. One staff member works with school aged children only. The registered provider was present in the service during the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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

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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 regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1 Room, Wobbler 2 Room, Playschool Room, Montessori 1 Room and Montessori 2 Room.

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 registered provider, deputy 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The assistant service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The assistant service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

Twenty-three staff files were reviewed. These included the files for the registered provider, student who was present on the day of inspection in addition to 21 staff members, 18 of whom worked directly with the children.

(2)(a) Twenty-seven validated written references were available from a previous employer.

(b) Fifteen validated written references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

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(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 23 adults whose full files were reviewed. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for 13 adults who had lived outside the State as adults for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The staff members all of whom work directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Three references that were available had not been translated to either English or Irish and therefore could not be interpreted. It is a requirement that documents are available in English/ Irish having been translated by a certified translator.

(3) Staff members had commenced employment in the services prior to all the required processes of regulation 9 (2)(a) & (c) being in place.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2)(a) Two references have been translated by a certified translator. One staff member has ceased working in the service.

(3) The registered provider stated that references have been validated and Garda vetting was applied for immediately. Garda vetting disclosure for 1 adult was submitted.

Preventive Action

(2)(a) Going forward the register provider will ask for all documents to be translated by a certified translator before staff member starts employment.

(3) If registered provider is unable to make contact with referees, staff member will be asked for another referee in a timely manner. The service has devised a staff record spreadsheet which will highlight expiry date to avoid this happening in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Garda vetting disclosure for 1 adult.
- Two references translated by a certified translator.
- Reference validation.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances under Regulation 9 have been met.

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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Wobbler 1 Room there were 8 children aged 10 months to 1 year 8 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Wobbler 2 Room there were 8 children aged 1 year 8 months to 2 years 8 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Playschool Room there were 12 children aged 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Montessori 1 Room there were 16 children aged 3 years 3 months to 4 years 7 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Montessori 2 Room there were 12 children aged 4 years 2 months to 5 years 8 months being cared for by 2 staff members.

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(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by the staff roster.

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

Compliance Information

1(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Healthy meals and snacks were provided by the onsite chef at regular intervals throughout the day. On the day of the inspection the children had Thai yellow curry for dinner, potatoes and broccoli. There were alternative food options available for children with additional dietary requirements or preferences. Throughout the care rooms the children's water bottles were accessible to them on low level shelving for them to take as desired throughout the day.
- The children's personal care needs were attended to promptly. The children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as needed. The staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. Toilet trained children were supervised discreetly when using the toilet and support was given when needed.
- The children in the Wobbler 1 and Wobbler 2 rooms were facilitated to sleep in line with their home routine and were placed to sleep when they exhibited signs of tiredness and if their sleep time coincided with mealtimes they were provided with their meals when they woke up. The majority of children attending the Wobbler 1 and Wobbler 2 rooms slept after they had their dinner in the two designated sleep rooms on the ground floor of the service and in the Wobbler 2 room. All of the children in the Wobbler 1 room and Wobbler 2 room slept in cots. The children over 2 years of age attending the Playschool room and Montessori room 1 slept on floor mats after they had their dinner.

Supporting relationships and interactions around children:

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- The inspectors observed the children to be familiar with practitioners. Children sought guidance and support from the practitioners using their names in a relaxed and comfortable manner. The children were given time and encouragement to communicate both verbally and non-verbally and practitioners demonstrated skilful interaction strategies to support the children in conversation and play. Practitioners acted as play partners with the children both indoors and outdoors referring to the children's siblings and parents all of which nurtured links between the service and home.
- Several children were in the process of transitioning between care rooms on the day of inspection. Practitioners throughout the care rooms were observed providing extra comforting and attention at times as needed during the day to assist the children to settle and feel more comfortable in their new care environment.
- The inspectors observed the children in all rooms to be engaged in activities that were planned based on the children's interests or which the children had chosen themselves. Practitioners paid close attention to children's emerging interests and kept note of this information to incorporate when planning the weekly curriculum of activities. Practitioners in each room were observed to build the children's confidence by praising and encouraging their involvement in activities and on completion of tasks.
- Parents and guardians were observed being warmly welcomed in the service both at drop off and collection. Practitioners took the opportunity at this time to update parents on their children's day in the service. In the Baby room and Wobbler room a daily record of the children's feeding, nappy changes, activities, general wellbeing and sleep was maintained for the children and shared with the parents when the children are collected from the service.

Physical and material environment:

- There was age-appropriate furniture with small child sized chairs and tables for children to sit whilst they played or for mealtimes. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children's independence in play. The rooms were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. There was plenty of free floor space in the wobbler rooms for children to explore and move around with padded floor mats, covered foam wedges and push-along toys provided to support gross motor development. Wall-mounted mirrors supported the development of children's visual senses.
- There were home corners and role play areas with wooden kitchen, kitchen equipment and small world items such as dolls and animals, and transportation toys such as cars, garage, wooden trains and train tracks to support imaginative and interactive play. Construction materials included work bench, wooden

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blocks and plastic building bricks. There were tabletop materials to support fine motor development. There were art and craft areas with art materials to support creative art and mark making for children. There were cosy areas equipped with child sized soft sofas and soft seating, cushions and a selection of books for reading and relaxation and providing opportunities for storytelling.

- An enclosed spacious outdoor area located to the side of the service had a variety of equipment and materials to meet children's developmental needs and interests. There were interest areas to include a large wooden and metal climbing frame with steps, standing platform bridge and a slide, small plastic slides, see-saw, scooters, ride on bikes and ride in cars and push and pull toys which promoted gross motor, fundamental movement skills and safe risky play opportunities for children. There were sit-in wooden stationary trains and cars, a kitchen area and playhouse with dinosaurs which provided opportunities for pretend and dramatic play. There was a large sandpit with buckets and spades for sensory play. There were transportation toys such as wheelbarrows and trolleys which supported children to move materials around the outdoor environment and promoted opportunities for schematic play. There were children's tables and chairs and benches for children to sit and relax or to carry out table top activities.

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:

- Entry to the service was managed by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The inspectors were asked to sign into the visitor's book on arrival.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with artificial grass.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and individual cloth towels for children's use were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Documented cleaning schedules were available in the service.

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Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The ambient temperature in Cot Room 1 where children were sleeping was recorded as 20.9°C at 11.45am in Cot Room 1, 20.5°C at 11.43am in Cot room 2 and 20.7°C at 12.05pm in Wobbler 2 room.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- A Garda vetting disclosure that was available for 1 staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

- Infection control measures were not always followed in the service. The possible risk of the spread of infection was increased due to the following:
 - The children were not assisted to wash their hands after nappy changing on 3 occasions.
 - Handwashing was not always carried out by staff in between nappy changing of children.
 - There were 4 children's soothers left sitting on the shelving unit.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no written health care plan available for 1 child in the Wobbler 2 room who required medication in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged that the medication was stored safely in the care room out of children's reach and available to adults as required in the event of an emergency and that the staff member had good knowledge about was required in relation to administration of this medication. However, having a care plan available for other staff members that may be working in the room would minimise the safety risk to the child in relation to the administration of medication.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was applied for immediately.

Preventive Action

1. The service has devised a staff record spreadsheet which will highlight expiry date to avoid this happening in the future.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

2. A memo was issued immediately to remind staff of the importance of strict hygiene practices for both staff and children. All rooms that have children who use soothers have been reminded to use their soother steriliser. There is a soother steriliser in each room that requires it.

Preventive Action

2. Checks will be carried out to ensure proper hygiene practices are being followed.

Administration of Medication:

Corrective Action

3. Health care plan was immediately written up in collaboration with the parent.

Preventive Action

3. Following enrolment and during settling in period, the service will write a health care plan for children if required before their official start date.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Evidence of Garda vetting application & Garda vetting disclosure for 1 adult
- Health care plan.

Summary Comment

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

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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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. There were 6 staff members trained in First Aid Response (FAR).

(2)(a) Adequately stocked first aid kits were observed throughout the service.

(b) First aid boxes were stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured the following:

(a) A record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 10/06/26.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available.

Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 24/03/26 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 03/04/26

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the care rooms and the hallway of the service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 89 children for full day care with an expiry date of 27/03/2027.