

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY104
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Headstart at Hannah's
-------------------------	-----------------------

Address of Service:	Doonbeg, Ballinderry, Tuam, Co. Galway
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	H54 AK06
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Hannah Coen
-------------------------------------	-------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	15/10/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	59	PM	37
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan and F. Mc Donagh.
Title:	Early Years Inspector.

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	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

This full day care service is in a rural area of north county Galway near the town of Tuam and the village of Corofin. The service is in a standalone building and there are 4 playrooms, a sensory playroom and sanitary facilities. The hot meal of the day is cooked in the service kitchen. The pre-school children have access to secure outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises for play activities and fresh air.

The service offers a full day care programme from 07.30 am to 18.00, from Monday to Friday, for children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. The (ECCE) Early Childhood Care and Education pre-school care programme operates from 09.00 to 12.00 from Monday to Friday. There is also a school aged service provided on the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider was the person in charge and there was a named deputy manager to deputise as required. There are a total of 12 adults working in the service, 9 adults work directly with children which includes the registered provider, there is also a cook and 2 school aged staff in the service.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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, 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was a person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises when the pre-school children were present.

(c) A clear management structure was in place, each adult's roles and responsibilities were displayed in the service.

All 12 adult files were reviewed on the day of inspection:

(2)(a) Twenty-two of the required 24 validated references on file in respect of 12 adults were from a past employer.

(b) Two of the 24 validated references were from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 12 adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that no adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years, therefore none required police vetting.

(4) There was evidence that the 10 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to an 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent.

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) There was an adequate number of adults working with the children on the day of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to.
There were 9 adults working directly with 59 children in the morning and with 37 children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were rostered during the operation of the service.

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

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The healthy eating policy was available for parents and guardians to view. The snacks and hot meal provided were healthy and nutritious. The hot meal of the day was chicken and vegetables which were grown on a local farm.
- Perishable items that were belonging to preschool children were stored in the service fridge.

- Crockery and plates used during children’s snack times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Children attending the service were toilet trained and toileted independently or with some assistance or support by adults as required.
- Younger children in nappies had them changed in a timely caring manner by the adults. Adults were observed picking up on childrens cues throughout the day.
- The children’s self-care was assisted and encouraged by adults for e.g. to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after outdoor play, after using a tissue and after messy play.
- In the playrooms the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couch in a designated cosy area and the service also had a sensory room where children could take time out and relax.
- Stackable beds and clean linen were available for sleep and a playroom was converted into a sleep room during the day.

Supporting Relationships

- Children’s behaviour was consistently managed in a positive manner by adults, with an emphasis on positive reinforcement and encouragement. Children were shown positive strategies to manage their behaviour during the day by adults.
- Adults were observed to show empathy and speak to children in a caring way throughout the day.
- There was an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises which had age-appropriate divided play areas that were clearly defined based on the age of the children. There was also a large shed with clearly defined interest areas for children to play in bad weather. Children could view ducks and hens in a secured area separate to the service.
- The play equipment and materials provided in the outdoor area supported a range of physically energetic activities and play experiences.

Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians, conduct observations to support each child’s developmental needs.
- Each child had a learning journal identifying their likes and preferences, showing their art and crafts work for the year.

- The programme of care was flexible and guided by the children’s choices. Children were supported by the staff during periods of individual and group-based activities. The staff sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.
 - The emerging interests were recorded on a board to inform the short-term planning and emerging interests of children.
 - Transitions between activities were well planned by staff and were carried out in a calm and relaxed environment. Good communication between adults in planning activities was observed.
 - On review of the documentation of the service it takes a wholistic approach to each child’s learning and development. They work in partnership with parents to enhance each individual child’s learning experience while attending the service.
 - The service programme of activity and curriculum which was in place supported the individual needs of each child in line with their age and stage of development. The curriculum was based on different models of best practice in early childhood education.
 - The activities observed were both adult and child led, both indoors and outdoors with an emphasis of the children’s emerging interests, wellbeing and development.
- The themes of the week were ‘Road Safety, Autum and Halloween’. Childrens artwork was on display in all the playrooms.
 - Children were observed in free play, the outdoor play area, group activities, playing in the clearly defined interest areas, at tabletop activities and at artwork.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Compliance Information

(1) Documented evidence that children attending the service were signed in was available and reviewed by the inspectors. An adult was assigned to handover each child to their parent or guardian when leaving the service to ensure each child’s safety. The adult was observed signing out each child as they left the service on the attendance record.

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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. Four adults had current training in first aid response for children.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the service.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped with all contents within expiry dates and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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) (a) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service the last fire drill was conducted on the 26 September 2025.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment on the premises and was serviced on 05 June 2025.
- Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of and fire, smoke alarms in the premises with the annual check dated the 05 June 2025.
- (4) A notice was displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that during the inspection all children were appropriately supervised, when attending the service in the playrooms. On the day of inspection, supervision by adults was both by sight and sound to ensure children’s safety. The adults were observed supervising children in the outdoor play areas and indoors at toileting, nappy changing, in the playrooms and at sleep time in the designated sleep rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for 79 pre-school children. The insurance policy for the sessional service was valid until the 27 March 2026.