

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY003				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	ABC Pre-School				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Friar Street, Thurles, Co. Tipperary				
<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 CV07				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Norah Commins				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/11/2023				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>42</td> <td>PM</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </table>	AM	42	PM	39
AM	42	PM	39		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

This full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years. A registered school aged care service is also provided to children aged 5 – 12 years. The service operates Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a 3-hour sessional service funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children which operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from a two-storey, mid-terrace premises in the town of Thurles in North Tipperary. This former business and residential premises was converted for use as a childcare facility with the early years service on the ground floor and the school aged service on the first floor. The early years service consists of three activity rooms, a sleep room, kitchen, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play areas.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service with responsibility for catering, administration and providing relief in the rooms when needed. There were 14 staff employed in the service, of whom 11 were present and working directly with the children on the day of inspection. This includes 2 staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). Two childcare students on placement were also present in the service 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), (11)(1)(2)(8), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 23, 24(1)(3) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment

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 inspector wishes 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

*(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

The staff files of six staff and two students who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 29 June 2022 were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of the six staff and two students.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of three staff and one student.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and the students. Relevant documents were held on file.

(4) Most staff employed to work directly with the children in the early years service held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework. Students on work placement were present in a supernumerary capacity.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting had not been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

Police vetting has been applied for. We will ensure that any person being employed who lived abroad for longer than 6 months is police vetted.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliance will be addressed when the police vetting has been received.

## 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 were 10 staff working directly with 42 children aged between 7 months and 6 years on the morning of the inspection. The number of children had reduced to 39 in the afternoon. The children and staff were divided between 4 groups over 3 rooms.

There were 2 groups in the main room: Bright Sparks group had 11 children aged between 3 and 6 years being supervised by 3 staff, including 2 staff employed under AIM; and Little Learners group had 11 children aged between 2¾ and 3¾ years being supervised by 2 staff. There was also a childcare student in Little Learners who was not included in the adult/child ratios.

The were 6 children aged 2 years being supervised by 2 staff in Little Lobsters room.

There were 14 children aged between 7 months and 2 years being supervised by 3 staff in Little Einstein’s room.

There was a childcare student and a member of staff working in a supernumerary capacity also present in this room who were not included in the adult/child ratios.

The registered provider was available in the service to provide relief in the rooms when required and was responsible for catering duties in the service. Another member of staff arrived at midday to help relieve for staff breaks.

(2) The adult/child ratios were maintained within the recommended ratios throughout the period of the inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

*(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-*

*(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

## Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to both indoor and outdoor environments to play and explore during the day. Each age group had a designated activity room which was set up with a range of activities and materials suitable to their age and stage of development. The outdoor area was also divided into separate spaces for each of the age groups.

(b) There were cosy areas in each room where the children could rest and relax during the day. There were reclining infant chairs in Little Einsteins room where the children could rest and relax. The staff said that the children liked to sit in them to rest and become fully awake again after waking from their sleep time in the sleep room. There was a sleep room with five cots available to the children who wanted to sleep during the day. Sleep mats were available for children aged over 2 years who required a sleep during the day. The sleep mats were placed on the floor of Little Lobsters room after dinner for those who wanted to sleep.

(3)(a) There was a large area at the back of the premises, enclosed by stone walls and fitted gates which was available to the children for outdoor play. This space had been divided into four separate areas for use by the different age groups of children. There was a covered area which enabled the children to play outdoors in all weathers, a large grass covered field which was used primarily by the school aged children, a natural area with mud kitchen, swings, trees and shrubs, and tarmac covered areas for ride-on toys, push toys, ball games and movement activities. All of the children enjoyed outdoor play on a daily basis. Children had suitable outdoor clothing including rubber boots and waterproof overalls to support outdoor play in all weathers.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

Each room was equipped with a range of furniture, toys and materials suitable to the age and stage of development of the children in each room. New padded floor mats had been purchased for each room since the last inspection in June 2022 to facilitate floor play. New semi-recumbent infant chairs had been purchased for Little Einstein’s room.

Toys and materials were laid out in interest areas which guided and supported the children’s exploration and self-directed play. Toys and equipment were displayed on open shelving units that were child height and easily accessible.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Meals and snacks provided by the service were planned on a three-week rolling menu basis. Some of the children brought their own meals and snacks from home, for example the children in Bright Sparks, who will go to primary school next year, brought a packed lunch to eat in the morning.

Lunches on the day of inspection included rice cakes, crackers, sandwiches, fromage frais, pancakes, fruit (bananas, pineapple, apple and mandarin) with drinks of smoothies, juice, squash and water. Childrens allergies and food intolerances were taken into consideration when planning meals. Parents supplied all food eaten in the service for some children with food intolerances.

Bottles of infant formula were brought in reconstituted and were stored in the fridge in Little Einsteins room.

Dinner on the day of inspection for the younger children in Little Einsteins room was roast chicken with potatoes and vegetables. The older children had roast chicken in a tomato sauce served with pasta and the option of grated cheese on top according to each child's preference.

Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day. Each child had their own drink bottle that was refilled with water as required.

### 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 service was accessed through doors at the front and back of the premises. All doors were kept secured with entry and exit to and from the service managed by staff.

The outdoor play area was enclosed and secured so that children could not gain access to the roadway in front of the premises and to prevent any unauthorised access to the service.

The service recently had flood gates fitted to the front of the premises and was due to have flood gates fitted to the back of the premises as a precaution against potential flooding.

##### Infection Control:

The staff and children were observed to follow good hand hygiene practices such as washing hands before eating, after using the toilet or nappy changing and after outdoor play. There was a sink in each of the activity rooms as well as in the sanitary accommodation areas to facilitate hand washing.

The service had a cleaning policy which included the method and frequency of cleaning all surfaces, fixtures, fittings, toys and equipment. Staff were responsible for cleaning in their rooms and were observed to practice 'clean as you go' with regard to cleaning tabletops and floors.

##### Administration of Medication:

The service has a policy on the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought before staff could administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to a child attending the service.

##### Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Sleep checks were carried out on sleeping children every ten minutes and a record was maintained of them.

### 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.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) Attendance registers were available in each room. The staff in each room were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children.

(3)(a) Staff ensured that only those who had permission to do so entered the premises.

(b) A record was maintained of any visitors to the service such as the inspector.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had current insurance for up to 60 children attending at any one time, valid until 27 March 2023.