

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023CE002		
Name of Service:	ABC Future Heroes Preschool		
Address of Service:	Cooraclare National School, Dangananella East, Cooraclare, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V15 D728		
Name of Registered Provider:	Thais Santos		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	18/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM 4
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare		
Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes		
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

ABC Future Heroes Pre-school was established in 2023, in a classroom in Cooraclare National School in County Clare. The current registered provider took over the preschool in September 2024. The childcare facility operates from Monday to Friday from 07:00 to 18:00. The care of the children is provided in one care room within a National School premises. An outdoor area is provided to the rear of the childcare facility.

Staffing

The registered provider and three adults are employed by the service. On the 18 February 2026, three adults worked directly with the children in attendance. The registered provider arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival and provided an administrative role as well as working with the children.

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. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) and (8)(a)

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(h)(i)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1), (2)(a)(b).

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4).

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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, 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.

(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)

On the 18 February 2026 the registered provider and a manager was available, and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and manager were available during the inspection.

(2)

Four files were available in respect of the registered provider and three adults currently working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Five written and validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Three written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of three adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

Four adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister 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)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 18 February 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Three adults cared for the thirteen children in attendance in the morning and two adults cared for the four children in the afternoon. The registered provider arrived onsite during the inspection and assisted the adults and provided relief cover for staff breaks.
- (8)(a)
During the inspection more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
(h)
The children’s arrival and departure to and from the childcare facility were recorded on an electronic childcare application device.
- (i)
A staff roster was available which demonstrated the adults rostered hours and work schedule.

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)

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a caring manner. Positive language was used during interactions. The adults praised and encouraged the children, conversed with the children at their level, used soft tones of voice and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort. The children were encouraged to be independent during mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The adults treated the children in a respectful manner while the children used the toilet and during nappy changes. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care and prompted to wipe their noses at appropriate intervals. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed occasion. Water was available in containers accessible to the children throughout the day. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided during mealtime.

Physical and Material Environment:

The service is operated from one room in the national school. The room was bright, spacious and well-resourced and laid out to enable the children to freely access the equipment and materials. Throughout the day, the children were offered a range of play based activities. Learning aids and the children's individual artwork were displayed. Areas of interest were provided within the playroom which was resourced with a kitchen and home corner, art stations, sensory areas, pretend play, dress up area with dressing table, chair and mirror, constructive play areas, wooden activity units for climbing, and balance blocks. Seating with soft furnishings and mats with adjacent reading materials were used by the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, sensory, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children.

The outdoor area was located to the rear of the premises and was fully enclosed with a high level fence and gate. Ride on toys and play equipment which included balls, cones and hoops were stored indoors and brought out to support the outdoor play opportunities.

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:

- A bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the service.
- The outdoor area was secured and enclosed with a surrounding perimeter fence and gate to protect the children within.
- The children were signed in and out on arrival to and departure from the service on the childcare electronic application system and supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.
- Medication was stored in a secure cabinet out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The children's and adult's sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined and pedal operated bins.
- The observed nappy changes were completed in accordance with the service's infection control policy. A nappy changing procedure was displayed in the nappy changing facilities.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime.
- Perishable food items and beverages were stored in the refrigerators in the care room.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The staff demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication procedure.
- Documentation was available should medication be administered to a child attending the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- The fire assembly point and the fire exit route signage were readily identifiable and known to the adults working in the service.

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)
All adults working in the service had current certification in first aid response FAR.
- (2)
(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the care room. The adults working in the service were familiar with the location of the first aid box.
- (b)
The first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The most recent maintenance records for these were dated 20 August 2025 and 05 April 2025 respectively.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the main playroom and in the hallway.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record was not available of the monthly fire drills that are required to be carried out in the service. The last fire drill was carried out in December 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) A fire drill was immediately conducted with all staff and children attending the service. A report was created, adding the number of staff and number of children present, the evacuation time, and the person in charge. ABC Future Heroes Preschool has added fire drill to its calendar and reports will be kept for each fire drill.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of fire drills carried out 27 February 2026 and 18 March 2026

Summary Comment

The actions taken have addressed the non-compliance. The requirements of Regulation 26(1)(a) have been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of current insurance cover was available for twenty-two pre-school children attending the service on a full day care basis. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was 27 March 2026.