

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY069				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Clever Clogs Montessori Pre-School				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Menlough National School, Menlough, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.				
<b>Eircode:</b>	H53 A3E8				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Maria Kelly				
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23 February 2023				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>23</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	23	PM	N/A
AM	23	PM	N/A		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Heagney				
<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
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### Description of service

This privately operated pre-school is in a detached prefabrication unit to the side and rear of the national school in the village of Menlough, Co. Galway. The pre-school offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care pre-school programmes, from Monday to Friday. The pre-school caters for children aged between 2 to 6 years. The service caters for a maximum number of 33 pre-school children, at any one time. There are two playrooms, and sanitary areas. A quiet rest area is provided in each playroom, to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chooses to. There is a secure outdoor play area to rear of the premises for children to have fresh air and a range of play experiences. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on emerging interests and an enquiry-based programme with elements of Highscope and Montessori is provided.

### Staffing

There is a person in charge and a named deputy person in charge. Six staff including the registered provider, hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education.

### 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, and facilities. The inspections 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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*
- (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) There was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
  - (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived, and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.
  - (c) Staff rosters and documentary evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, which identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.
- (2) The files for the six staff were reviewed.
- (a)&(b) Twelve of the twelve written validated references, on file for the six staff, were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect of the six staff.
  - (d) None of the six staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age, and therefore did not require police vetting.
- (4) The six staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the six staff.

### 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)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of the inspection, there were 23 pre-school children aged between 2 to 6 years.
- There were four staff working directly with the pre-school children.
- (8)(c) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

### 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.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

*(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) A sample of nine children’s records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspector.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The nine random children’s records contained the following: The name and date of birth of the child.

- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child’s parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.

- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

(4)&(5) The person in charge advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending 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,*

#### Compliance Information

- The staff encouraged and supported the children to be as independent, as possible.
- Between 10.40hrs to 11.05hrs, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians. They were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The staff complied with the service’s healthy eating policy.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children’s ages and stages of development.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting. One child wore a nappy and was changed on a regular basis.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax in a designated cosy area.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, playing house / kitchen, at sand and water play. The children chatted about daffodils. The theme of the week ‘Spring’ with children chatting about baby animals and

planting. The children were observed stacking, constructing, shape sorting, connecting, and playing with animals / dinosaurs. The children chatted about their emotions and the food that daffodils eat. In the outdoor area the children played in the hobbit house, filled the wheelbarrows with grass to feed the dinosaurs, and were observed building blocks. They were also observed playing in the mud kitchen, balancing on the bridge, chasing, running, and playing catch. The staff read stories and children questioned the characters and gave their views. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as 'who is this?', 'how many are there?', and 'where is that?'.

- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
  - having a key person system for each child,
  - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
  - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language,
  - using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
  - providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
  - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
  - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.
- Parents/guardians signed a parental agreement form and received a parent handbook with the service ethos, daily routines, strategies for supporting the children and the updated policies, procedures, response plans.
- The service completed Mo Scéal (my story) templates to help tell the story of the child's learning and development. This information was shared with parents and, with their consent, with the primary school.
- On speaking with the person in charge, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages, by phone calls, and by email.
- The staff created individual learning journals / profile books for each child, showing the themes, experiences, and activities engaged in, along with photographs. The themes to date included my first day,

ribbon height, baking, Christmas, exercising, handprints, traffic lights, ghosts, branches, penguins, rainbow art, and sticker pictures. Additionally, there were learning record templates with themes including number recognition, RNLI, the children putting wooden block into the boat, and Halloween. The templates explored each theme under various headings 'look at what I am doing', 'what does this experience tell you about me', 'what will we do next to support my learning' and 'I want to show my family what I can do'. There were also learning plans including 'how are you going to help me', 'what I would like some help with', 'my interests and my favourite things to do' and 'my strengths and competencies'. Children's art and craft work was collated and stored on an individual clip board.

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences. The inspector noted the staff acknowledged a child's achievements 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

### 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 19 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.

(2) A registered provider-

(b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service. The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. The play materials and environment were changeable, flexible, and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests of the children. The staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, and equipment in the environment, based on the child’s choices, age and stage of development.

#### The Playrooms

The indoor playrooms were designed and arranged to

- maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter,
- accommodate children individually, and in small groups,
- divide the space into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children’s play and learning,

- give all children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible by the pre-school children.
- The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.

### Junior playroom

- Materials and items of interest included insets, puzzles, games, links, timers, clocks, connectors, and counters. There were art and craft materials including pipe cleaners, chalk, playdough, paints, art trays, glues, recyclable materials, rollers, coloured paper, stampers, and shape cutters. There were farm animals, farm yards, garages, and dinosaurs. There were shapes, blocks, drawing frames, pins, rods, and stairs. There were sand units with ice trays, containers, sieves, scoops, and shapes. There were shops with baskets and groceries. There was a love heart tree and libraires with books. There was a kitchen with utensils, toasters, cup, plates, pots, and pans. There were dolls, doctor sets, baskets, tracks, mirrors, and musical instruments.
- Displayed on the walls were posters, visual aids, photographs, artwork, and themes including emotions, how many spoons of sugar, our family wall, an easel, white boards, clip boards, Birthday plates, snow clouds, and Lámh (Irish manual sign system that can help a child or an adult to communicate).

### Senior playroom

- Materials and items included a wooden tent with soft matting/ padding and books. There was art and craft materials including glue, egg cartons, junk art, jars, art trays, paints, and paper. There were tracks, rods, pins, links, connectors, stacking materials, dressing frames, and threading. There was the alphabet, numbers, shape sorters, puzzles games, containers, a globe. There was a kitchen with fruit pieces, bowls, tins, plates, utensils, telephones, sieves and containers. There were shapes, small world, little people, doctors sets, and flowers. There was a water basin and a sand basin with utensils. There was a cardboard junk art named Lizzy made by the children.
- Displayed on the walls were notice boards, white boards, posters, visual aids, photographs, artwork, and themes including Happy Birthday plates, numbers, how many spoons of sugar in, the days of the week,

and calendars / schedules. There were also displays of the policeman / woman, our leader check, and the planet earth.

(1)(b) Rest / quiet area was provided in the playrooms in the form of child size seating, foam matting and poof discs to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to.

(2)(a)

### Outdoor area

- The outdoor area was surrounded by fencing and gates. The area was covered with grass, pebbles, wooden planks, bark, and a tarmacadam entrance.
- The outdoor play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate. Items in the outdoor area included a wooden boat with seating, wheelbarrows, cots, rockers, and a balancing bridge. There were tables, trunks, and bench seating. There was a mud kitchen with pots, pans, teapots, and dinosaurs. There were mounted blackboards, a musical wall and bird houses. There was a tree house with a slide. There was a box of transport vehicles and a box with blocks. There was a wooden cabin which the children called the hobbit house.
- The registered provider advised that the children also had opportunities for play in the adjacent grass pitch and tarmacadam playground. The children also had supervised access a nature trail.

## 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

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- Between 10.40hrs and 11.05hrs, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included raisins, cheese, meat slices, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, vegetables / fruit pieces and yogurt.
- Cutlery and plates were offered for children’s snack times.
- Clean and safe drinking water was at a low-level and accessible to children in each playroom.
- There were designated fridges, for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children’s lunch boxes, for their snack times.

## 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:

- There was a buzzer access system at the front door entrance.
- The external play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors were unobstructed.
- Blind cords were secured by fasteners.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all of children attending the playrooms.
- Staff advised of documented risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor play areas.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting / nappy changing, after messy play and outdoor play and prior to their meals / snacks.
- There was a designated nappy table in the sanitary area, adjacent to Junior Pre-school room. Children's barrier creams were clearly individually labelled / stored within the nappy changing areas.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposal paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.

### 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 two staff were trained in first aid for children and available to the children, attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) There were two first aid boxes and a wall mounted cabinet, with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes / cabinet was fully equipped and 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 firefighting 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 recorded fire drill was dated 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2023.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2022.

The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2022.

- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.