

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK050
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Clever Clogs Pre School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St Mary's Old National School, High Street, Croom, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V35 F990
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	David Moloney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	08/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Ellen Browne
<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 community service first notified in 2008 and is registered to provide sessional care and education for children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 12:30 for 38 weeks of the year. The service can cater for up to 22 pre-school children.

The service operates from the refurbished old school building located on the grounds of the national school since January 2023. The service has the sole use of a large playroom, a sensory room and a garden that is shared with the national school, and bathroom facilities for the children and adults. A school aged service and a breakfast club are available to the children attending the national school.

### Staffing

There are five staff members including the manager working in the service each day. The registered provider does not work in the service.

All the staff members hold a qualification in childcare.

### 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 announced 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, 11, 19, 24, 25, and 26; however, on inspection, a non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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
- (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.

(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy was always available on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.

- (2) The files of the five staff members were viewed on the day of inspection.
- (a) Two written and validated references were on file for all staff members working in the service.
- (b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of Garda Síochána were available for all staff members present and working at the service. Garda vetting for the staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the Inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1 January 2024.
- (d) Police vetting for persons who had lived in another country for longer than six consecutive months was not required.
- (3) All of the above documentation was furnished to the registered provider prior to each new staff member taking up employment at the facility.
- (4) All the staff members working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there were 4 childcare staff working with 10 pre-school children for the morning sessional service. The person in charge was also on site if required. The adult to child ratio was maintained throughout the hours of operation.

### 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

##### **BASIC NEEDS:**

The service ensured that each child's learning and development were facilitated within the daily life of the service. A healthy eating policy was in place, and children brought a healthy snack each day with them to the pre-school. Children's foods and perishable drinks were stored in the fridge in the pre-school room and were accessible to the children when needed.

All children were toilet trained and were independently using the bathroom facilities. Help was offered if required. Nappy changing facilities were available if needed. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were accessible in the bathrooms to ensure hygienic washing of hands.

A large couch with soft cushions and floor mats adjacent to the library was positioned in the mezzanine area of the room. This provided the children with a rest space if they needed quiet time away from the general play area.

Children had daily access to the outdoor space containing lots of sensory and natural play materials. A big emphasis was placed on outdoor play and extending the children's learning outcomes in this area.

The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and gentle way.

##### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

The indoor environment was well laid out with a good range of developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences for the children. Low level tables and chairs provided a space for the children for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes. Play equipment and materials were displayed on open low-level shelving and were

grouped to provide specific interest spaces. Some of the areas included a construction area, a home corner equipped with a play kitchen, food props, dolls and prams, an imagination play area with dress up clothes, an art/craft with sensorial and messy play areas. Children's family photographs and educational posters were displayed on the walls of the room at children's eye level.

The outdoor area of the service offered the children space for physical play, for movement and for exploration. There were opportunities available that were exclusive to outdoor and risky play.

### 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) All the pre-school children who attended the service on the day were recorded on the attendance register, and it included their time of arrival and their time of departure.

(3) (a) No persons could enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee other than the following:

(i) A pre-school child.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A daily record in writing was kept of the entry on the premises of any such person in the visitors' book.

### 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) There were four staff members who had up to date children's first aid responder training in place.

(2)(a) The person in charge ensured that suitable equipped first aid boxes for children were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions at the premises.

(b) The first aid boxes 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) There were fire drill records available on file for 2024 and 2025. The last recorded fire drill was dated 1 April 2025.

(b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 27 August 2024, and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on the 26 February 2025. The maintenance certificates were submitted to the Early Years' Inspectorate office.

(4) A fire action notice of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire was clearly displayed in the service.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(b) There was no safe and secure space for the following:

1. The outdoor sensory materials/equipment were exposed when not in use. This increases the risk of damage and pest infestation.

(d) The service was not maintained as evidenced by the following:

2. The wooden fencing and the wooden play equipment/materials in the sensory garden were in poor repair and in need of maintenance. The paint work was chipped and worn.
3. The bark material used to cover the ground surface in the sensory garden was insufficient for the children's safety and play.

These non-compliances pose a risk to the safety of the children.

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

**Corrective and Preventive Action:** The manager has stated that:

- (b)
  1. The service has purchased an outdoor unit for the storage of the outdoor sensory materials and equipment.
- (d)
  2. The service has employed a painter to paint the fence and wooden play equipment; this work is due to start the week beginning the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2025.
  3. The service has purchased a supply of wood chip for the sensory garden due to be delivered the week beginning the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2025.

The staff will carry out regular inspections of the sensory garden this will include the play equipment and materials. Issues will be identified promptly, and this will ensure the regular maintenance of the garden area and its equipment/materials. All inspections will be documented and finding shared with management.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted:**

Photos and invoices for equipment and materials purchased.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 29 Premises points (b) and (d).