

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN014
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Name of Service:	Clever Cloggs Full Day Care Nursery Ltd (Annyalla)
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Address of Service:	Knockcarrick, Annyalla, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A75 XV96
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra McMahon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	33
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
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Inspection undertaken by:	S Taaffe and S Cully
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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
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Description of service

Clever Cloggs Full Day Care Nursery Ltd (Annyalla) is a privately-owned early years service which caters for a maximum of 74 pre-school children from 6 months to 6 years of age on a full day care, part-time and sessional basis. Childcare services are also provided to school aged children up to 10 years of age. The service has been in operation since 2007 and is one of two services operated in Co. Monaghan by the two co-owners. This purpose-built service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm each weekday, with eligible pre-school children facilitated to avail of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00midday daily. There are 4 care rooms in operation, namely the Wobbler Room, the Toddler Room, Pre-school Room 1 and Pre-school Room 2. A spacious enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider and the service's deputy manager coordinate the day-to-day operations of the service and both are available to assist with the care of the children in the care rooms when required. Nine further core staff members are employed to work directly with the children in the service, with 2 of these staff members currently on long term statutory leave. In addition, 1 further core staff member who is employed as a cook holds a major childcare award at Level 6 and is available to provide relief for staff breaks and support with the care of the children when necessary. A college student was also present in the service in a supernumerary capacity on the day of inspection as part of a work experience placement whilst undergoing a Level 5 college course in Early Childhood Studies.

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. 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, deputy manager, staff members, student 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and the deputy manager was appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The person named to deputise in the absence of the registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.50am on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider arrived on the premises shortly thereafter and remained on the premises for part of the inspection.

All staff files were reviewed. A total of 16 files were maintained in respect of the registered provider, the co-owner, the deputy manager, 12 core staff members and the college student.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 16 adults whose files were reviewed.

(a) Twenty-three written references were from past employers.

(b) Nine written references were from sources other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, the co-owner, the deputy manager, 12 core staff members and the college student.

(4) The registered provider, the co-owner, the deputy manager, and 12 core staff members all work directly with pre-school children in the service and each held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or had been issued with a letter of eligibility to practice following an assessment of their qualification by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

Non-Compliance Information

(d) International police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action:

The international police vetting has been applied for by the staff member.

Corrective Action:

All future early years practitioners who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult will have international police vetting carried out prior to working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the required international police vetting certificate dated 15/11/2023 for the relevant staff member which was written in a language which had been translated into English by an official translation service.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the corrective actions and supporting documentation submitted by the registered provider after the inspection.

The registered provider demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2)(d) has been adequately addressed.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Wobbler Room there were 6 children (of whom 2 children were aged 8 months and 10 months and 4 children who were aged 1 year 10 months to 1 year 11 months) being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Toddler Room there were 6 children aged 2 years and 1 month and 2 years and 4 months being cared for by 1 adult.
- In Pre-school Room 1 there were 14 children aged 2 years 11 months to 3 years 9 months being cared for by 2 adults when the ECCE programme was in operation. Six of these children were present with 1 staff member on the afternoon of the inspection.
- In Pre-school Room 2 there were 20 children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 6 months being cared for by 2 staff members when the ECCE programme was in operation. Fifteen of these children were present with 2 staff members on the afternoon of the inspection.

The registered provider, deputy manager and staff member who was mainly assigned to kitchen duties were all available to provide relief for staff breaks and support in the care rooms when required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at 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

1 (a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs:

- Breakfast was available for children in the morning up until 8.30am, if required. Food was prepared on-site on a daily basis and a weekly dinner menu was on display. On the day of inspection, children in the Wobbler and Toddler room had a hot meal of chicken dippers and spaghetti hoops between 10.30am – 11.00am. The children in the pre-school rooms brought their own morning snacks to the service. A chicken and vegetable soup lunch was served at 1.00pm with a later snack of a variety of snack foods including fruit, crackers or breadsticks being provided to children at 3.30pm. Drinking water was available at every meal. Children's water bottles were accessible during the day and offered to children while eating. Mealtimes were observed to be a social occasion with children and staff talking together, and children allowed time to finish their food at their own pace with support provided when needed.
- In the Wobbler Room, staff facilitated child-led sleep schedules by following children's individual routines and responding to children's cues of tiredness by bringing them to the sleep room where cots were available. The children in the Toddler Room had time to nap and rest from 11.15am and were provided with sleep mats and fresh bed linen. Children had access to comfortable spaces for rest within all care rooms.
- On the morning of the inspection, the inspectors observed the children in all rooms engaged in interesting activities that were planned based on their interests or which the children had chosen themselves. For example, when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service, the children in the Toddler room were just finishing washing animal figures in a water tray, the children in Pre-school Room 1 were being provided with activities in different learning areas including an open sand tray and children in Pre-school

Room 2 were outside accessing a variety of learning stations also including sensory play. Throughout the inspection, children's interests were observed to be followed and staff were responsive to their ideas and requests for materials. Children moved freely in their spaces, were encouraged to explore, and were praised for their efforts and success in activities.

- Nappy changing for younger children occurred regularly and as needed. Staff were observed to carry out nappy changing in a sensitive and respectful manner, talking and chatting with children throughout the process. Older children used the toilets independently with discreet supervision and support was provided to children who required assistance during toileting.
- Children were observed to spend time outdoors during the inspection and were appropriately dressed on each occasion during a day of changeable weather.

Supporting relationships:

- It was observed that the children and staff were very familiar and comfortable with one another, including the registered provider, deputy manager and the staff member providing break cover who were present in the care rooms during the inspection. This was evidenced by the staff members' nurturing interactions with the children and the use of children and staff members names during conversations heard taking place together about family, recent events or activities they would like to do soon.
- Staff members communicated well together and with the inspectors about children's routines and needs. Staff demonstrated knowledge of and familiarity with the children's preferences and worked together to provide the children with what they needed to feel safe and secure. For example, a child in Pre-school Room 1 was facilitated to go back to the room during outdoor play time as staff knew that the child needed a break from the busy area. Staff members in the Wobbler Room were heard on a number of occasions telling a child who had returned to the service on the day of inspection following a 2-week holiday that they were missed when away and that the staff members and children were glad they were back. This child appeared very settled during the inspection, with no evidence of distress such as crying observed.
- The service uses a mobile application (an 'App') to communicate children's routines and learning with their parents and guardians. Parents and guardians were greeted by name at collection time. The deputy manager also described how new families are given a tour of the whole service before their child joins the service and that parents are facilitated to be present during the settling-in process when needed for the benefit of the child.

Physical and material environment:

- A variety of play materials and resources were available in all four care rooms. Materials were accessible on low-level shelving to facilitate children's independent choice and play.
- Each care room had designated areas of interest including library/cozy corners, home corners, shop areas, construction area, messy areas, dress up and creation stations. Each room reflected the age and interests of the children present, with additional play equipment and materials in storage which the inspectors were informed were rotated for use into the care rooms on a regular basis to support play and learning, taking cognisance of the children's emergent interests. The children's unique artwork was on display in each room.
- Sensory play experiences were facilitated indoors with sand tables provided in each care room and also in the outdoor play areas.
- Each room had access to an assigned outdoor play space at all times.
 - The outdoor space designated for the children attending and accessed directly from the Wobbler Room had an artificial grass surface and contained an outdoor kitchen, ride-on self-propel cars, push-along toys, a low-level plastic slide and a plastic playhouse.
 - The outdoor space for children attending the Toddler Room contained sensory play wall displays, a playhouse, bikes and ride a long toys, bench and sandbox.
 - The outdoor space provided for Pre-school Room 1 had a tar and gravel surface and contained water and sand trays, a wooden climbing frame, tables and chairs, a child sized sofa covered in water resistant material, dolls prams, balance bikes, a slide, basketball hoop and mud kitchen.
 - Outdoor space for Pre-school Room 2 was also surfaced in tar and gravel and contained water and sand trays, a tray-top activity table, a wooden outdoor kitchen, an A-frame climbing wall, balance beams and a large upright 4-in-a-row sturdy frame.
 - Staff were observed to bring additional materials and resources to the outdoor spaces including toys from the rooms and parachutes.

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-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Adequate facilities for rest and sleep were provided in the service for the number and age range of children attending. There were two separate sleep rooms provided on the premises. The smaller sleep room which adjoined the Wobbler Room contained 4 standard cots whilst the larger sleep room contained 9 standard cots. Digital thermometers were provided in both sleep rooms and, in discussion with the inspectors, staff members accurately described national best practice safe sleep guidelines regarding the prevention of sudden infant death, including safe sleep room temperatures. All cots were observed to be in good condition with appropriately fitting supportive safety mattresses. Children aged 2 years and older slept on sleep mats on the floor of the Toddler Room at the service's designated sleep time after dinner. Within care rooms there were suitable rest areas equipped with soft matting and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if 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 entrance doors and garden gates were secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the childcare service.
- The water temperature in the hot taps did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.
- Play materials and equipment provided in each care room were observed to be safe and suitable for the children present.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The management team conducted monthly audits in the service. These records included a review of documentation completed in the care rooms, in addition to a review of safety and quality issues within the

service. The audits outlined the precautions and control measures put in place to reduce the likelihood of a child experiencing harm as a consequence of any identified risk.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins in the service.
- The premises' play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition. There was a process in place for the cleaning of toys and equipment on a daily and weekly basis. Tables were observed to be appropriately cleaned prior to and following meals and snacks.
- The children in the service were facilitated to wash their hands before eating and following outdoor and messy play. Children who were toilet trained were gently reminded, and assisted when necessary, to wash their hands after using the toilet. Hand hygiene pictorial posters were positioned throughout the service to remind staff and children on the appropriate hand washing technique.
- Staff members wore individual aprons and gloves for nappy changing procedures and washed their own hands before changing gloves between each nappy change. Children's hands were washed after they had their nappies changed.
- The service implemented effective soother management procedures, with all individually labelled soothers stored in personalised containers when not in use.
- The sand tables provided in the outdoor play area had appropriate lids available and were covered when not in use, to prevent contamination by animals and birds.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.
- There was evidence of appropriate record keeping in relation to medication administered to children in the service, with the records maintained electronically using a softwear application. The electronic records showed that the forms had been shared with and reviewed by the children's parent or guardian and that parents were aware of when and how much medication had been administered to their child over the course of the day.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern were being performed and documented on all sleeping children.

- Based on an examination of the children’s attendance records maintained in the service, all children under 2 years of age have access to a standard cot on a daily basis. All children aged less than 2 years slept in a standard cot on the day of inspection.
- The temperature in the sleep rooms was monitored and recorded on a daily basis and was maintained between 16 - 20°C.

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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for 12 staff members and in the service’s staff roster.

(2)(a) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations in each care room and in the service kitchen.

(b) The first aid supplies were available to the staff members at all times for the children attending the service.