

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MN014
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Clever Clogs Full Day Care Nursery Ltd (Annyalla)
-------------------------	---

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Knockcarrick, Annyalla, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	A75 XV96
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Paula Dobbin
-------------------------------------	--------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	13/11/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	52	PM	48
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S Mc Kenna & M Mc Donnell
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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

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 aged 0 to 6 years on a full day care, part-time and sessional basis. The service has been in operation since 2007 and is one of two services operated in Co. Monaghan by the registered provider. This purpose-built service operates from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm each weekday, with eligible pre-school children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00 am to 12.00 midday daily. There are 4 care rooms in operation, namely the Wobbler Room, the Toddler Room, Pre-school Room 1 and Pre-school Room 2. Designated outdoor areas for each care room are located to the rear and side of the premises. School aged childcare is also provided.

### Staffing

There is a total of 19 staff employed to work in the service. This includes the registered provider, a service manager, fifteen childcare staff, one cook who is qualified in childcare and also covers in care rooms and one school-aged staff member.

### 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 & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 28 Insurance.

However, on inspection, an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations in 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, service manager, 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) The service had a designated person in charge, and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge and registered provider, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation, the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster on display and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 19 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 19 adults.

A total of 26 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 12 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 19 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for 19 staff demonstrated that 2 adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 2 staff was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 18 staff employed to work with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification for the school-aged staff member is not required.

### 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 adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

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

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance;

Two adults cared for 8 children aged 11 months to 1 years 7 months in the Wobbler room, of whom all attended on a part time or full day care basis.

Two adults cared for 11 children aged 1 year 4 months to 2 years 4 months in the Toddler room, of whom all attended on part time or full day care basis.

Two adults cared for 14 children aged 2 years 5 months to 3 years 10 months in Preschool 1, all of whom attended on part time or full day care basis.

Three adults cared for 19 children aged 3 years 3 months to 4 years 6 months in Preschool 2 of whom 4 attended on a sessional basis and 15 attended on part time or full day care basis.

In addition to the above, the service manager, registered provider and cook covered the care rooms for staff breaks and lunches and provided additional help when needed.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises 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;

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (h)

Attendance records reviewed at 11 am in the Toddler room did not adequately reflect the attendance of each child on the day of the inspection. One child present in the Toddler room, who arrived at approximately 10am was not signed in on the services' digital attendance records. It is acknowledged that when brought to the attention of the staff in this room, the child was then signed in.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

A staff meeting took place on Friday, 14th November and all staff were in attendance.

Regular Staff meetings and management supervision and overseeing of the digital attendance times being checked in on arrival and departure.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of staff meeting minutes.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 16 (1) (h).

### 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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being were facilitated in the service:

##### Basic Needs

The children were observed to have access to their drinking cups and bottles throughout their day. Snack times were observed to be unrushed, where children chatted with their friends, and adults used this time to sit with and encourage conversations among the children.

The older children were observed to use the toilet independently, with staff providing close supervision to any child who required additional support. The younger children had their nappies changed at scheduled times, and outside of these times when their routine required. The staff were observed to chat and sing with the younger children during nappy changing times.

Children's appearances were cared for through the use of bibs for younger children at meal times, aprons for messy play activities and spare clothing for each child if needed.

The individual sleep needs of the younger children were met. This was observed on the day when children were placed for a sleep in line with their individual care needs. Older children in the Toddler room slept at a scheduled time, approximately 11.30 am daily.

Rest areas to include soft mats and cushions provided areas in each of the care rooms where children could rest and take time out from their day if they wished.

Younger children were observed to crawl and play on soft floor areas within the Wobbler room.

Outdoor play was facilitated for the children in Preschool 1 and 2 and the children were dressed appropriately for the weather on the day.

Individual care plans were available where children required additional supports and for emergency care procedures.

### Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere upon the inspector's arrival was warm and welcoming. The children were observed to be engaged in play and activities of their choice. The children appeared familiar with the staff who cared for them and confidently sought out staff when required for help and support.

The staff used gentle encouragement for children to be mindful of other children's feelings and were observed to promote positive behaviour. Praise was given for positive behaviour interactions to include comments such as "good boy" "well done". The staff used age-appropriate strategies to help children find positive solutions to problems, such as turn taking.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes while also acknowledging children's individual preferences and choice.

The staff were observed to communicate using soft, gentle tones while interacting with the younger children. Floor play was availed of in the Wobbler room with the staff remaining close by the children for supports, singing songs and providing access to toys when required.

Communication with families is through the use of a digital application, where the child's daily routine to include sleep, meals and toilet/nappy times, is recorded. Photos of activities and observations are also shared with parents this way. The parents are greeted at the main entrance door, and the staff take the children to their individual care rooms in the morning. Parents also use this time to communicate relevant information regarding their child.

The staff team and management were observed to work well together in all of the care rooms. The staff communicated frequently with each other, ensuring transitions were smooth for the children.

### Physical And Material Environment

The indoor care rooms were comfortable, pleasant and laid out to suit the needs of the children in attendance.

There was ample space for babies and young children to engage in floor play. Many interest areas were provided in each care room and set out in a clearly defined, uncluttered manner.

Indoor play equipment and materials available provided a range of enriching learning experiences for children.

The materials in each of the care rooms were freely available and accessible to children on low level shelves and boxes at children's level, nurturing independence to retrieve and self-care to return. The display of seasonal artwork was on each of the care room walls, along with birthday charts and family walls. Sensory play was a predominant theme throughout the service, where staff and children embraced learning through their senses.

Materials available include an autumn box of leaves, sand play, an exploration tray with glitter and sand.

The four designated outdoor areas were spacious, pleasant and safe, and laid out well to accommodate the needs of the age range of children assigned to each area. The areas were surrounded and secured by high-level walls and fencing with secure gates. A mixture of artificial grass in the Wobbler area and tarmac/concrete in the three other areas provided a ground surface for use of the areas all year round. Developmentally age-appropriate materials and equipment were available to include play houses, ride-on trucks, push-along toys, seating and small climbing structures.

### 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

The registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

##### General Safety:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- A visitor log is maintained, and the inspectors were requested to sign in and out.
- The garden areas were secured with high-level fencing and secured gates. No hazards were identified.
- The play equipment and materials used by the children on the day of inspection were observed to be maintained in good working order.
- Risk assessments were completed up to date.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children.
- Storage areas and cupboards remained secured when not in use.
- Floor coverings were maintained in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Fire exits were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised by the staff during the inspection.

The inspectors observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

### Infection Control:

- Warm thermostatic controlled running water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot-operated bins were provided for handwashing purposes. Hand washing was observed in practice before children had their meals, and after children used the toilet or had their nappies changed.
- Nappy changing procedures were carried out in line with the service policy. Individual use aprons and gloves were used for each nappy change. The adults and children were observed to wash their hands following each nappy change.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through means of openable windows and air filter units.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after meal times.
- The children in Preschool 1 and 2 take in their own snacks from home. Some snacks contained perishable food items, which were stored in the fridge in each care room until snack time.
- Cleaning schedules were completed up to date. The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- External waste bins were stored securely and were inaccessible to children.
- Children's soothers were stored in individual labelled containers. Staff outlined to the inspector the cleaning and sterilising process for soothers.
- A box for mouthed toys was in use in each of the care rooms.

### Administration of Medication:

- Staff outlined the relevant procedure for administering medication to children.
- Records available for review demonstrated that the service had obtained parental signatures for medication administered.

### Safe Sleep:

- There are two cot rooms available for use by children aged under 2 years attending the Wobbler room.
- There is a total of 13 cots provided for children's use. The cots are fitted with safety mattresses and individual bed linen, and cellular blankets are provided and laundered at least once a week in the service.
- Sleep checks are recorded every 10 minutes to include the child's position, skin colour, and breathing pattern. The cot rooms were maintained within safe sleep temperatures of 16 - 20°C.
- Sleep facilities for children aged over 2 years are provided through the use of stackable beds with individual bed linen for each child.

- Children aged under 2 years who have transitioned out of a cot were provided with an appropriate floor bed suitable for their age with a fitted mattress. A sleep care plan completed by both staff and parents was available for the one child aged under 2 years who used a floor bed.
- The Toddler room was set up with a floor bed and stackable cots at 11.15am, all children in attendance had a sleep at this time. The children in this room on floor bed/stackable bed as per Tusla updated sleep guidelines, were supervised at all times while sleeping.
- Sleep checks are recorded every 10 minutes to include the child's position, skin colour, and breathing pattern. The care room, when used for sleep time, was maintained within safe sleep temperatures of 18 - 22°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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times. This was evidenced by 9 staff FAR training certificates on file, eight of whom were rostered to work on the day of inspection.

(2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises, located in each of the four care rooms in clearly labelled cupboards and available at all times.

## 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) A record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 31 October 2025.

(b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 11 February 2025, and the smoke alarms was dated 19 May 2025.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 74 pre-school children attending the service on a Full Day Care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.