

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN015		
Name of Service:	Clever Clogs Full Day Care Nursery Ltd (Drumbear)		
Address of Service:	82 Drumbear Wood, Cootehill Road, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan		
Eircode:	H18 A529		
Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Dobbin		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM 44
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84		
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna & M Mc Donnell		
Title:	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).			
Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable.		

Description of service

Clever Cloggs Full Day Care Nursery Ltd (Drumbear) have been operating as a privately run childcare service since 2008. They provide full day care, part-time and sessional care to pre-school children aged from 0 - 6 years of age. The service is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm each weekday and caters for a maximum of 72 children. The service operates from rooms in a purpose built 2 story building in a housing estate in Monaghan town. The service currently has 4 care rooms in operation namely: The Butterfly Room, The Caterpillar Room, The Ladybird and the Bumble Bee Room. There is one sleep room, nappy changing and sanitary accommodations, a kitchen, a staff room and an office. The service has 3 outdoor areas to the back of the service. School aged childcare is also provided. Car parking is available to the front of the premises.

Staffing

There are 21 adults employed in the service, 18 of whom who work directly with the children which includes the registered provider. Two cooks and one relief cook is also employed.

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 20 Facilities for rest and play, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures and Regulation 28 Insurance.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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.

(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 has a designated person in charge who is the registered provider, and a named person to deputise in their absence who is the service manager.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider, and review of the staff roster 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 and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 21 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 21 adults.

A total of 36 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 6 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 21 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 21 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 the 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 two cooks and relief cook 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 10 months to 1 year 5 months in the Butterfly Room, all of whom attended on a part time or full day care basis.

Two adults cared for 10 children aged 1 year 6 months to 2 years 6 months in the Caterpillar Room, all of whom attended on part time or full day care basis.

Two adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years 1 month to 3 years 11 months in the Bumble Bee Room, all of whom attended on part time or full day care basis.

Three adults cared for 19 children aged 3 years 5 months to 4 years 10 months in the Ladybird Room, all of whom attended on part time or full day care basis.

In addition to the above, three school aged children were present in the Ladybird room.

The registered provider and service manager cover staff lunches and assisted in the care rooms when required.

(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 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 was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

The service provides all snacks and meals to the children attending on a part time or full day care basis, with the exception of the sessional preschool children in the Ladybird and Bumble Bee rooms who take in their own

morning snacks. Mealtimes and snacks were observed to be unrushed, with staff observed to support children where needed. The hot meal served on the day of inspection at approximately 1.30pm was pasta bolognese, with potatoes mince and gravy provided for younger babies. Children's dietary requirements were met where required, with snack and meals adjusted to suit their needs. Bibs were used at meals times for young babies and children. Spare clothing was available for the children if required.

The children had their nappies changed in line with their routines, and older children were observed to use toilet independently. Children recently toilet trained were given gentle reminders.

Children in all care rooms experienced a change of environment to the outdoor play area on the day and were dressed appropriately for the weather. The children in the Butterfly room availed of indoor and outdoor play throughout their day, as the door off their care room was left open which led directly onto a designated area for this room. The children who were crawling and walking were observed to play indoors and outdoors at times of their choosing.

The individual sleep needs of babies and younger children in the Butterfly room were in line with their personal routine. In the Caterpillar room children availed of a sleep in the care room approximately 12 midday until 1.30pm. Rest areas to include soft mats and cushions were provided in all of the care rooms for children to use for rest during their day.

Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere throughout all of the care rooms was warm and welcoming. The staff were observed to engage in play and activities with the children both indoors and outdoors. The staff were observed to sit on the ground and played and interacted with the younger babies both indoors and outdoors. Some of the children had recently transitioned to new care rooms and were getting to know their new environment and friends. The staff in each room appeared familiar with the children and were aware of the children's likes and dislikes.

The staff used gentle encouragement for children to be mindful of other children's feelings where minor disagreements occurred. The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour and give praise where positive interactions were observed.

The staff were observed to communicate using soft gentle tones while interacting with the babies, and floor play occurred on many occasions, with the staff remaining close by for supports if needed.

The children in the older rooms appeared familiar with the staff who cared for them and were observed to seek out staff by calling them by name when they needed help with anything.

Communication with parents is through in person at arrival and collection, and also through a digital application where details of the children's day to include meal times, sleep times, toilet times and any reminder of materials needed such as nappies is recorded and shared with the parents.

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, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.
- There was a separate sleep room off the Butterfly Room containing 7 standard cots available for the children aged under 2 years of age to sleep.
- Stackable beds were also available for children aged over 2 to sleep, which were observed in use during the inspection.

(3)(a) The children had access to three outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises:

- The area located directly of the Butterfly Room had a ground surfacing of laid artificial grass, and surrounded by wooden fencing, with a small section of the play area covered by Perspex roofing. A small plastic play house and wooden play kitchen was provided in this area. A mat was placed on the floor where additional toys from inside were taken out for children to play with; included rattles, books and fidget toys.
- The area located off the Ladybird Room surrounded by wooden fencing, had a concrete ground surface, a wooden kitchen, a wooden bench, a small corner area with artificial grass and a storage box with large connecting toys for children's use. The children took in their own teddies on the day of inspection and were observed to sit on blankets and take part in a "teddy bears picnic" at morning snack time.

- The third area had a ground surface of concrete, surround by wooden fencing and a locked gate. It also had a covered section with play trays for sand and water. There was a mud kitchen alongside bikes, trikes, soft mats and soft bricks for the children to play with.

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 was maintained, and inspectors were signed in upon arrival and departure.
- The garden area was secured with high level wooden fencing and a locked gate with key accessible only to staff. The area was observed to be free from hazards.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children were maintained in good condition.
- Risk assessments were completed up to date and were on display through the service.
- The kitchen was located away from the care rooms and remained inaccessible to the children.
- Windows on the first floor were fitted with restricted opening devices.
- Blind cords were secured.
- Handrails on stairways were in good condition and suitable for both children and adults use.
- Floor coverings throughout the service were maintained in good repair.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelving out of the reach of children.
- The children were observed to be appropriately supervised both in the indoor and outdoor play environments.

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

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled hot running water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins were provided at each wash hand basin. Hand washing was observed in practise before meal times, after the children used the toilet and after outdoor play.
- Nappy changing procedures were carried out in line with the service policy.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated by openable windows and mechanical ventilation.
- The children’s snacks taken in from home were stored in the fridge in the care rooms until snack times.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained digitally and were recorded up to date.
- Waste bins were stored in a secure area and inaccessible to the children.
- The children’s soothers were stored in individual containers when not in use.

Safe Sleep:

- A cot room is located directly of the Butterfly room. A total of 7 cots with safety mattresses were provided. Individual bed linen is provided for each child and laundered onsite at least once a week.
- Sleep checks were carried out and recorded at 10-minute intervals for all sleeping children. The colour, position and breathing pattern along with the sleep room temperature were recorded and signed by staff.
- Floor beds for children aged between 15 months and 2 years, and stackable beds for children aged over 2 years were provided for use in the Caterpillar and Bumble Bee Rooms.
- Children who slept on floor beds were observed to be supervised during sleep times.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were carried out monthly, which was demonstrated by records available for review.
- Fire exits remained free from obstruction during the inspection.
- Staff outlined to the inspectors where the fire assembly point was located.

Outing:

- Staff advised the inspectors that the service does not take part in outings.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. Safe sleep practices were not always implemented in the Caterpillar Room in-line with Tusla’s safe sleep guidelines for children under 24 months.
 - A child under 24 months was placed to sleep on a stackable bed. The stackable bed was not suitable for a child aged under 24 months, in line with Tusla’s Early Learning and Care sleep provision guidance for children under 24 months, which requires a floor bed to be fitted with a mattress of at least 6cm in thickness.

- A sleep plan was not in place for three children under 24 months who were not sleeping in cots. This is at variance to the guidelines that state a child can sleep in an approved alternative to a cot provided it is agreed with parents, and a sleep plan is established and signed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

Risk assessments for each child under 2 were immediately completed and signed by both the parent and Manager. Regarding the child who was sleeping on a stackable bed, a risk assessment was completed with parent and the parent agreed and signed off on approval of child sleeping on a stackable bed as this was in the best interest of the child following the risk assessment. (Child likes adult to be close to them whilst falling asleep and sleeping on a floor bed does not allow for this). A staff meeting took place after the inspection; all staff were in attendance. Tusla's updated Safe Sleep Guidance for children under 24 months was communicated by the service manager, staff were also given a copy to familiarise themselves with the guidance. In future all risk assessments will be completed prior to a child transitioning to the toddler room and prior to them sleeping on a floor bed. All risk assessments were completed immediately by Manager and completed and signed off by the parents. Service manager will monitor this closely and ensure that all risk assessments are completed and kept on the child's file. Monthly review of risk assessments will be completed by the service manager.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe Sleep:

Risk Assessment attached of child sleeping on stackable bed. Risk Assessment attached of child sleeping on floor bed. Minutes of staff meeting.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

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 registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. The registered provider and twelve staff members held in-date FAR training certificates.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in each of the care rooms and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations 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 02 July 2025.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 04 November 2024, and the smoke alarms was dated 05 March 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 up to 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.