

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CN045
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Pebbles Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Shercock Road, Cabra, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A82 X6AO
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Pauline Grimes
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	06/06/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	48	PM	28
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Family Resource Centre, Navan, Co Meath
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C Tunney
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Pebbles Childcare is a privately operated Early Years' Service located in the outskirts of Kingscourt town, in operation since 2012. The childcare service provides full day care, part time and a sessional service to children aged from 1 year to 6 years. The service operates from 7am-5.30pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The pre-school comprises of four pre-school rooms, a Toddler Room and three Pre-school Rooms. Three outdoor play areas are available and located to the rear and side of the premises.

### Staffing

Fourteen staff members are employed in the service. The registered provider is the designated person in charge, a deputy is also available. One staff member is presently on extended leave.

### 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 and safety. The inspections 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 16 Record in relation to Pre-school service, Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 28 Insurance and Regulation 30 (minimum space requirements). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler Room, ECCE 3 and ECCE 1.

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, 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) The registered provider had identified a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider and deputy were present on arrival of the inspector and remained throughout the period of inspection.

(2) The registered provider confirmed there are 14 staff members employed in the service and all files were reviewed as follows;

- (a) Eighteen validated past employer references were available.
- (b) In the absence of past employer references ten validated references were available.
- (c) Garda Vetting was available in respect of the 14 staff.
- (d) Police vetting was available in respect of two staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Fourteen staff members held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

## 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) (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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct as outlined below:

- **Toddler Room:** Three staff members cared for 12 pre-school children, (aged between 1 year to 3 years) of which the 12 children were attending for full day care.
- **ECCE Room 1:** Two staff members cared for 7 pre-school children (aged between 4-6 years), of which 6 children were attending for full day care. Additionally, three school aged children were present.
- **ECCE Room 2:** Two staff members cared for 9 pre-school children (aged between 3-6 years), of which 4 children were attending for full day care.
- **ECCE Room 3:** Four staff members (including 1 staff member employed under the access and inclusion model) cared for 20 pre-school children aged between 3 years -6 years, of which 6 children attended for full day care

(8)(a) Two staff members are present, at all times in the service as required by Regulation 11 (8). This was confirmed from examination of the staff roster record and verification from the registered provider and staff members duty hours.

### 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:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the information as prescribed under Regulation 16 (a) to (k). Documentation in relation to the service and staff members position was displayed in the hallway for inspection.

(3) The records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was adequate facilities for the children registered to attend the pre-school service to play indoors in each of the pre-school rooms. Children were observed playing in designated areas unhindered by furniture or fixtures. The children had access to three outdoor play areas with direct access to the outdoor area from all pre-school rooms except for ECCE 2 Room.

(b) In each pre-school room there was a designated rest area for children to avail of quiet time. In ECCE Room 1, the rest area was decorated by the staff members and children with pictures of the night sky and planets which added a warm and interesting ambiance to this space for the children.

### 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

##### Needs of Children:

- The basic care needs of the children were met on the day of inspection. Parents provided snacks which consisted of small sandwiches, fruit and cheese. Dinner consisted of vegetables, potatoes, and meat. The adults sat with the children and supported them during their meals. The younger children were supported

with feeding as required. Drinks were available and accessible to the children as they were placed at low level.

- The children's personal care was attended to.
- Nappy changing was carried out according to the service policy and procedure. The older children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of their development.
- The children availed of outdoor play areas which supported and promoted their gross motor development.
- Quiet areas were also available in the care rooms, should a child need to take a break from activities and rest if required.

### Supporting Relationships

- Positive engagement between the staff members and children were noted. The staff members were familiar with the children's patterns, preferences and care routines. They used age-appropriate soft tones, addressed each child individually and spoke at their level. The staff members were actively involved in the children's play where appropriate. The staff members acknowledged the children's efforts. The children were familiar/comfortable with their routines and with the staff members caring for them. Children who became upset were nurtured and cuddled until they settled.
- The children in the Toddler Room and in the three pre-school Rooms availed of outdoor play time which provided a change of environment and promoted the children's gross motor development.

### Planning and Assessment

- An emergent curriculum was implemented which incorporated seasonal themes. There was evidence of curriculum planning and artwork related to themes were displayed. Learning journals with a chronicle of activities carried out throughout the year were available which acknowledged the children's work. Activities were child centred and age appropriate such as water play and painting in the Toddler Room. In ECCE 1 the children were rehearsing for their graduation play for their parents and guardians. The children's singing and dancing demonstrated the confidence of this group of children to perform in front of others, gained through the opportunities given to them during their pre-school year. Outdoor play was encouraged, three outdoor play areas were available with a variety of age-appropriate play materials available in each area. Language development was facilitated through reading, songs and conversation.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Needs of Children

1. In ECCE Room 1 during the afternoon period the environment did not meet all children's basic care needs present. Twelve children from the Toddler Room were transferred to ECCE 1 Room for the afternoon period. Five of the 12 children were between 1 year to 2 years of age and seven children were between 2 to 3 years of age. They were cared for in addition to the six children aged between 3 to-5 years already present. Three adults cared for the 18 children. This environment did not meet the younger children's care requirements as it was set up and suitable for the older children such as the play equipment was not age appropriate with a variety of textures, shapes, and sizes that were not suitable to the young children.

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

#### Corrective Action

1. Following the inspection on 06/06/2023, the registered provider had a meeting with the Toddler room and ECCE 1 room staff to discuss the issue of moving younger children out of their room at lunch time. We decided that the children in the Toddler room will stay in their own room as it is more suitable for their care requirements throughout the day.
  - ECCE 2 room is now used as a sleep room in the afternoon. The team feel that this is a much better routine for the younger children, and they are happier in their own environment. There is also new floor covering in the toddler room which makes the room cosier for the little ones.

#### Preventive Action

1. The registered provider will ensure that the environment will meet all children's basic needs throughout the day. Babies from the age of 1-2 need to be able to safely interact in their environment's both indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments are on-going.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Appropriate measures have been put in place to ensure the needs of the children attending the Toddler Room are met at all times. Regulation 19 has been addressed.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- There was adequate and suitable materials available on the premises. Each pre-school room was well organised and defined interest areas to offer the children diverse experiences were available. The defined interest areas were displayed at eye level to the children and play materials were accessible to promote independent access by children.
- Toddler Room: The resourced interest areas included arts and crafts, musical instruments, soft climbing area, soft toys, activity sets, containers with wooden and plastic blocks of various sizes, water play, and sensory play activities. Age-appropriate tables /chairs and highchairs were available for the children.
- ECCE Rooms: The three ECCE Rooms were appropriately resourced. Interest areas included imaginative home corner areas with support material and equipment, pirate ship in ECCE 3, construction areas with tractors, train set, piano set, natural products, book areas and arts/ crafts. The walls were decorated with the children’s paintings, birthday walls and family photos.
- The Toddler Outdoor area contained a ball pool, sand tray, small slides and sit on toys and tractors. three outdoor areas supported gross motor development. The children had opportunities to play on age-appropriate materials such as slides and ride on toys.
- Two outdoors areas contained a variety of play material to support gross motor development, there was large areas for children to run and play games, with slides, activity centres, balancing beams also available.

### 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:

- Children's attendance was recorded daily, staff members also recorded their attendance daily on a computer application.
- Play materials were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing was carried out as recommended, children were encouraged to be independent, and assistance was given as required.
- Prior to the children's meals, tables were cleaned.
- Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins.
- Perishable foods were stored in a fridge in the pre-school rooms to prevent the growth of poisonous bacteria.
- The standard of cleaning in the pre-school was satisfactory, up to date cleaning records were available.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication records viewed demonstrated that medication administration was carried out correctly and appropriate actions were taken to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the children in their care. Medication was not observed been administered on the day of inspection.

##### Safe Sleep:

- A sleep room with 2 cots was available, Low beds were available for older children if required. The cots noted on the day of inspection were maintained in good condition. Sleep observations were recorded every 10 minutes in relation to the children's colour, position and breathing status. A system was in place to manage each child's linen. The Toddler Room was also used as a Sleep Room, the lighting was relaxed by the provision of a blind on the patio doors which was comfortable for the children who availed of sleep or rest time.

### 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) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

(3)(a) and (b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their name, their contact number, the reason for entry and their check in and out times. The inspector was requested to record her arrival and departure times.

### 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.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions in the care rooms out of the reach of children.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 30 – Minimum space requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraph (2) a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day-care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) While there was adequate space available for the 12 children attending the Toddler Room on the day of inspection, there was evidence of inadequate space being available on days when up to 20 children are present. This number of children was confirmed by the deputy person in charge. A minimum 50.15 sq. metres was required for 20 children while 38sq metres was available.

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

#### Corrective Action

During the summer months the older toddlers aged 2-3years use the ECCE 3 Room. From September 2023 we will be running two ECCE Rooms only, so we will have a free room that can now be used as a toddler room.

Baby room - 1-2 years

Toddler room - 2-3 years

Ecce 2 – 2 years 8months – 4 years approx.

Ecce 1 – 3 years 6mths – 5 years approx.

There will be no more than 15 babies booked in for any one day in the baby room so that we will have adequate space to meet their needs.

#### Preventive Action

The registered provider is now aware that the baby room is 38sq meters and cannot cater for 20 children. Management will be aware of capacity when booking babies into Pebbles. The limit will not be exceeded.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted. Regulation 30 has been addressed.