

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY104
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Name of Service:	Pebbles Montessori Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Dirtane, Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 X3R8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jacinta O'Hara
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	25/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Pebbles Montessori Pre-school is a private early years service that is registered to cater for children aged between 2 years and 6 years on a sessional basis. The service currently caters for children aged between 2 years 9 months and 5 years. The service is open between the hours of 9am and 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 5 adults currently employed in the service that includes the registered provider who works daily in the service and an adult for relief as is required. There are 2 adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme.

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.

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*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The registered provider is the designated person in charge and there is a named person who can deputize as required.
- (b) At all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the registered provider and the named deputy are on the premises.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that 5 adults work in the service, therefore recruitment records in relation to the said adults were reviewed.
- (a) 7 references and records of validation were on file from a past employer.
- (b) 3 references and records of validation were on file from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) A Garda Vetting Disclosure was on file in respect of the 5 adults.
- (d) Police Vetting was on file for 2 adults who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 consecutive months.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to the adults were appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service
- (4) The adults working directly with the children had attained Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training at Level 6 to level 8.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children present.
- (3) There were 3 adults working with 17 children aged between 2 years 9 months and 4 years attending on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was a sample of 11 records inspected, each record had the required detail as per(a) to (i) inclusive.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS

- The children's snacks were provided by the parents, the food observed on inspection included sandwiches, wraps, crackers, a selection of fruit, yogurts and cheese.
- The staff sat with the children in the playroom at snack time and ate with them, this encouraged and promoted conversations between the children and the adults.
- There was drinking water available in the service with the water bottles available to the children when required.
- The children had ample time to eat in a relaxed unhurried environment.
- The children's movement was not restricted, they moved about freely within the spacious playroom.
- The children played in 2 groups, 1 group aged between 2 and 3 years, the 2nd group between 3 and 4 years. The children rotated between the outdoor play areas and the playroom.
- The children were observed using the toilets independently, with the staff on hand to provide assistance if required.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets located within the playroom and the inspector observed the children were accompanied to the toilet in a timely manner from the outdoor play area.
- The staff were observed to interact with the children in a kind, caring, supportive manner. The children sought support of the staff; the staff were prompt in responding to individual children's needs.
- The adults greeted the parents/guardians and grandparents in a professional, friendly and positive manner. They gave a synopsis of the time the child spent in the service.
- The registered provider provided the inspector with details of individual children's care plans and the established links she had made with support agencies in the provision of care for the children, in partnership with the parents.
- The children had access to a varied range of toys in the playroom that were accessible on the low-level open shelving and on the floor.

- A designated rest area furnished with soft seating and matting was provided in the playroom and the children were observed using it during the inspection.
- The children availed of long periods of playtime outdoors playtime with shelter provided from the elements with the “hut” used for story time, singing and news time and where the children changed into their wellingtons and outdoor protective clothing, a spacious timber enclosed structure with a bark surface consisting of toys such as chalk boards and chinks, tables and chairs, picnic benches, allocated sand and water containers, and arts and crafts materials and a sink with running cold water.
- A spacious area with grass underfoot was provided. The freshly mowed spacious grass area had a variety of equipment that included for example a fixed activity unit, a low-level slide, swings, playhouses, planting boxes, a container of peat with diggers and excavators, low level table and chairs, picnic benches, adult seating, ride on toys, water play tables, a covered in sand area, a timber teepee furnished with soft matting and cushions and a selection of books.
- It was evident the registered provider was regularly providing for the children’s emerging interests, for example the development of the farm section in the outdoor play area with farm machinery and animals. This interest was further provided for in the playroom with farm themed toys.
- A large range of toys were stored in lidded boxes in the “hut” that are rotated in line with the curriculum and the children’s emerging interests.

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:

- All storage of cleaning agents was out of the reach of the children.
- The internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children gaining access to the registered provider’s private residence.
- The external doors were secured to restrict unauthorised access in and to prevent children going out unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- The children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet, after playing outside and before the mealtime.
- There was warm water, liquid soap and disposable paper hand towels for effective hand washing by the adults and the children.

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) 2 adults present had current First Aid Responder (FAR) training with the certification on file.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was provided; it was stored on a high-level shelf above the wash hand basins in the children's sanitary accommodation.

(b) The first aid box was accessible to the adults and was out of the reach of the children

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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place prior to the summer holidays. The registered provider informed the inspector that a fire drill will be conducted before the end of this calendar month.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was September 2023 and the firefighting equipment was 11.09.2022 and for the 3.10.'23 (the registered provider submitted the cert to the office of the early years inspectorate).
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certification for the service was open to inspection.

The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- the contact details for the insurance provider
- the name and address of the service insured.
- the category of insurance cover for the service
- the number of children covered by the insurance was for 22 children.
- The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27/03/'24.