

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY104				
Name of Service:	Pebbles Montessori Pre-school				
Address of Service:	Dirtane, Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry				
Eircode:	V92 X3R8				
Name of Registered Provider:	Jacinta O'Hara				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	16/09/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>17</td> <td>PM</td> <td>None</td> </tr> </table>	AM	17	PM	None
AM	17	PM	None		
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	N/A
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Description of service

Pebbles Montessori Pre-school Playschool is a private early years service that provides education and care to children aged from 2 years to 6 years offering sessional care. The service is registered to operate 1 session between 9:00am and 12:30 pm Monday to Friday. At the time of the inspection the children attending were aged between 2 years 9 months and 4 years.

The premise is purpose built, adjoining to the registered provider's private residence. There is one spacious playroom with the sanitary accommodation located within the playroom.

The service has a spacious, fully enclosed outdoor play area available and accessible to the children each day.

Staffing

There were 4 adults attached to the service including the registered provider that are employed to work directly with the children. There were 1 adult 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 announced/unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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

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

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

Acknowledgments

The 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.*

(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 deputy to deputise in her absence as required.
- (b) When the announced inspection commenced, the registered provider and the named deputy were on duty to assist with the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to each of the 4 adults attached to the service were inspected.
- (a) There were 5 references from previous employers with records of validation on file.
- (b) There were 3 references from a source other than a previous employer on file with records of validation.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 4 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) There was Police vetting on file for 1 adult who resided outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for greater than six consecutive months.
- (4) All staff working directly with the children had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) with copies of the relevant qualifications on file.

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 attending the service.
- (3) There were 3 adults caring for 14 children aged between 2 years 9 months to 4 years attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider had a record in writing in relation to:
- (h) Details of the children’s daily attendance including the arrival and departure time.
- (i) The arrival and departure time for the adults working in the service.
- (j) There was a designated record book to record any medication administered in the service. There were no entries.
- (k) There was a designated record book to record any accident, incident or injury involving a child in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

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

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

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

Basic Needs

- The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their individual level of independence. This was evidenced for example when children were washing their hands prior to the snack time, after the cutting and pasting activity and after using the toilet.
- At the snack time observed during the inspection, each of the children had enough time to eat and enjoy their food without being rushed in any way with the adults sitting with the children at the tables.
- Conversations between the adults and the children ensued during snack time in a relaxed, calm environment.
- The children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment both indoors and outdoors.
- The staff encouraged the children to interact and to engage with a wide range of materials, activities and equipment in the indoor and in the outdoor environment based on the children's own choices, interests and their age and stage of development.
- The materials and equipment in the playroom and in the outdoor area were arranged so they were readily visible and accessible to promote independent free access by the children at all times.
- The staff ensured that the children had opportunities to interact informally with one another as evidenced during the free play time and at snack time for example.
- The adults facilitated opportunities for small and large group activities and play as evidenced with tabletop activities, cutting and pasting creating Owlets, threading, pegging, shape sorting, building blocks on a large mat on the floor and story time "Owl Babies".
- During outdoor play time, the children for examples used the bikes, painted the timber Tippee with paint brushes and rollers, played in the designated farm section with an overhead roof, artificial grass underfoot

with a variety of sheds, farm animals and vehicles, in the restaurant within the spacious sheltered timber structure with timber bark underfoot.

- The registered provider read a story to the children who sat on soft ring cushions on the floor. They watched and listened to the story on the large wall mounted screen and there after the registered provider talked about the story and encouraged the children’s participation.
- The staff were observed listening to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed their emotions.
- Staff spoke to the children in low soft tones of voice, coming down to their level making eye contact.
- The staff were cognisant of children’s needs and observed to make the transition into the service as easy and as comfortable as possible for the children who were new to the service.
- The staff comforted and nurtured children who required additional support during the session as they settled into the setting.
- The staff were observed to issue gentle reminders to the children to use toilet as they needed to for example prior to the outdoor play time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The outdoor play area secured with fencing and gates to prevent the children gaining unsupervised access to the roadway.
- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.
- The staff were observed conducting head counts of the children during the inspection, prior to going outside and when some children left the outdoor area before others.
- The staff supervised the children going to the outdoor area, reminding the children to be careful and take time using the 2 steps down from the exit door.

Infection Control:

- There was a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap, disposable paper hand towels and pedal operated lidded bins in place at each of the 2 wash hand basins in the children’s sanitary accommodation and at the sink in the playroom to facilitate effective hand washing to prevent the spread of infection.
- The tables were cleaned down prior to and after the mealtimes.
- There were child sized plastic aprons provided for the children’s messy play activities.

- The service had protective suits and wellies for the children for outdoor play use kept on the premise.

Administration of Medication:

- The medications observed on inspection were stored out of the reach of the children, clearly labelled and within a sealed container.
- The procedures for administration of the medication along with signed parental consent was available for the medications.

Fire Safety:

- The fire procedure notice was displayed in the playroom.
- The fire exits were observed to be unobstructed.

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 did ensure that there was a person available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. Two adults had FAR training certifications that demonstrated the training expired on 07/10 /'25. The registered provider informed the inspector that she and a second adult had completed the FAR refresher training and awaiting the certifications.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored up high, out of reach of children and was clearly identifiable in the sanitary accommodation.

(b) The first aid box was suitably stocked for the number of children attending the service and was available for the adult to attend to the children if required.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
- Visually the premises appeared to be sound and stable.
- (c)
- Within the playroom and sanitary accommodation, natural lighting was provided through the windows, and this was supplemented with artificial lighting.
 - The air temperature was recorded at 20.2 degrees Celsius.
 - The playroom and the sanitary facilities were supplied with natural ventilation, through openable windows.
- (e)
- The service had adequate and suitable sanitary facilities available to the children attending the service.
 - There were 2 toilets and 2 wash hand basins with warm running water. The temperature of the water did not exceed 43 degrees Celsius.
 - There was a supply of liquid soap, disposable paper towels and lidded pedal-operated bins.