

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH075		
Name of Service:	Pugwash Bay LTD		
Address of Service:	97 Loughantarve, Knockbridge, Dundalk, Co. Louth		
Eircode:	A91 WT44		
Name of Registered Provider:	James Moore		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	10/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM 32
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan		
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Flood		
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		

Description of service

Pugwash Bay Ltd (Knockbridge) is one of a chain of privately owned childcare services operating in the northeast of the country. This service has been operating as an Early Years' service since 2008 and provides sessional, part-time, and full day care and education to pre-school children aged 0-6 years. The service operates from 8am-6pm Monday–Friday and is registered to cater for a maximum of 49 preschool children.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises in a residential area of Knockbridge, Co. Louth. The premises consist of 3 care rooms namely; The Ladybug Room, The Bumble Bees Room and The Caterpillar Room that are all located on the ground floor. Ancillary accommodation includes sanitary areas, a kitchen, an office and storage areas. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area on the premises.

Staffing

There are 15 staff working in the service. Twelve staff are employed to work directly with the preschool children, which included the designated person in charge, supervisor and the services Quality & Governance Creche Co-ordinator. Three additional staff included the national chief operating officer who is present in the service intermittently, one staff member who was engaged in catering and cleaning duties and one student who was present in a supernumerary capacity.

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 regulations 9, 11, 16, 20,22, 23, 25 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 19. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Caterpillar and Ladybug rooms.

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 would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the *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)&(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. On the day of the inspection the person in charge and service supervisor were on the premises when the inspector arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) Fifteen staff files were reviewed which included the national chief operating officer, 12 childcare staff including the service supervisor and the services Quality & Governance Creche Co-ordinator., 1 staff member who was engaged in cleaning and catering duties and 1 student who was present in a supernumerary capacity.:

(a)& (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for 14 members of staff and 1 student.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all members of staff and student. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 5 members of staff who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 11 out of 12 adults who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentary evidence was not available to confirm that 1 staff member who was observed working directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The Staff member in question was advised promptly to retrieve her Certificate which was awarded in 2020. She has been in contact with the college and they have given her a letter stating that she has completed her Early childhood and education course while she waits to receive her certificate. This staff member has joined the company in October 2022.

To prevent these issues from recurring again, extensive checks will be completed on the staff files regularly and when employing a new staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of minimum required level 5 childcare qualification.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on this information the non-compliance under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) On the day of inspection there were 3 rooms in operation and the following observations were made on arrival to the service:

- **The Ladybug Room:**

There were 9 preschool children aged 1- 2 years with 2 members of staff. A 3rd member of staff was on their break.

- **The Caterpillar Room:**

There were 14 preschool children aged 2years 7 months - 4 years cared for by 2 members of staff. One student was also present in a supernumerary capacity.

- **The Bumble Bees Room:**

There were 14 children aged 3-4 years with 3 members of staff.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records the information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults 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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

The following records were reviewed and included:

- (h) Documentary evidence was available of the daily attendance of each child in the service and included the arrival and departure times of each child in the Caterpillar and Ladybug rooms.
- (i) Up to date daily/ weekly staff rosters were available in the service and were reflective of the staff present in the service.
- (k) Documentary evidence was available of accidents and incidents that occurred in the service. A sample of 8 forms were reviewed and all appropriate sections were completed. This information included parental signatures indicating that they had been informed about the incident and signatures of the staff members and managers 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,*

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service in relation to the following:

(1)(a)

1. In the Ladybug Room some children who were visibly showing signs of tiredness for example, rubbing eyes, crying, wanting to be held in staff members arms, were not put down to sleep in a timely manner.

The inspector heard one staff ask the children “*you are very tired....?*” And another child was asked “*are you tired?*” to which the child was observed nodding their head.

2. One child attending the Ladybug room was given a bowl of crunchy snacks for dinner when their peers were seated around the table eating the dinner of the day which consisted of cubed potatoes, sausages and peas. Dinner was not offered to this child and no documented care plan was available to demonstrate that parents and staff had discussed strategies to support healthy eating.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

1. The Ladybug room is currently receiving support from both the Manager and supervisor to enhance their daily routine, aligning with the children’s needs. Emphasizing the importance of meeting these needs, staff have been reminded to be attentive to signs of tiredness in children and to offer nap opportunities accordingly. This was reiterated during our recent Staff meeting on 08.05.2024.
To proactively address these concerns staff have been sent and asked to refresh on The Sleep policy. Close observations are being conducted daily to refine the routine and ensure that each child’s needs are met effectively. Cot risk assessment is being carried out daily by the staff members and the manager.
2. The service upholds a healthy eating policy, which has been consistently communicated with parents. Regarding the issue of providing a bowl of crunchy snacks, after discussing the matter with the staff, it has been observed that the child in question is particularly selective with dinners provided by the crèche. The manager has reached out to the parent to discuss potential plans moving forward. Staff members have been advised to promptly communicate any concerns or matters related to children in our care to the parents, manager or person in charge. A specific plan has been devised for the child, which is displayed in the room and in the kitchen. The staff will actively encourage the child to try the meals daily, and in case the child refuses to eat, a healthy food option will be readily available in the kitchen. Additional food items will be included in our weekly shopping order to accommodate such needs.

Supporting documentation submitted

Healthy Eating Policy also safe sleep policy submitted to the office of the early Years Inspectorate.

Minutes of staff meeting dated 08/05/2024.

Dietary requirement plan template.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 19 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft mats and cushions.
- A number of individual day beds suitable for children aged over 2 years were available.
- A separate sleep room was located off the Ladybug Room and contained 6 standard cots.

(3)(a) A spacious outdoor area was available on the premises and is subdivided into two separate areas:

Area 1 is an enclosed area located off the Ladybug and Caterpillar rooms. The area had an artificial grass surface and had some toys and equipment available including; a low-level slide, a zebra rocker toy and a plastic play house.

The person in charge reported that area 2 which is located off the Caterpillar and Bumble Bee rooms is currently not being used and is to undergo renovation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were instances where sleep facilities were found to be inadequate for example, one of the cot mattresses was ill-fitting and had a foothold present in the cot, which was a potential safety hazard. This was not identified by the staff carrying out the daily risk assessment of the sleep room.

(3)(a) The outdoor area accessed by the preschool children during the inspection was inadequately resourced. A number of the interest areas did not have supporting play materials and equipment to facilitate a creative, diverse and enriching outdoor play environment for the children. For example, the mud kitchen and water tray did not have any supporting play equipment and the pink picnic table had areas of paint chipping off. No additional toys were brought out from the indoor area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) Following the staff meeting on May 8th 2024, the registered provider has emphasized the importance of conducting thorough risk assessments daily. Since then, the cot has not been in use, and all staff members have been duly informed. A new cot has been purchased.

Staff has undergone a retraining session to reinforce proper procedures for conducting risk assessments. To maintain adherence, these procedures are now being monitored daily by the designated person.

(3)(a) The service possesses a significant number of resources and equipment, all securely stored in our shed overnight. Regrettably, during the day of inspection, the toys were inadvertently not taken out for the children to use. Following the staff meeting on May 8th, a plan has been put in place for the staff members opening in the morning to have all the interest areas in place in the garden for the day. The Pink picnic table has been removed and is awaiting maintenance. New materials for the garden area have been purchased to support the Mud kitchen and water tray.

Daily checks will be completed by the manager to ensure children's play experiences are being met. Staff has been informed play equipment needs to be taken out in the morning.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of new cot purchased submitted.

Copy of the Outdoor and Safe Sleep policies submitted.

Risk assessment documents

Minutes of staff meeting dated 08/05/2024

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 20 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Healthy eating is generally promoted in the service and there is a menu on display. All hot meals are provided by an external catering company and reheated by the service. On the day of the inspection the lunch time dinner was served at 11.55am in the Ladybug room and was observed to consist of cubed potatoes, sausages, and peas. The consistency of the food was age appropriate, and the children were encouraged to be independent with self-feeding. Support was also provided if required. All children bring in their own snacks for morning and afternoon snack times and the perishable items were stored appropriately in the fridge.

Bottles and cups were stored on low level shelving/tables throughout the day and were available for the children to access as required in all rooms. In the Ladybug room the staff reported that any bottles of milk are brought in by the parents and stored in the fridge on arrival to the premises.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children in all of the rooms.
- Highchairs were in good condition and fitted with safety harness.

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Infection Control:

- Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection e.g. after toileting and nappy changing, after outdoor play and prior to mealtimes.
- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing in the service.
- The service has a procedure in place for the appropriate storage of soothers. Staff were familiar with the process and detailed that all soothers are stored in individual, labelled containers.
- Documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the service.
- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out 10-minute physical safe sleep observations in accordance with the services safe sleep policy and a written sleep log was kept while children were sleeping.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

General Safety:

1. Some of the blind cords in the service were not appropriately restricted and were therefore potentially accessible to the children, e.g. in Caterpillar and Ladybug rooms. In addition, this potential safety risk was not detailed on the services risk assessment documents.

Infection Control:

The following cross infection risks were observed:

2. During a nappy changing procedure one staff member was observed wearing the 'used' gloves to clean down the mat after the procedure and also to replace the child's nappy changing supplies to the boxes on the shelf above.
3. Sensory trays containing oat flakes, dried pasta and cereal hoops were stored in the lobby of the sanitary area of the Ladybug room.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Following our staff meeting on May 8th, 2024, the importance of conducting thorough risk assessments daily and to be reported to the manager was emphasised. The blind has been on the list for the maintenance team to fix it. The issue has been immediately fixed.

To prevent occurrences in the future the importance of risk assessments was reiterated with all staff during our recent staff meeting on 08/05/24. Extensive daily and weekly checklists will be completed by the person in charge along with checks to ensure staff are following and completing their daily risk assessments.

Infection Control:

2. At the staff meeting held on 08/05/24, the registered provider underscored the significance of adhering to proper nappy changing procedures and emphasizing the importance of infection control to mitigate the spread of bacteria. The management spoke with staff about the importance of understanding and following the policies and procedures. Additionally, extra nappy changing training was provided to staff. To ensure compliance, the person in charge will conduct weekly checks to verify that each staff members following the correct procedures and adhering to the infection control policy. Staff were sent the infection control and nappy changing policy and asked to refresh on this. Policies has been given to staff during the meeting.

3. The sensory trays have been promptly removed from the lobby of the sanitary area, and it has been clearly communicated to all the staff the imperative of refraining from such actions in the future. The Infection control policy was thoroughly discussed during the staff meeting held on 08/05/2024. Daily overview of compliance will be conducted by the person in charge.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of Nappy Changing policy and Infection Control Policy submitted.

Risk assessment documents.

Photographic evidence of restricted blind cords.

Minutes of staff meeting dated 08/05/2024

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the corrective and preventive actions will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 trained in first aid (First Aid Responder) was always available to the pre-school children. This was evidenced by the availability of up to date first aid responder (FAR) certification.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were adequately equipped and stored safely out of the reach of the children and were easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate detailing adequate cover for the number of children attending the service at any one time was on display in the service and detailed 27/03/2025 as the date of expiry