

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH153
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Name of Service:	Pugwash Bay Ltd
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Address of Service:	Mornington Manor, Mornington, Drogheda, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92 A076
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Moore
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	60	PM	45
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath C15 CP23
Inspection undertaken by:	S Taaffe and S McKenna
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
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Description of service

Pugwash Bay Ltd. in Mornington is one of a 11 early years services operated by the registered provider throughout the country. This service is conducted from a detached single storey purpose-built premises, established in 2011, which is located within a residential housing estate in the coastal village of Mornington in east Co. Meath. Four care rooms and a separate sleep room are provided in the service which accommodates pre-school children from 1 to 6 years of age on a sessional, part-time, and full day care basis, and school-age children up to 12 years of age. The service operates for 51 weeks each year and is registered to operate from Monday to Friday between 7.45am and 6.00pm. Eligible children participate in the state funded early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme from 9.30am – 12.30pm from Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 19 staff members in this service consisting of a manager who oversees the day to day operation of the service on a full-time basis and provides support in the care rooms when required; 15 staff members who provide direct care to the pre-school children; 1 staff member who provides break cover in the care rooms, caring for the pre-school children and also separately undertaking house-keeping duties; 1 staff member who works with school age children only; and 1 staff member who is employed to clean the service. Additionally, a student is facilitated to be present in the service in a supernumerary capacity on a part-time basis, observing care practices and staff responsibilities in advance of commencing a childcare training course. The registered provider was not present during the inspection and is not based in this service.

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. The inspection 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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to excessively hot water at a sink where children were facilitated to wash their hands during the inspection. The registered provider provided written assurances to the Inspectorate of appropriate immediate action undertaken to address the risk identified within 24 hours of issue. This response was accepted.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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

(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 manager was the designated person in charge of the service. The deputy manager was appointed to deputise in the role of person in charge when required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service for the duration of the inspection, including when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.45am.

Following a review of previous inspection records and in discussion with the service manager it was confirmed that 2 staff members had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection which was carried out on 24/06/2024, and a student is being facilitated to be present in the service in a supernumerary capacity on a part-time basis since September 2024. The full staff files for these 3 adults were reviewed.

In addition, Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all 19 staff members employed in this service, for the student, the registered provider, the company's general manager, the area manager, and the maintenance worker.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 2 staff members and for the student whose full files were reviewed.

(a) Four written references were from past employers.

(b) Two written references were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) The records reviewed during the inspection confirmed that Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 19 staff members employed in this service, for the student, the registered provider, the company's general manager, the area manager and the maintenance worker. Each of these records demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as supportive documentation demonstrated that neither of the two new staff members nor the student had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) The 2 staff members whose files were reviewed both held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service during the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the highest number of children were in attendance in each care room:

- In the Turtles room there were 15 children aged 1 year 5 months to 1 year 8 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Sharks room there were 18 children aged 2 years 3 months to 2 years 6 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Penguins room there were 15 children aged 3 to 4 years being cared for by 4 staff members.
- In the Starfish room there were 12 children aged 2 years 3 months to 3 years 1 month being cared for by 2 staff members.

Throughout the inspection the service manager, the deputy manager and the designated staff member employed to cover breaks and carry out household duties, each of whom held an appropriate childcare qualification, provided relief cover and assistance in the care rooms when required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained 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) The following observations are examples of how the children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. A 4-week menu was on display detailing all snacks and meals provided to children in attendance. A choice of cereal is available for breakfast, and the morning snack which is sent in from home contained a variety of sandwiches, fruits, yogurts, cheese, bread sticks, and bread rolls was served at approximately 10.30am. A hot meal of sausages, potatoes and peas, bought in from an external catering company was heated and served to the youngest children from approximately 11.45am, with the older pre-school children served this meal at 12.30pm. A further snack and tea are provided in the afternoon to children in attendance at these times, with pasta and a tomato-based sauce served for tea on the day of inspection. Younger children were provided with bibs at meal times and supports given by adults where the children needed to be fed. The children in all care rooms had access to their drink cups during their day, including while in the outdoor play area.

The children had their nappies changed regularly and promptly when needed during the inspection with the staff members heard chatting and singing to the children during these procedures. The older children were observed to use the toilet independently, and gentle reminders were given to children just recently toilet trained. Toilets were located off the hallways outside the care rooms and the staff were observed to remain with the children while they used this area.

Aprons were provided for the children’s messy play activities and changes of clothing were also provided.

The individual sleep needs of babies and younger children were met as observed on the day of inspection when children were placed to sleep in line with their individual care needs. After dinner the Starfish room was turned into an environment conducive for a daytime sleep for children who were aged over two years. Older children who did not sleep at this time attended the Penguin room during the scheduled sleep time.

The younger babies were observed to crawl, lay and roll on soft floor areas in the Turtles room and the adults supported and encouraged the children to engage in physical and gross motor activity. The children in the four care rooms were observed to take scheduled turns in the outdoor play area during the inspection. The children were observed to be dressed appropriately for the weather on the day.

Supporting Relationships

A key worker system was in place which allows opportunities for close relationships to be formed among children and the staff who cared for them. There was minimal staff change over observed during the inspection and as confirmed on review of previous inspection records, the children were observed to be familiar with all staff within their care rooms.

The staff used gentle tones while interacting with the children. A happy playful environment was provided within each of the care rooms, and the children were observed to seek out staff for support where needed.

The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour, and praise was given for positive interactions such as turn taking and sharing. The staff were observed to use age-appropriate strategies to help children find positive solutions to their problems where minor disagreements occurred.

The children's needs, interests and preferences were respected and facilitated by the staff. The staff were observed to treat each child with respect, addressing each child by name, using soft gentle tones, and by providing a positive friendly atmosphere while caring for the children.

The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families.

Parental wishes were respected, and individual care plans were in place where required. Communication with parents took place in person at arrival and collection times and using a digital application. A parents comment board was on display in the hallway which included positive messages of thanks from parents to the service.

Strong team work between staff and management was evident. The staff were observed to communicate clearly with one another, providing timely reminders to children about upcoming transitions to the next activity or meal times. Management was observed to provide additional supports to staff in the younger care rooms, at nappy changing times and sleep times.

Physical And Material Environment

The rooms were bright and welcoming with many colourful displays on the walls to include children's recent art work, family trees and birthday charts. The indoor environments were laid out to facilitate free-flowing movement of children between the designated interest areas. The tables, chairs and highchairs provided for children's use where suitable for the children in attendance.

Interest areas in the care rooms included role play and dress up sections, well-resourced home corners, creative areas, construction play and table top areas to include connecting toys and jigsaws. In all 4 care rooms sensory play was provided through the availability of sand trays, water trays, playdough, and shredded paper trays. Cosy areas where children could rest and read a book were provided within the care rooms, and there was adequate

space for the children to engage in floor play activities. Staff were observed to sit with and read stories to children and sang songs including those based on the room's weekly theme.

Play equipment and materials were freely available and accessible on low level shelves and boxes at the children's level. The children were observed to retrieve play materials at a time of their choosing and were able to place them back easily at clean up times.

Gross motor play opportunities were provided in the outdoor learning environment, which was secured by high level walls and fencing with an artificial grass ground surface. There was a climbing frame with slide, seating, a balance beam, rockers, chalkboard, mud kitchen and many ride on and push-a-long toys provided for children use. A covered area is sectioned off for use by the younger children and was observed to contain push-a-long toys, sit-on rocking toys, a plastic kitchen and a low-level slide.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Adequate facilities for rest were provided for the number and age range of children attending the service on the day of inspection. Seven standard cots were provided in the service's sleep room, and a further standard foldable cot was observed in storage, to be set up in the Turtles Room when needed. All cots were observed to be in good condition with appropriately fitting supportive safety mattresses. Children from each care room who were aged 2 years and older and who still availed of a daytime nap were observed sleeping on either stackable beds or sleep mats set up in the Starfish Room after dinner. Within care rooms there were suitable rest areas for children to take a break from activities and rest if required.

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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

- Upon the inspectors arrival to the premises, the main entrance door was appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The outdoor play area was observed to be secured and free from hazards.
- The children were observed to be appropriately supervised during the inspection.
- The toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be maintained in good repair.
- Risk assessments were available in relation to the indoor and outdoor environments, and records were completed up to date.
- Blind cords were observed to be secured.
- Floor coverings were observed in good condition.
- The kitchen area remained inaccessible to the children.
- Storage areas were locked and inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

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

- Hand soap, individual use paper towels and pedal operated bins were provided at each wash hand basin. Hand washing was observed in practice following nappy changing, when children used the toilet and before snack and mealtimes.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after snack and mealtimes.
- Nappy changing procedures were carried out in line with the service's policy, with disposable aprons and gloves used for each individual nappy change.
- The sanitary areas were ventilated with openable windows or mechanical vents.
- Snacks taken in from home were stored in the fridges in each care room until snack times.

- Cleaning schedules were in place and completed up to date. The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- Children soothers were stored in individual labelled boxes, and the staff outlined appropriate washing and sterilising procedures.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.
- The service had a medication protocol available in respect of a child with a specific medical condition, to authorise staff members to administer a prescribed medication in the event of a medical emergency.

Safe Sleep:

- All children aged less than 2 years old slept in a standard cot on the day of inspection. Based on an examination of the children's attendance records maintained in the service, all children currently attending who are under 2 years of age had access to a standard cot on a daily basis.
- In discussion with the inspectors, staff members described safe sleep practices. The records indicated and staff members reported that sleep checks were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting the child's position, colour and breathing pattern.
- The air temperature of the sleep room and in the Starfish room was recorded within the recommended range of 18-22°C for children aged 1 year and older. In discussion with the inspectors, the staff members outlined the safe sleep temperature range and were observed operating a mobile air conditioning unit in the Starfish room and sleep room to achieve this during the inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to remain free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outings:

- The service manager demonstrated knowledge of the relevant safety issues associated with the preparation and safe management of outings, which included the completion of a documented risk assessment prior to the children being taken out in a 6-seater buggy and on walks in the vicinity of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The hot water supply provided at the higher-level wash hand basin in the sanitary accommodation adjoining the Turtles room was recorded at 47.2°C at 2.50pm and at 44.8°C at 3.55pm, while the hot water supply provided at the lower-level wash hand basin in the same sanitary area was recorded at 46.6°C at 2.50pm. This exceeded the maximum safe water temperature of 43°C and posed a risk to the children. When identified, the inspectors informed the staff members caring for the children of this scalding risk and these wash hand basins were subsequently not used. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to this risk.

Infection Control:

2. Thermostatically controlled warm water was not available for hand washing at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation accessed by the children attending the Penguins room and the Starfish room. The water in both the hot taps and the cold taps felt cold to touch at 11.30am and at 3.40pm. Cold water does not support pre-school children to effectively wash their hands.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been carried out:

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. A plumber was on site on 20/03/2025 at 9.00am. Two temperature controllers were fitted to the pipes of the basins. The temperature is set not to exceed 43°C. The new thermostatic control is working well.

Infection Control:

2. Following the inspection, the service sought advice from an outside plumbing company who came to investigate the issue and ensure the water is maintained at the safe temperature of between 39 - 43°C. The plumber has advised the service to connect a heating system to the 4 sinks. This will enable the water to reach the correct temperature for safe hand washing and maintain infection control efforts. The plumber is due to visit on 29/04/2025 to go through the final plan.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In order to maintain the safety of children the following steps have been put in place:

- The service has returned to having a water check officer in the centre who checks the water at various points of the day. This will ensure a record is maintained of all the temperatures and a pattern will show if there are any inconsistencies.
- Room staff have also been given probes in which they can check their water in their Turtle room as an extra precaution. Management will ask the staff to check paperwork also which means management will have a full picture of the water safety throughout the day.
- Management will audit the temperature record weekly. By doing so management can ensure the service is proactive if any surges occur.
- Management have informed the maintenance man of the issue and he will be informed of any work needed to be completed.

Infection Control:

- The service has returned to having a water check officer in the centre who checks the water at various points of the day. This will ensure the service has a record of all the temperatures and a pattern will show if there are any inconsistencies such as cold water.
- Room staff have also been given probes in which they can check their water in their Starfish room as an extra precaution.
- The deputy manager has also been given a probe to check the children's bathrooms temperatures.
- Management will ask the staff to check for their paperwork also which means the service will have a full picture of the water safety throughout the day.
- Management will audit the temperature record weekly. By doing so management can ensure the service is proactive if any decrease in water temperature occurs.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A range of photographs including temperature probes in use in both sinks, showing safe water temperature readings.
- Documentation including email confirmation of the work completed by the maintenance man, temperature records and managers checklist for water control checks.

Summary Comment

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to excessively hot water found during the inspection. The registered provider provided written assurances to the Inspectorate of appropriate immediate action undertaken to address the risk identified within 24 hours of issue. This response was accepted.

The inspectors reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers following the inspection. The registered providers demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present on the mobile tablet device used to record attendance, noting each child's arrival and departure time.

(3)(a)(b) The service ensured that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the premises. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival the inspectors were requested to record their attendance in the service and the purpose of their visit.

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) A person who held First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced by the in-date FAR training records maintained for 9 staff members and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster.
- (2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes provided in the service were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations on the premises, including in each care room, and these were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

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 was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 25/02/2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in November 2024 and the smoke detection system on 14/03/2025.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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 72 children with the in-date policy showing that the full day care service is insured until 27/03/2025.