

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LH004
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Name of Service:	Pebble Beach Playschool
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Address of Service:	The Malthouse, Main Street, Castlebellingham, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 YE09
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Name of Registered Provider:	Emma Hoey
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	No.
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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.
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Description of service

Pebble Beach Playschool is a privately owned service that has been in operation since May 2016. The service provides sessional care and education to preschool children aged 2 years - 6 years and caters for a maximum of 22 preschool children. The service operates from 9.00am to 12.30pm each weekday. The afternoon sessional service is currently not in operation.

The service operates from a converted commercial building on the main street of Castlebellingham in Co. Louth. It consists of a playroom and access to an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. Ancillary accommodation includes a sanitary area, a storage room, a reception/office area, and a kitchen area

Staffing

The Registered Provider and 3 childcare staff are employed to work directly with the preschool children

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/ premises and facilities. 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

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

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

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. The registered provider who is also the person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived and were present throughout the inspection.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Four staff files were reviewed including files for the registered provider and three childcare staff. The following vetting documents were available:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for 3 staff members and the registered provider.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all 4 members of staff. The registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented for inspection, international police vetting is not required.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 3 out of 4 members of staff, including the registered provider 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)
1. There was insufficient documentary evidence available to confirm that 1 staff member who was observed working directly with the preschool children held the required minimum 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

The relevant staff member has re applied for a copy of their childcare certificate from the governing body. The registered provider will ensure that all staff certificates are on file before commencing employment.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. However, documentary evidence of the required childcare qualification for 1 staff member has not been submitted to date. Regulatory compliance under Regulation 9 (4) has not been achieved. The registered provider is required to submit evidence of a childcare qualification when it is received.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10.30am and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 9 preschool children aged 3 to 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members including the registered provider.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs:

- The children's lunches were provided by the parents and were appropriately stored in the refrigerator. Some of the children were given roles of responsibility distributing the lunches and this promoted the children's independence. The children were also encouraged to be independent when opening their lunches and assistance was also provided if required.
- The staff sat with the children during snack time and engaged in social conversation about what activities the children did at the weekend. A discussion followed on about the St. Patricks day parade and all who attended. Drinks consisting of water and milk were available and provided when requested by the children.
- The children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and additional support was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- The children had a change of environment to the outdoor area where they engaged in a variety of outdoor games and were facilitated to choose what games they played. The children were provided with the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor areas and select their chosen toys and games of interest.

Supporting relationship around children

- A key person system was in place in the service with staff members allocated a group of children. The key person took the lead in supporting that group's transitions, recording their daily activities, maintaining relationships with their families, and documenting their learning and development.
- Individual plans for children who required additional supports in the service were available and were being implemented. The staff when questioned were familiar with supportive strategies and these were observed during the inspection.

- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up and through the use of phone calls and a small messaging service.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff member for example, “.....you are flying...that’s super...” “ yes good girl....you know how to do it...”. The children were observed to seek out the staff for assistance.

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:

- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- The premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises, with the entrance doors leading into the premises secured by a ‘buzzer system’.
- The outdoor play area was enclosed by fencing and secured with high level latches to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining entry or to prevent a pre-school child from gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.
- Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments was evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels in the service to support hand washing. Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection e.g. after toileting, after outdoor play and prior to mealtimes.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. The fridges in the service were in a clean and hygienic condition.

- Pedal operated waste bins were observed in use and were appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.

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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 for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for two adults in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box available in the service was stored in a conspicuous location where they 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

Documentary evidence was available of an up-to-date insurance certificate. Adequate cover was available for up to 22 preschool children attending the service on a sessional basis. The expiry date detailed was 27/03/2025.