

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2018LH505 |
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| Name of Service: | Pugwash Bay Ltd |
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| Address of Service: | Aston Village Green, Aston Village, Drogheda, Co. Louth |
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| Eircode: | A92 N60W |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | James Moore |
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| Service type: | Full Day |
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| Date of Inspection: | 11/11/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 33 | PM | 32 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin |
| Inspection undertaken by: | M. McDonnell 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

Pugwash Bay is based in Aston Village, in residential area of Co. Meath. The service is registered to provide sessional and full-day care to children aged 0-6 years old. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Pugwash Bay is in a purpose-built ground floor building with the Little Lions, Zebra, Tigers and Giraffe rooms available for the children. There is also a dedicated sleep room, a kitchen and sanitary facilities and an outdoor area on the premises. There is a registered school age service in operation.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs 18 staff members to work in the service, and this includes an area manager and person in charge who work in a supernumerary capacity. There is also a human resources manager, (not on site) a cleaner, a cook a school age staff member, and 9 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children. On the day of inspection, a student was working in the 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 (i)(k) Records in Relation to a pre-school service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of a child, Regulation 27 Supervision, Regulation 31 Notification of Incidents, and Regulation 32 Complaints.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) There was a designated person in charge of the service, and there was a named person to deputise in their absence.
- (b) On the inspector's arrival the identified person in charge was available. Following discussion with the area manager, the person in charge, and a review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises and staff were knowledgeable about who this was.
- (c) Following the previous inspection in May 2025 and the implementation of the preventive action as a result of that inspection it was evident that there was a clear management structure in place and staff were familiar with it.
- (2) Following a review of rosters and a discussion with the area manager it was confirmed that there were four new staff members who were employed since the last inspection on 20 May 2025 and additionally, a student was present. The staff files of the four new staff members and the student were reviewed.
- (a)(b) There were 10 written and validated references available for the four staff members and the student. A review of the roster and a discussion with the area manager demonstrated that the references outstanding from the last inspection were not required, as the staff member was no longer employed in the service.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the new staff members and the student. A Garda vetting disclosure, dated within the last three years, was also available for the staff members who were working at the last inspection in May 2025.
- (d) A review of the documentation available demonstrated that two staff members and student did not require police vetting. The police vetting required for two staff members was available and appropriately translated as required.
- (4) There was documentation available to demonstrate that three of the four staff members who worked directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7) A review of the staff files demonstrated that staff members were provided with training to support them in the care of the children. New staff members had signed and dated induction records on file. A sample of these staff members discussed how they had been trained in the service's policies and procedures. Staff members who had worked at the previous inspection discussed regular team meetings and training opportunities, inclusive of behaviour management training recently provided with documented attendance of staff members. Staff members and the area manger discussed and provided documents of training of staff policies which included questions on staff members understanding of policies. Inspectors were provided with documented records of supervision following the appointment of the new person in charge which reflected the service's staff training policy.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) From the documentation available on inspection, the inspector could not confirm that one staff member, who worked directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The registered provider stated the staff member has now submitted all required documentation to the department for formal recognition of qualification and this had been approved as a Level 6. As a preventive action the recruitment team will ensure that all prospective employees provide the required documentation prior to commencing employment. This will include verified qualifications and, where applicable, a letter of recognition from the department. A qualifications checklist has been implemented for all new hires, and management will complete regular audits of staff files to ensure ongoing compliance with Regulation 9.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the application and employee checklist was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance.

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 was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the inspector's unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- In the Little Lions Room there were 2 staff members, and 7 children aged between 1 and 2 years old, all of whom attended on a full day care basis.
- In the Zebra Room there were 2 staff members, and 5 children aged between 2 years 4 months old to 2 years 10 months old, all of whom attended on a full day care basis.
- In the Tigers Room, there was 1 staff member and 8 children aged between 2 years and 11 months old to 3 years and 7 months old
- In the Giraffe Room, there were 3 staff members and 13 children aged between 3 years and 7 months old to 4 years and 11 months old attending on a sessional basis. There were 2 staff members and 12 children who attended on a full day care basis. There was also another staff member with school age children in this room in the afternoon.

The area manager and the deputy person in charge were available to provide cover for breaks and support with care for the children.

(8) (a) Following a review of rosters, sign in records and discussions with staff members and the area manager the inspectors could confirm that two staff members were always on the premises when the children were attendance in the service.

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:

- (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

(1) (i) The inspectors were able to review a roster for the week of the inspection, which was reflective of the staff available on the day of inspection. Previous rosters, demonstrating management staff on site, were also available for review from May 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

(k) Following a review of 3 accident and incident reporting books for the Little Lions, Zebras and Tigers rooms a total of 68 accident records were reviewed covering the time frame of May 2025 to November 2025.

A total of 16 reports did not have all the required sections completed to ensure all risks were identified and managed. The following was identified;

- 13 had no manager signature
- 8 had no parental signatures, and
- 3 had no staff signature completed.

Whilst the forms available and discussions with staff members demonstrated that parents had been informed of incidents, the oversight of these records, as stated following the previous inspection in May 2025, had not prevented a non-compliance in relation to accident and incident forms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(k) The registered provider stated that all accident and incident reports have been audited and any missing information identified. Management reviewed each form in full and ensured that all outstanding sections were completed and signed as required. This process confirms that all records are now complete, accurate, and compliant with regulatory requirements. As a preventive action the registered provider stated a staff memo has

been issued to remind all staff that all sections of accident and incident report forms must be fully completed. Staff have also been reminded that the accident and incident book contains two pages: one copy to be retained by the service and one copy to be provided to parents. To ensure ongoing compliance, the Deputy Manager has been assigned responsibility for auditing the accident and incident records on a weekly basis. All completed forms will be checked to confirm they are fully completed and signed, and will then be filed in the child's individual file. This system will support effective oversight, accurate record-keeping, and regular review of accidents and incidents.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated checklist and the memo to staff

Sample updated incident records

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance.

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

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

Children's food was provided by the service and brought in from home. At snack and mealtimes, the staff were observed to sit and chat with the children whilst they ate. The children's drinking water was easily accessible to the children within their rooms at the designated water stations. The older children were encouraged to participate in the daily routines, with children being given clear roles and responsibilities, which included giving out lunches. Children had their nappy changed in a timely manner and staff chatted with the children whilst they

were being changed. Children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff remaining close by for support if required. Spare clothing was available for the children, and they were observed to be dressed appropriately for the weather on the day while in the outdoor area.

Sleep needs for the children in the younger rooms were in line with the children's needs. The children in Little Lions room were placed to sleep in the cot room at various times throughout the day in line with their individual care needs, and staff remained with the children until they went to sleep. Three children from the Tigers room joined the Zebra room at an allocated sleep time after dinner. The staff quickly set the area up for sleep following dinner time and were observed to soothe and comfort children while they transitioned to sleep. The staff remained in the care room while the children slept.

Supporting relationships around children

The staff members were observed to interact kindly with the children within their care and demonstrated awareness of the children's individual preferences. The staff members provided comfort and responded efficiently to children who were upset over minor disagreements with their peers, for example encouraging children to share equipment and give a peer some paper. Staff members discussed the individual needs of children and were aware of the supports required. Staff members discussed recent and previous training in behaviour management and supports in place to discuss any issues with the management team. This included support and training from a quality improvement service. Relevant staff members discussed the use of observations for behaviour management and how these were discussed with parents and management staff members. Children were observed to have choices within their play routine. For example, in the Tigers room children were provided with pasta and toys to play with in the sensory tray. At this time other children were observed playing independently with toys and equipment such houses and dolls and cars in the home corner, whilst a staff member provided reassurance to a child when they had questions about a peer going to the doctor. A digital application was used to record children's activities, food eaten, sleep and toileting routines. Staff members discussed how they communicated with parents on a daily basis through the application and how phone calls would be made should there be any significant incidents. If required incident records would be available at the entrance for parents to sign. It is acknowledged that an incident which occurred on inspection was notified to the parent and a signed copy, by the parent, of the incident record was submitted to the inspectors on 12 November 2025. Transitions were observed to be calm and supportive of children. For example, in the Tiger and Giraffe rooms children were encouraged to get ready independently and wait for their peers to go to the outdoor area. Staff in

the Tiger room sang songs at this time and the routine was adapted in the Giraffe room to support different children.

Physical and material environment

Appropriate relaxation areas were available in the rooms, with well-developed cosy areas available in all rooms. Activities and equipment were available on open shelving at a low level for children to access independently which included a range of books, tabletop activities, construction toys. The home corners in each of the care rooms, were equipped with a range of materials which included food, cutlery and dining items. There were also babies, buggies and clothes available. The Little Lions room catering for the younger children had comfortable floor areas for children to sit and play.

Art pieces were on display in all the care rooms, along with a picture schedule of the daily routine, family photos and birthday charts. Children’s emerging interests were recorded and there was a keyworker system in place. Learning journals with links to the curriculum framework were maintained for each child.

An outdoor area was available for the children on the premises. This area was partially covered, and children were observed in this area due to the inclement weather. The covered area was contained by a low wooden fence and artificial grass. The children had access to a small slide, ride on toys, trikes and balls. When each room used the area, they also brought other toys out, which the children helped pick. For example, when the children from the Giraffe room went outside, they brought a play mat and cars. The uncovered area had artificial grass surface and was surrounded by high level walls and a secured gate. There were two low level wooden climbing structures, large tyres, ride on toys, and a seating area.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system and keypad locks in place.
- The inspectors were requested to sign into the service, and a record of visitors was maintained.
- Following the previous inspection the inspectors discussed the child safeguarding with staff members, inclusive of management staff, and staff described training they had taken and relevant steps they would take should they have any concerns about children in their care, inclusive of referrals to other agencies. This demonstrated that the preventive actions were in place.
- Warm water was available for handwashing and was thermostatically controlled to not exceed 43°C to prevent a risk of scalding.
- Emergency exits, hallways and the entrance to the service were clear of obstructions.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary facilities had warm water, paper towels and soap available for effective hand washing.
- Children in the Zebra room were observed to wash their hands after painting activity and before dinner.
- The service was visually clean, and a dedicated staff member was available, and observed cleaning the communal areas of the service.

Safe Sleep:

- There were documented sleep checks of children whilst they slept. Staff members spoken with were aware of the requirements of the checks including checking the children's breathing, colour, position and room temperature at 10-minute intervals. The checks were recorded on the service's electronic application.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The blind cord on one window in the Tigers room was unsecured and accessible to children which posed a risk of injury to a child.
2. In the Zebra room an undercounter cupboard was unsecured. A bottle of washing liquid was stored within the unsecured cupboard, which if accessed poses a risk of harm to a child.

Infection Control:

3. The children's hands were not observed to be washed before their afternoon snack time in the Little Lions room. The children proceeded from playing with toys in the care room to sitting at the table for their snack time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The damaged blind in the Tiger Room and the defective cupboard in the Zebra Room were immediately recorded on the maintenance log and the necessary repairs were carried out.
2. As an immediate risk control measure, the washing-up liquid was removed from the cupboard and is now securely stored in the sluice room. All staff have been informed that washing-up liquid is no longer required or permitted to be stored in playrooms, and this has been communicated to ensure ongoing compliance and child safety.

As a preventive action for both issues a maintenance officer has been appointed and allocated protected time each week to identify, record, and address health and safety issues requiring maintenance. All identified issues are documented in the maintenance logbook and are signed off by the maintenance officer and a member of the management team to ensure appropriate oversight and accountability.

Room-specific risk assessment sheets have been introduced in each room to support staff in identifying and documenting hazards as they arise. This ensures that risks are effectively monitored and managed on an ongoing basis. In addition, a dedicated line relating to cupboard safety has been incorporated into the daily room risk assessment to provide a clear prompt for routine checks and to support consistent implementation of safety controls.

Infection Control:

1. Following the observation that children were not washing their hands prior to snack, all staff have been reminded of the requirement to follow the service's infection control procedures. The infection control policy was sent out to the staff as a reminder. A visual handwashing reminder chart has been placed in all areas where snacks are served. Staff are required to supervise and support children in washing their hands before snack time. They have been encouraged to use songs and hand movements to make hand washing more fun. The Deputy Manager/Floater will carry out daily checks to ensure handwashing is completed before meals and snacks. Compliance with hand hygiene procedures will be reviewed during weekly audits and discussed at staff meetings

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the checklist

Photograph of the handwashing signs in place

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The inspector observed staff supervising children primarily by sight throughout the period of inspection. The layout of the rooms supported staff in being able to maintain sight of the children. Staff used observations and incident records to support effective supervision and there were records that incidents of biting had been reduced from a review of incident records, with a staff member knowledgeable about what supports were required to achieve this. During the inspection the area manager was observed using the CCTV to support practice within the service, by assisting a staff member in their room. They discussed how it was used contemporaneously to support staff members and how they or the person in charge may support staff in the rooms.

Each of the rooms had access to their own separate sanitary facilities. Staff were aware of children who used the sanitary facilities and maintained verbal contact with children at these times. In the Tiger room staff members had to use alternative nappy changing facilities and other staff members provided supervision and support at this time.

The children in the Little Lions room were supervised while going to sleep. When settled staff were observed to carry out the required 10-minute checks on sleeping children. The children in the Zebra room were supervised at all times during sleep time.

In the outdoor area there was a climbing frame, trikes, scooters and toys for the children to play with. Staff members were aware of children's play and appropriately supervised the use of the different equipment that was available.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*

Compliance Information

(c)(d) There was evidence that the service had submitted notifications of incidents as required following the previous inspection in May 2025. On discussion with the staff members, they were aware of the requirement to notify the Agency.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider’s complaints policy.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c) The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and the appeals process.

(2) (a)(b) The service had a record of recent complaint which was dealt with in line with the service’s complaints policy