

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025LH001
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Name of Service:	Pugwash Bay LTD
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Address of Service:	Carrick Road Medical Centre, Lis na Dara, Carrickmacross Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 HTX3
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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(s) of Inspection:	16/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	24
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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

Pugwash Bay Ltd (Carrick Road Medical Centre) is a new service, that has been registered since 20/05/2025. The service joins a group of five already operational Pugwash Bay services in the Co. Louth and Co. Meath areas, in addition to a further 8 early years services operated by the registered provider nationally.

The service operates on a full day care basis from 8.00am – 6pm, Monday- Friday and is registered to cater for a maximum number of 44 pre-school children ranging in age from 2 - 6 years.

The service operates from the ground floor of a 2-storey building that is attached to a medical centre and pharmacy in the Lis Na Dara residential area of Dundalk, Co. Louth. There is off street parking for drop off and collection.

The premises includes 2 rooms, namely Dolphins Room (Preschool room 1) and Turtles Room (Preschool Room 2). Ancillary accommodation consists of an office area, a sluice, sanitary and nappy changing facilities. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the building. Facilities for the storage and processing of food is located in an adjacent premises childcare service

Staffing

There are 10 staff employed in this service, including the regional area manager and 8 childcare staff of whom work directly with the children and 1 staff member who carries out cleaning duties.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child. 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 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required.

Both were on the premises when the inspector arrived at the service and for the duration of 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) Ten staff files were presented for inspection and reviewed.

(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for all 10 members of staff including the area manager, 8 childcare staff and 1 staff member who carries out cleaning duties. All references reviewed were validated as required.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 10 staff members, and the service 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 and required translations were available for 3 staff members who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that 8 out of 9 members of staff, including the area manager who work directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification or a letter of equivalency.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentary evidence of a certified translation was available for 1 staff member; however this information was insufficient to assure the inspectorate that this equated to the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Actions

The service obtained the original qualification certificate from the staff member in question. The certificate has been reviewed and verified as authentic by management. The qualification has been confirmed to be on the DCYA (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) approved list, meeting the minimum Level 5 childcare qualification requirement. The original certificate has been professionally translated by a certified translation service to ensure accuracy and compliance with TUSLA requirements. A copy of both the original certificate and the certified translation will be retained on the staff member's personnel file for inspection purposes.

Each qualification is cross-checked against the DCYA approved list before employment commences.

A full audit of all staff qualification records will be completed to ensure compliance with TUSLA and DCYA requirements. On going monitoring, The Person in Charge (PIC) or Deputy PIC will review staff files quarterly to ensure all qualifications remain fully documented and verifiable. Any missing or unclear documentation will be followed up immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of qualification certificate and official translation.

Email detailing that the qualification submitted meets the minimum level 5 childcare qualification requirement

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with photographic evidence of a qualification certificate. Further information was requested, and an official translation of the qualification and evidence that it meets the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification was received. Based on the information submitted the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately 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 adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios in the following rooms were correct in the service when the inspector arrived:

- **The Dolphins Room:**

There were 16 preschool children aged 3-4 years with 3 members of staff.

- **The Turtles Room:**

There were 21 preschool children aged 2-3 years with 4 members of staff.

The area manager for the service group was also present in the service.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g. staff rotas and children's attendance records this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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) There were two rooms in operation on the day of the inspection namely, The Turtle and The Dolphin Rooms. The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider facilitated each child's learning and development:

Basic Needs of Child:

- The children had free movement in the care rooms, and all children had a change of environment to the outdoor area located on the premises on a few occasions. Some children who requested to remain inside the care room to play were also facilitated.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff. The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- Care needs were attended to on a regular basis by the staff. Noses were wiped frequently, and hands were washed prior to mealtimes and after toileting and outdoor play.
- Drinks were available to the children as required. "Personal care stations" were available in both care rooms and the children could access their drinks cups/ bottles as needed.
- In the service, morning snacks were brought in from home by the children and were stored appropriately in the fridge. Lunches were observed to consist of a variety of sandwiches, fruit, yoghurts, crackers and cheese. The service provided a hot meal which was from an external catering company and was prepared and reheated in the adjacent Pugwash Childcare service and transported to the service. The hot meal observed during the inspection was observed to consist of 'Cottage pie'. The tea-time snack was also provided by the service and was reported to consist of one of a variety of items e.g. crackers & grapes, soup and brown bread, waffles and beans or custard and raisins. A weekly menu was on display in the care rooms. The staff supervised and provided assistance at mealtimes, and the children were all given

time to finish their meals. One child who required extra time to eat and finish their snack was facilitated by the staff.

- No child was observed to sleep during the inspection. However, some of the children accessed the rest area in the care rooms where they lay down for a period to take a break from activities.

Supporting relationship around children

- A key person system was in place in the service. It was observed that each staff member had a small group of children assigned to them and the key person took the lead in supporting that groups transitions, recording their daily activities, maintaining relationships with their families, and documenting their learning and development. Photographs of the staff and allocated key children were also on display in the care rooms.
- In the care rooms, children were observed to be provided with sensitive care and nurturing interactions by staff. Children were spoken to with positivity and encouragement. For example, when one child was carrying out a hand painting activity the staff member was heard to say “...now sleeves up and off you go...that’s right its orange...well done...wow I can’t wait to see this....wow everyone look at ... hand.” “Well done”.
- Staff used an electronic application (an ‘App’) to provide information to parents regarding their child’s care and daily routine in the service on a daily basis. Information shared included details of each child’s personal care routines such as what they ate, when they slept, nappy changes and play activities. Pictures of activities, games, curriculum plans, and the children’s learning journeys are also shared through this ‘app.’ A documented daily diary was also completed for some children whose parents requested it. This record detailed information pertaining to the children’s care needs such as mealtimes, toileting and nappy changes and activities of the day. This information was also verbally shared with parents at drop off and collection.
- The staff have a communication group where they share information through a messaging service. The staff also report on regular staff meetings in the service.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in both care rooms on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children. Specific areas of interest were defined, and each area was well supported with a variety of toys and equipment for example: a nature area, home area, constructive toys and manipulative toys that included jigsaws, blocks and magnet shapes, a rest area with books on display, an art area and a dress up area. A specific sensory area was also

available and included a sand tray, sensory toys and bottles and pictures of ‘big emotions’. buggies and books.

Programme Of Activities

- A variety of the children’s artwork was on display in both rooms and included ‘all about me’ handprints, ‘our handprints are unique’ and fish plates.
- In both care rooms the staff were observed seated at tables or down on the floor with the children and to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner reading stories, engaging in art/ playdough activities, and singing songs.
- Evidence of long/ medium and short-term planning were on display in the rooms and many of the activities were reflective of the planned curriculum. “All aboard the timetable train “included photographs of the daily routine and was displayed in the care rooms.
- Children who required additional supports from the service were supported with various strategies which staff were familiar with.

Non-Compliance Information

1. During the inspection on a number of occasions the children from the Dolphins Room were observed to walk through the Turtles Room and use the exit door from this room to access the outdoor area. The children also used this door to access the toilet facilities when they were in the outdoor play area. Some children in the Turtles Room who were playing on the ground with their chosen toys had to move their toys out of the way or were interrupted playing. This was disruptive to the activities of the children in the Turtles Room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Actions

1. Staff supervision was increased during transitions to ensure children follow designated pathways. Temporary measures were put in place to minimize disruption to the Turtles Room activities, such as rearranging play areas and supervising children to avoid interference with ongoing play. A team meeting was held to inform staff of the issue and reinforce procedures for maintaining boundaries between rooms. Staff were reminded of the importance of maintaining uninterrupted play for all children. A dedicated access route for Dolphins Room children to reach the outdoor area and toilets will be established without passing through the Turtles Room. Room leaders and the Person in Charge (PIC) will monitor transitions between rooms and outdoor areas daily for a period of four weeks to ensure compliance. Monthly reviews will ensure that the new system is effective, and children’s play is not disrupted.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff meeting agenda and attendance record.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on the information submitted and the assurances given that the person in charge will monitor transitions and establish an access route to the outdoor area for the children attending the Dolphins Room, the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

There was inadequate supervision of the children in the outdoor area. For example; when the children attending the Turtles Room were in the outdoor area with 3 staff members, 9 children were observed on the small outdoor frame at the one time. Additionally, at this time one child was also observed to run and jump on top of the other children already on the frame. No timely interventions were observed by the staff present until one child became upset and started crying and were removed from the frame to be comforted.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager immediately discussed the observations with all staff about the safety and what do in this case: to remove the child from the small outdoor frame and comfort them. The number of children on the outdoor frame was immediately reduced to ensure safe play. Staff were reminded on the spot to actively supervise and monitor children during outdoor play, particularly on equipment. The incident was discussed in a staff meeting to reinforce the importance of active supervision, prompt intervention, and child safety. Staff were reminded of their responsibility to anticipate potential risks and intervene before incidents occur.

Supervision plan will be implemented for the outdoor area, assigning specific staff members to monitor different sections (e.g., frame, open play area, sandpit). Refresher training on active supervision, risk assessment, and safe play practices will be provided to all staff. Staff will be trained to identify unsafe behaviours and intervene promptly, emphasizing proactive rather than reactive supervision. The Outdoor Play Supervision Policy will be updated and include: the maximum number of children allowed on each piece of equipment at one time, clear guidance for monitoring and intervention procedures.

The staff will review and acknowledge the updated policy to ensure understanding and compliance.

The Person in Charge (PIC) or Deputy PIC will observe outdoor play sessions weekly for the first month to ensure proper supervision and adherence to ratios. Monthly reviews will be conducted to ensure continued compliance and identify any further training needs.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated Outdoor Play Policy

Staff meeting agenda and attendance information

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on the information submitted and the assurances given that the person in charge will monitor outdoor play and staff supervision, the non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.