

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH070
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Name of Service:	Periwinkles Pre School
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Address of Service:	Callystown National School, Callystown, Clogherhead, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 P981
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Coates
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	06/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	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

Periwinkles Pre-school is one of 3 privately owned services by the registered provider. This service has been in operation since 2014 and operates from a prefabricated building on the grounds of Callystown National School in the coastal town of Clogherhead in Co. Louth. It provides sessional care and education to pre-school children aged 2 - 6 years.

The premises consists of a playroom with adjoining sanitary facilities, an outdoor play area and the service also have access to the activities hall in the main school building. There is onsite parking for drop off and collection.

Staffing

There were 10 staff employed in the service including the following:

- The registered provider who works directly with the preschool children.
- Two childcare staff who work directly with the children on a daily basis.
- Six childcare staff from the 'sister' services that may provide relief cover when required.
- One staff member who is employed to work with children attending the school aged 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

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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 person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 10.40am. The registered provider arrived on the premises at 11.00am and was present intermittently until 12.15pm.

(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 reviewed including files for the registered provider, eight childcare staff and 1 staff member who works with children attending the school aged service.

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The following vetting documents were available:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written references available for 9 staff members and the registered provider. All references were validated as required.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all 10 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, international police vetting was not required at this time.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that all 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.

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 10.40am and remained so throughout the inspection. The staff and preschool children from a 'sister' service were also in attendance as the school photographer was present for the day. There were 22 preschool children aged 2 years 6 months to 5 years being cared for by 5 staff members. The registered provider arrived on the premises at 11.00am and was present until approximately 12.15pm..

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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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (a) A curriculum vitae detailing qualifications and experience was available for each of staff files reviewed.
- (h) Documentary evidence was available of the daily attendance of each child attending the service and the visiting preschool children from the 'sister' service. This included details of the arrival and departure times of each child.
- (i) An up-to-date weekly staff roster was available in the service and were reflective of the staff present in the service.
- (j) It was reported that no medication has been administered in the service. Documentary evidence was available of signed parental consent for temperature reducing medication should it be required in an emergency. A medical care plan was also available and which staff were familiar with for a child who may require medication in the event of an emergency.
- (k) A sample of 5 accident and incident forms were reviewed. The required information was recorded and included for example; the incident details, the time and date of the incident, parent signature, the staff signature and managers signature indicating that they had reviewed the information.

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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 examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic needs:

- The children were observed to move freely in the care room. All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area, and the children were dressed appropriately for going outside. Additionally, the children attended the photographer in a group in the activities hall of the main school building.
- The children's lunches were provided by the parents, and all perishables were appropriately stored in the refrigerator. The children were encouraged to be independent when tidying up after lunch. Assistance was also provided if required. The drinks cups / bottles were always accessible to the children.
- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting and step ups were provided. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required and gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting.

Supporting relationship around children

- A key worker system was in place in the service, and this was displayed in the care room.
- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. A parents information board is also on display in the hallway. A newsletter and parents media messaging 'app' is also provided and details information about the curriculum including activities, photographer, themes and associated planned activities or visits from local services. Phone calls and meetings with parents are also used if required.
- The staff reported regular meetings to plan and discuss care practices and activities in the services. Documented 'minutes' of the staff meetings are also maintained to record items that are discussed. A small messaging service to support communication within the staff group is also frequently used.

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- The teaching staff in the adjoining primary school are reported to visit the service to introduce themselves and to support transitions for the children moving to primary school.

Physical and Material Environment

- The playroom was a bright and spacious play area with a variety of developed areas of interest. The interest areas were well resourced with a variety of toys and equipment including a selection of real-world materials. The children were observed to engage in imaginary play and role play at times throughout the session and this was supported by the staff, for example, a group of children were in the 'shop area' and one of staff was observed to engage in the role of the customer
- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available. The toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- A variety of sensory trays containing sand and water were available and equipment such as large balls and cushions were regularly used by the children who wanted to engage in sensory play.
- The staff 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 members. For example *"mummy's & daddy's will be so happy with the photographs"* "A child had a minor trip and the staff member responded" *you are very brave...did that ever happen you before?...I'm sure you were very brave then too..*". The children sought out the staff, and one child was observed to ask a staff member *"can I play in the kitchen?"* the staff member responded, *"yes if you tidy up the puzzles we can go to the kitchen them."*

Programme Of Activities.

- Evidence of child led curriculum plans were available. Details of the children's emerging interests were also on display, and the staff confirmed how the children's interests were incorporated into the curriculum plan.
- Scrap books had been commenced for the children and contained a variety of the children's artwork, observations, photographs linked to some of the monthly themes e.g. superhero cape design, St. Patrick's day shamrocks, and activities in the service.
- The children were observed to have a change of environment to the outdoor area where they engaged in a variety of games and activities including; playing with bubbles, chalk drawing and associated running and jumping games.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

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

General Safety:

- The external and internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving and in locked cupboards.
- Low level sharp corners were protected adequately to prevent injury to a child. Documentary evidence of risk assessments was also available.

Infection Control:

- All perishable items provided by the parents for snack time were stored appropriately in the fridge.
- A pedal operated waste bin was observed in use and was appropriately maintained on the day of the inspection.
- There was a constant supply of thermostatic controlled hot water, liquid soap and single use paper towels in use in the service. Hands were observed to be washed after toileting, outdoor play and before lunch.
- A nappy changing mat was available and there was a supply of aprons and disposable gloves for use in nappy changing. No nappy changing was observed by the inspector.
- Evidence of the care of mouthed toys was observed and when questioned the staff were familiar with the procedure in accordance with best practice guidelines.

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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 adequate insurance cover for up to 22 children which expired on 27/3/26.