

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025LH002
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Name of Service:	Periwinkles Ltd
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Address of Service:	Main Street, Clogherhead, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 EKD7
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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:	27/11/2025
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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

Periwinkles Ltd is one of three private services owned by the registered provider. This is a sessional service that operates from 9am- 12.00pm Monday - Friday. The service caters for a maximum of 21 pre-school children with an age range of 2 ½ to 6 years.

The service is located on the main street in Clogherhead and consists of a playroom with adjoining sanitary accommodation and a separate storage & kitchenette area. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs 4 childcare staff including the registered provider who work directly with the pre-school children attending 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 announced and focused on the area of governance and 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 registered provider, 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 was on the premises when the inspector arrived announced to the service at 10.55am. The registered provider was also on the premises. All were present 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) 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 references available for 3 staff members and the registered provider. All references were validated as required.

(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, 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 announced at 10.55am and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 9 preschool children aged 2 years 10 months to 3 years being cared for by 3 staff members. The registered provider was also on the premises and was present for the duration of the inspection.

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*
- (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

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

Basic Needs

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before snack times after toileting and nappy changing.

- Snack time was observed to be a social, interactive occasion with all children observed seated at the tables. Children who required additional time to relax and eat their lunch were facilitated and were supported by the staff e.g. *“well done ...did you eat up all your lunch...?”*. The children were encouraged to ‘tidy up’ after their lunch promoting their independence.
- The children’s drinks cups and bottles were stored on a low-level shelf in the care room, and they were accessible as required during the session.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff.
- All children had a change of environment to the outdoor area located on the premises and were dressed appropriately for the weather outside.

Supporting Relationships

- Links between the service and home were promoted and evidenced by the presence of ‘Our Periwinkles Family’- pictures of the children’s family and staff which were on display in the playroom.
- Parents were informally communicated with at drop off and collection time. The staff reported that most communication with parents is carried out through this method. Social media, email and phone calls are also reported as being used on a regular basis to share information about activities that are happening and photographs. The staff confirmed that an ‘information day’ is also run for parents and children attending the service.
- The staff communicate with each other on a regular basis and report that a messaging service and verbal communications on a daily basis support them to meet the children’s needs in the service. For example, some evidence was available of strategies that have been identified by staff to assist children who require additional supports in the service.
- The staff report that the registered provider ensures that all new staff receive induction training and mentoring from more experienced staff when they commence in the service.

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. A sensory area was available with mats and trays containing sand were also available and this supported the children who wanted to engage in sensory play.

- The toys and equipment observed were age appropriate and displayed on low level open shelving, which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- The staff confirmed that the children had a change of environment to the outdoor area prior to the inspector's arrival. The area had a variety of surfaces including concrete, grass and bark and was secured with fencing and gates. The play equipment available in the area included; a sand tray, ride on equipment, seating, a plastic playhouse and planted areas.

Programme Of Activities.

- "Periwinkles art wall" displayed some of the children's artwork including "our traffic lights and our pumpkins". In a separate display the children's artwork included "turkeys and Mayflower pilgrims" which was reflective of the theme of "thanksgiving" which was part of the planned curriculum. The children also sang "the turkey song" while engaging in a discussion about Thanksgiving.
- 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 while allowing also for flexibility for topics of interest that may arise.
- Scrap books had been commenced for the children and contained a variety of the children's artwork, learning observations and photographs of activities that are sent home as a 'keep sake' at the end of the school year.
- The staff were observed down on the floor with the children, engaged in activities and games. They interacted with the children in a warm and supportive manner, encouraging the children to select what they would like to play with or supporting the children with an art activity or an area of interest e.g. pencil work in a copy, story time and a discussion that followed about "going to the cinema".