

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS146
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare Newcastle
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Address of Service:	The Glebe, Newcastle Village, Newcastle, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D22 HK19
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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

Cocoon Childcare Newcastle is a full day care service located in a residential area of Newcastle, South Co. Dublin and is one of fifteen early years services operated by the registered provider. Care and education are provided on a full-time basis to children aged six months to six years in a purposely adapted residential property. The service is open from 08:00 to 18:00 each weekday and comprises of four care rooms, three of which were in use on the day of inspection. An outdoor play area is available on the premises and a dedicated sleep room is located adjacent to the Wobbler one room.

Staffing

The service currently employs ten staff members, including a designated person in charge. All ten staff members were present during the inspection. The area manager arrived to the service subsequent to the inspectors arrival to facilitate the inspection.

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/ information and records. 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 wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

- (2) Documentation was reviewed in respect of regulation 9(2)(3)(4) for nine adults who were employed to work in the service since the last date of inspection on the 1st March 2022. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all ten adults employed to work in the service and the registered provider.
- (a) (b)
- The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for each of the nine adults.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau was available for each of the ten adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for six adults who required it.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures detailed above under 9(2) had been completed prior to the nine adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Eight of the adults held a relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. One adult did not require a qualification.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were twenty-seven children present in the service being supervised by eight adults during the inspection. The person in charge provided relief cover to the care rooms when required.

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:

- (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

- (1)
 - (h) A record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.
 - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection.

- (j) Written records of medication having been administered to children in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample of the records reviewed contained all of the necessary details.
- (k) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample reviewed on the day of inspection documented necessary details.

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

A healthy eating policy was in place in the service. Staff stated snacks, a hot lunch, and tea are prepared and served daily in the service to the children in attendance. Staff sat with children during mealtimes encouraging a sociable atmosphere. Staff supported younger children to self-feed who were all provided with bibs to protect their clothing. Older children served themselves at lunch time and more food was available to any child who wanted it. Drinking water was available to the children during the inspection and milk was provided to drink at snack time.

Rest areas were available in each room to enable the children to rest or take time away from the group as desired. Younger children were all given the opportunity to sleep at a designated time after lunch. The children were made comfortable for sleep, with staff removing their shoes and outer clothing and providing soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, staff sat with the children soothing them and offering comfort as needed.

Children's nappies were changed routinely and as needed, with staff using these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently. Staff assisted the children with handwashing before meals and helped them clean their faces after eating. Staff addressed children by name and spoke to them in gentle positive tones. A record was kept for staff to communicate with parents/guardians regarding individual children's care, including information about diet, sleep, and nappy changes.

An outdoor play area was available on the premises. The area was well resourced with a variety of play equipment and materials. The care rooms were observed to be well resourced, and all materials were made accessible to the

children at all times on low level shelving units, facilitating the children's choices in play. Pieces of the children's artwork were displayed around the care rooms alongside photographs the children had taken in from home. Materials and equipment were arranged into various areas of interest including home corners, sensory play and construction areas. Low level tables and chairs were available for the children appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

There were adequate and suitable facilities available on the day of inspection for children to rest. Designated rest areas were available in each care room where children could rest throughout the day. Low level beds and standard cots were available for children to sleep suitable to their age and stage of development.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised. The care rooms and outdoor play area were observed to be safe and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required. Individual care plans were in place for children requiring emergency medication.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance. Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated sleep room and the younger care rooms, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in

accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

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)

An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of inspection.