

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS200
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare - Kimmage
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Address of Service:	28a Shelton Park, Lower Kimmage Road, Kimmage, Dublin 12, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D12 PN40
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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(s) of Inspection:	24/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	79	PM	78
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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:	S Quigley & H Sutherland
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Kimmage is a full day care service located in an urban, residential area of Kimmage, Dublin 12 and is 1 of 17 services operated by the registered provider. Care and education are provided to children aged between 6 months and 6 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:30am and 18:30pm hours. The service operates from a purpose-built single storey premises. Children are allocated to one of six care rooms dependant on their age and stage of development. A large outdoor play space is located to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 19 staff members including a cook, a cleaner, and a centre manager. On the day of inspection, 13 adults who are employed to work in the centre were present. The area manager, four adults employed in other centres operated by the registered provider, and an adult who works in head office of Cocoon Childcare were also present. The registered provider arrived subsequent to the inspector's 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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9, 11 and 19; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by the receipt of information which was furnished to the Early Years Inspectorate on the 13 April 2026, and on the 20 April 2026.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 required under Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of five adults working in the service during the inspection from other Cocoon centres and head office.

(a) (b) There were two references each available for the adults which had been appropriately verified.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all of the adults employed in the service.

(d) International police vetting was available for one of the five adults who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(3) The procedures specified above under Regulation 9(2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing employment.

(4)

Documentation reviewed evidenced that four of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One adult who did not hold a recognised

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

qualification held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were not working directly with the children attending the service at all times during the inspection as detailed below under (2).

(2)

The registered provider did not ensure that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service at all times. An insufficient number of adults were available to the children intermittently during the morning of inspection attending on a part time and full day care basis in the Senior Preschool, Senior Toddlers, Junior Toddlers, and Junior Wobblers:

- From 8:35am until 9:22am across the aforementioned five care rooms, adults were observed caring for preschool children aged between 1 to 4 years for periods of 2 to 12 minutes not within the required minimum adult to child ratios for the ages of the children in attendance in these rooms.

Staff members who were not rostered to work in the service on the day of inspection arrived resulting in the adult to child ratio being met as follows:

- The area manager was present working directly in the care rooms with the children when the inspectors arrived at the service. At 8:58am, 9:04am, 9:18am, and 9:32am three adults employed in other centres operated by the registered provider, and one adult employed in the service's head office, arrived to the service to work directly with the children across the care rooms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The service has since had three employees commence their employment and also still has additional support provided from an external agency, operations manager and other Cocoon services when

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

required. The companies Emergency Relief Panel also remains in place as support to the service if required due to unexpected absences. The services operating hours were also temporarily reduced to 8:00am – 5:00pm in response to this.

- (2) Due to unexpected absences on the morning of the inspection and time required to arrange alternative cover and transport this resulted in momentary lapses in the adult to child ratios. Once notified of the unexpected absences, team members and the emergency relief panel was contacted to arrive to the centre. The service has since had three employees commence their employment and also the services emergency relief panel has been on site along with a member of the operations team where required to ensure adult to child ratios are being met each day and offer support in the event of unexpected absences. The centre also reduced their operating hours temporarily in response to this.

Three additional team members have commenced their employment with an additional five staff due to commence as soon as garda vetting returns. The registered provider has recruited for additional team members to ensure if extra support is required for the service in the event of unexpected absences or further garda vetting delays. The centre will continue to be supported by the operations manager, other centres, an external employment agency and emergency relief panel if required. The service temporarily reduced the centre operating hours in response to this and has recruited additional team members for the service to ensure additional support is available when required. Members of the operations team, other services and emergency relief panel have been on site and will continue to do so where required. The centre manager will ensure to update the centre roster regularly throughout the day where required to reflect any changes in staffing scheduled for the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliance.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)

Staff members reported all meals and snacks are provided by the service each day and are prepared onsite by a cook, including a hot dinner. Mealtimes were observed to be sociable and relaxed where children sat together chatting. Staff encouraged self-feeding and provided assistance to younger children where required. Younger children wore bibs to protect their clothing and staff assisted in cleaning their hands and faces following meals. Drinking water was available to the children on the day of inspection.

Staff members were observed interacting with the children in a warm and caring manner. Staff responded promptly to younger children's cues for care. Older children were supported to be independent in their environment including using the toilet independently, cleaning up following mealtimes and play, and washing hands before meals and faces afterwards. Adults used gentle tones and kind, respectful language during interactions with the children who appeared content and happy in their environment during the inspection. Babies were placed to sleep throughout the day in accordance with their individual routines. Older children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after lunch and staff members stated sleep could be accommodated outside this time if required. Rest areas were available in the care rooms for children to take a break from activities if required.

The care rooms were well resourced with a variety of play materials and equipment which were accessible to the children at all times during the inspection, promoting child led play. Various areas of interest were defined including home corners, library's, sensory play spaces, and construction areas enabling children to engage in various forms of play and learning. Displays of children's artwork, birthday walls, and photographs of children and their families were displayed on the walls, promoting a sense of identity and belonging in the play environments. Care rooms were equipped with suitable low-level tables and chairs in line with the developmental needs of the children in each room. The children had access to an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i)

Although it is acknowledged that a staffing roster was in place in the service detailing staff members hours of work each day, the roster was not reflective of the staff members present during the inspection who were working directly with the children as follows:

- Five adults present during the inspection, including the area manager and four adults from other centres operated by the provider and the service's head office, were present and working directly in the care rooms during the inspection. The area manager was present on the inspector's arrival. The four other adults arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Due to unexpected absences within the service and staffing challenges due to Garda Vetting delays the staff roster on file was unable to be updated as the operational manager on site was required to support the care rooms and the staff roster was updated later that day to include the additional support that arrived to the centre after the inspectors arrival. The centre manager will ensure to update the centre roster daily where required and as soon as possible when there are any unexpected changes to facilitate any changes in staff members or arrival of support to the centre.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspectors.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.