

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:	12/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	70
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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 & Linda Magee
Title:	Early Years Inspector(s)

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 Educare Kimmage is a full day care service located in a residential, urban area of Kimmage, South County Dublin and is one of fifteen early years services operated by the registered provider. Care and education are provided to children aged between six months to six years and the operating hours are from Monday to Friday between 07:30 and 18:30. The service is a purposely built, single storey property and comprises of six care rooms. The children have access to an outdoor play area which is attached to the premises with an artificial grass surfacing.

Staffing

The service currently employs twenty-three staff members, not including the registered provider and the area manager. On the day of inspection, nineteen adults were present and rostered to work in the service. The area manager and the registered provider arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival to support staff members and 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection included an assessment of the following regulations;

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby room, the Senior Wobbler room, the Junior Toddler room, and the Senior Toddler room.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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

(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)
Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that eight adults had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 26th November 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these eight adults as detailed below.

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

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

(d) International police vetting was available for the adults who both required it.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing employment in the service.

(4) The adults each held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 seventy-six children present in the service being supervised by seventeen adults during the inspection. The persons in charge provided relief cover to the care rooms when required.

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-

(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

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place. The children moved freely – exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff. The children used the toilet when they needed and children wearing nappies had these changed regularly. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm individual engagement with the children.

Regular snacks and meals were provided to the children by the service, including a hot lunch. Staff sat with the children when eating, creating a sociable atmosphere. Bibs were provided to protect children’s clothing when eating. Staff promoted independence at meal times and provided support when needed. Children were assisted to clean their faces and wash their hands at appropriate times.

Children who required sleep were facilitated in the afternoon after their meal and staff members reported they could sleep outside this designated time if required. The rooms where they slept were calm and conducive to sleep. The children who had soothers were offered them when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided the children with reassurance and comfort when settling them to sleep, sitting with them and speaking to them gently. Areas were available within the children's rooms where they could rest or take a break from activities if required.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children observed by the inspectors. They addressed them by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. The staff provided the children with comfort when they became upset, holding them and talking to them in kind tones. Information regarding children's daily routines were recorded in the care rooms to share with parents upon collection to allow for continuation of care.

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 were taken 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.

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.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and detailed the safe sleep procedures in place in the service during discussions with the inspectors. 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.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A blind cord in the Junior Toddler room was hanging unsecured on the day of inspection and could be accessed by the children in attendance posing a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

2. There was no system in place to manage mouthed toys in the Baby room to mitigate the risk of cross contamination. Children were observed repeatedly mouthing toys and equipment in view of staff members who made no attempt to clean them. This was at variance with the infection control policy in place in the service.

Safe Sleep:

3. The temperature of the Junior Toddler room where children aged one to two years slept on the day of inspection exceeded the required temperature range of 18 - 22°Celsius. This was at variance with the safe sleep policy in place in the service and posed a risk of harm to a child as follows;
At 12:20pm the temperature of the Toddler Room was recorded to be 24°Celsius whilst children were sleeping. The inspector informed staff members who turned on an air conditioning unit to allow additional air to circulate. At 12:30pm the temperature had reduced to 23.2°Celsius, still exceeding the required temperature range.

- A child aged one year was observed sleeping on a stackable floor bed in the Junior Toddler room which is at variance with the safe sleep guidelines in place for children aged under two years. Staff members stated there was no sleep plan in place for the child and stated the child had been placed on the stackable bed when they moved into the care room in the beginning of May 2025.

Fire Safety:

- Documentation available evidenced that fire drills had not been completed in the service on a monthly basis as required. The last fire drill recorded was on the 18th February 2025. Practicing regular fire drills ensures the safe evacuation of children and staff members in the event of a fire.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The following day the blind cord was secured to the door at a higher level in the Junior Toddler room to ensure it cannot be accessed by the children in the care room. The care room risk assessment was updated to ensure that the blind cords are checked daily. The centre management team will actively monitor all blind cords to ensure they are secured and out of reach of children. The care room risk assessment was updated to include blind cords are checked daily.

Infection Control:

- The toy cleaning policy & procedure was reissued to all staff in the baby room and were retrained on the toy cleaning policy & procedure. This was also reissued at the centre team meeting held on the evening after inspection. The centre management team will actively monitor the toy cleaning and mouthing toy cleaning procedures within the centre to ensure effecting cleaning of mouthing toys.

Safe Sleep:

- The service have updated the centre care room daily risk assessment to include that air-conditioning units are turned on at 7:30am when the care room is opened and the carer is completing the daily risk assessment. The air conditioning unit has been switched on each morning upon opening of the service to ensure the correct temperature is maintained throughout sleep time. The management team are actively monitoring the room temperatures throughout the centre. The centre management team are continuously ensuring that all air conditioning units are on when opening the service. The centre management team will continue to actively monitor sleep room temperatures within the service and maintain the correct temperature of under 20 degrees Celsius.

- The child sleeping on a stackable floor bed had been previously agreed with the child's parents as the parent requested this due to the child not sleeping in a cot at home. The child sleeps on a low bed at home and a wobbler sleep needs assessment was completed by the parents and discussed with the centre management team previous to the child being placed on a low stackable bed. This was in place on the day of inspection however the carer did not share the document with the Inspector. The child also turned 2 years old shortly after the inspection took place. All children in the Junior Toddler room are now over the age of 2 years old. If in the event in the future a child under 24 months is in the Junior Toddler Room the centre manager has the correct beds in place for under 2's available.

Fire Safety:

- Fire Drills were completed within the service in the following months after February however the paperwork was filed in the wrong location and therefore not presented on the day of inspection. A schedule has also been set by the centre management team and also a calendar reminder shared with the operations manager of the centre has been set to monitor the monthly fire drills. The centre manager has set a fire drill schedule for the full year to occur monthly and also set a calendar reminder shared with the operations manager of the service as this can be monitored and ensure the files are in place and located with all fire drills for the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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 in the service at all times during the opening hours of the service on the day of inspection.
- (2)
(a)(b)
A suitably equipped first aid box was observed to be immediately accessible to the children within the service and was stored in a conspicuous location on the day of inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
(a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place on the 18th February 2025.
(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system had been serviced as required.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.