

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS200
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare - Kimmage
-------------------------	----------------------------

Address of Service:	28a Shelton Park, Lower Kimmage Road, Kimmage, Dublin 12, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------

Eircode:	D12 PN40
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	26/11/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	68	PM	67
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley & Roisin Phillips
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Kimmage is a full day care service located in a residential, urban area of Kimmage, South County Dublin and is 1 of 14 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-one staff members, not including the registered provider and the area manager. On the day of inspection, nineteen adults were present including the registered provider, the area managers, and a cook.

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/ notifications and complaints . The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and regulation 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following rooms: Senior Preschool, Senior Toddlers, Senior Wobblers, and Junior Wobblers.

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 19th November 2024.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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

(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) The assessment of documentation under Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was limited to thirteen adults who had commenced employment since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 12th April 2023. Regulation 9(2)(c) was assessed for each of the twenty-one adults working in the service, the registered provider, and the area manager present on inspection. The following records were available:

(a) (b)

A minimum of two references had been sourced from past employers and from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. The references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for each of the twenty-three adults. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in relation to two staff members.

- (d) International police vetting was available for eleven of the adults who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the thirteen adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) There was evidence that eleven of the staff members had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent. Two adults who did not hold the required qualification was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the Minister.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The inspection of regulation 10 was limited to a review of the following policies and procedures:

- Complaints Policy
- Policy on Managing Behaviour
- Policy on Accidents and Incidents
- Staff Training Policy
- Supervision of Staff Policy

A review of documentation evidenced that the registered provider had the above named policies and procedures in place for the service.

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 children throughout the inspection. There were fourteen staff members allocated to work directly with sixty-eight children during the inspection. Two centre manager was available to assist in the care rooms where required.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the ages and type of service delivered.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (1)
 - (k) Detailed records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service were available. A sample of these records were reviewed and contained all of the necessary details, including evidence that children’s parents/guardians had been informed.

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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place which staff stated was communicated to parents when a child starts in the service. Staff stated a morning snack, 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. 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 placed to sleep in line with their individual care needs and older children were 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, with staff sitting with the children and soothing them 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. Children were comforted promptly if they became upset. Adults supported were supported to be independent, encouraging them to clean up following play and wash hands before meals. A record was kept for staff to communicate with parents/guardians regarding individual children's care, including information about diet, sleep, and nappy changes.

A large fully enclosed 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.

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 and placed babies on their backs to sleep. 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 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Throughout the inspection, children were observed to be appropriately supervised at all times in their environments.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider’s complaints policy.*
- (3) *A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

(5) The requirement in paragraph (4) is without prejudice to any requirement to retain the record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) under any other enactment or rule of law.

Compliance Information

(1) A complaints policy was in place in the service and adequately outlined the following;

- (a) Details of the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service.
- (b) Details of the manner by which a complaint will be dealt with by the service.
- (c) Details of the procedures in place outlining how the person who makes such a complaint in relation to the service will be informed of the manner by which the complaint is being dealt with.

(2)

(a) (b)

A review of documentation evidenced that a record was maintained in the service of any complaints made in respect of the preschool service. The documentation available also evidenced that any complaints made in relation to the service had been dealt with in accordance to the complaints policy in place.

(3)

(a)(b) Records of complaints made to the service were available for inspection on the premises. Documentation reviewed evidenced that these records detailed the nature of complaints made to the service and the manner in which the service had dealt with the complaints.

(4)(5)

The person in charge in the service stated during discussions with the inspector that all records relating to any child and family who have attended the service are retained for the required period of time, including any complaints made.