

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY054

Name of Service: Cocoon Childcare- Artane

Address of Service: Timber Mills, Kilmore Road, Artane, Dublin 5.

Eircode: D05 C6V0

Name of Registered Provider: Nicola Battams

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 10/04/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	52

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Kerrigan
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 Artane is a full day service which is located in the residential area of Dublin 5. The service operates from a purpose-built building and is open from 7:30am-6:30pm, Monday to Friday. The service offers care and education to children aged 0-6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service is comprised of five care rooms: Baby Room, Wobbler Room, Toddler Room, Junior Preschool and Preschool room, an office, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and a staff room. An enclosed outdoor area is available adjacent to the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs twenty staff to work in the service, this includes the person in charge and the deputy person in charge, fifteen early years practitioners, a chef and a cleaner. A senior management team are also employed by the registered provider and rostered to attend the service regularly. Eighteen staff were rostered and present on the day of inspection. An area manager attended the service at 10:48am to support the inspection. The registered provider does not work in 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under.

- Regulation 16(1) (j)(k) Record in relation to a Pre-School Service.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of the Child.
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of Child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby and Preschool rooms.

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 area manager, the 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise when required.
 - (b) A review of roster and conversations held indicated that a designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service on the day of inspection.
 - (c) The service had a management structure with clear roles and responsibilities for staff members.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with management showed that nine new staff have commenced employment in the service since the last inspection held on the 28 August 2024. The files of all nine staff were

reviewed along with the files of the area manager, who was also present on the day of inspection. The garda vetting disclosures of one existing staff member whose Garda Vetting was required to be renewed since the last inspection was also reviewed, along with an international child protection certificate (ICPC) for one staff member which remained outstanding from the previous inspection.

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were eleven written and validated references were available from a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that there were nine written and validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
 - (c) The registered provider ensured that garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eleven adults who in their role have access to the children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for ten adults who had resided in a country other than Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months; this includes the international child protection certificate which was outstanding on the previous inspection.
- (3) All references and Garda vetting procedures were completed prior to the ten adults being allowed access or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) The nine adults who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed, held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualification 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times, provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the children attending the preschool service, with seventeen adults available within the service to work directly with fifty-seven children.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratios were maintained within the service on the day of inspection. This was further evidenced in the roster made available on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the operational hours of the service. This was also evidenced in the roster.

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:

(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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)

(j) A sample of ten medication administration records were reviewed and were found to be fully completed with all necessary details included.

(k) A sample of ten accident and incident records were reviewed and were found to be fully completed with all necessary details included.

(3) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was available and on the premises for inspection by the inspector.

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) The registered provider ensured the child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service, for example.

Basic Needs

- Children were provided with regular meals and snacks, food served was reflected in the service menu. This included a hot meal prepared and cooked onsite. On the morning of the inspection children in the care rooms were served a snack of fruit, cut to differing sizes and a drink of water, with alternative options of being given if needed. At 11:45am rice, meat and sauce were given for lunch with a hot alternative available for children who did not eat the meal offered. At 3:35pm, an afternoon snack of fish fingers and toast was served. The transition to mealtime was observed to be a timely experience for the children, at a pace suited to their needs. For example, a child in the Preschool room was supported to eat at a time that suit them, and provided with a meal of his liking, ensuring his nutritional needs were met outside the scheduled mealtimes.
- Toileting and nappy changing were observed to be undertaken on a scheduled bases and as needed across the rooms sampled. Children were observed to have unrestricted access to the toilet with support given as needed. Nappy changing was observed to be a dignified process which was child centred in its approach.
- Children were provided with appropriate clothing and sunscreen for outdoor play, independence with self-care skills were promoted with children being encouraged to put on hats for outdoors themselves. The service supplied hats for children who did not bring any. This facilitates comfort in play experiences and promotes independence.
- Children were observed to move around the care rooms freely and engage in a variety of activities and play experiences, which were supported by the adults on the day.

Supporting Relationships

- A key worker system was in place in the service and key groups are displayed within the classrooms. A key worker system allows staff to develop in depth knowledge about the children in their group and fosters nurturing relationships helping children to feel confident.
- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a responsive, warm and respectful manner. For example, in the Baby room a child was observed to be upset during a transition period, staff were observed to physically comfort the child, through hugs and soothing tones, whilst guiding the child through activities. Staff were empathetic and child centred in their response.
- Staff were observed to speak to each other in respectful and warm manner.
- Staff completed a daily log for each child, outlining meals, toileting and activities, this log is made available to parents, with daily conversations between families and staff occurring at pick up and drop off times. Ensuring families are connected to the service and their child's.

Physical and Material Environment

- The furniture provided in each care room was low level and appropriate for children attending with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low-level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- There was a range of equipment available throughout the service which was in line with the developmental age of the children in each care room, this included, mark making equipment, home corners with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experiences, stacking, building, connecting and threading toys to facilitate creative play, cars and tracks for transporting and books to facilitate language and early literacy, and indoor climbing equipment for younger children, which promotes reciprocity and gross motor skills.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment throughout the day. This was scheduled but also available to children if and when they needed. This area had absorbent flooring, slides, wobble boards, plastic stepping stones, ride in cars, tents and parachutes giving an array of options to develop gross motor skills. It was observed that the service also brought books into the outdoor space providing an area for children to partake in quieter tabletop activities if they chose.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

1. The provision of additional hot food portions was not made available in the Baby room. One child indicated their hunger and requested more food having eaten their portion of hot food provided. Staff advised that there were no additional portions of food available. This child was observed to become upset. This poses a risk to children not being adequately sated. It is acknowledged that additional hot food portions were available in other rooms sampled.
2. Water was not accessible and freely available to children who were mobile in the Baby room. Posing a risk to children self-regulating thirst cues. It is acknowledged that it is supplied regularly throughout the day on a scheduled basis or when the children indicate it.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Extra portions are always available from the kitchen, extra portions will be sent into the baby room at mealtime to eliminate staff having to request them. The centre manager will monitor additional portions at mealtimes.
2. Water is regularly offered throughout the day. The placement of a water station will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. None.
2. Documentation evidence given.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider been adequately addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 19. Regulatory compliance has been met.

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

General Safety:

- The main entrance to the service was secure upon the inspector's unannounced arrival at the service. Access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member allowed access, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons, this also prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors were secured with high handles and secured lower gates ensuring children could not exit the rooms unsupervised.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents and medication were placed on high shelving away from children's reach.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- The outdoor area was fully secured and enclosed with a high wall, which was accessed through the care rooms.
- On the day of inspection children's attendance records were completed on time, these reflected the children attendance and their movement through the service.

Infection Control:

- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach for children, reducing the risk of cross contamination.
- Pedal bins were in use throughout the service ensuring appropriate disposal of waste.
- Children's soothers were individually stored and clearly labelled in the rooms sampled.
- Cots were fitted with waterproof and wipeable mattresses, ensuring good hygienic sleep practices.

Administration of Medication:

- Detailed health care plans were available in each room outlining the steps to be taken in the event of a medical emergency. Clear concise allergy plans were available in conspicuous positions within each care rooms throughout the service, -these comprised of each child's picture, simple concise instructions that were colour coded ensuring they were accessible to all staff.

- Emergency medication was placed in accessible areas within the service. Emergency medication was held in individual containers labelled with each child's picture, prescription and authorisation. This was in line with the service policy on medication storage.
- Through conversation staff across the service were able to demonstrate their knowledge on the safe administration of emergency medication and the steps to be taken in such an emergency. This was reflected in the service policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff maintained physical checks of sleeping children every 10 minutes, records outlined position, colour and breathing. Staff were observed to physically supervise children sleeping on low level beds.
- An ambient temperature between 18-22° was maintained in rooms where children over 1 year were sleeping.
- There were sufficient amounts of cots and low- level beds to meet the sleep needs of the children within the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection, the registered provider did not ensure an adequate ambient temperature was maintained between 18-22°C in the Preschool room. The following was observed in the Preschool room.
 - In the area nearest the library, located away from the door a temperature of 23.6°C was recorded at 14:52
 - In the area nearest the doors to the outdoor area a temperature of 23.2°C was recorded at 2:54pm. It is acknowledged at this time one fan was operating and the doors to the outdoor were open to allow air to circulate.
 - In the area nearest the sanitary area the temperature was recorded as 23.4°C at 3:18pm
 - In the area nearest the door the outdoor area the temperature was recorded as 22.4°C. It is acknowledged that staff introduced a third fan and the door to the outdoor was open to allow air to circulate. Staff were observed to encourage children to remove jumpers and provided ongoing hydration. This was also a non-compliance noted in August 2024.

Infection Control:

2. Effective handwashing techniques were not consistent throughout the service. For example, in Baby room
 - Upon return from the outdoor area handwashing was not undertaken in a timely manner. Posing a risk to younger children being exposed to harmful bacteria.

- Handwashing prior to mealtime was ineffective and cumbersome. It is acknowledged that bowls with water were used to wash each child's hands prior to mealtime but it was insufficient for effective handwashing.

Administration of Medication:

3. Emergency medication which forms part of an emergency response plan was noted to be out of date. This could potentially hinder a child receiving an adequate response to medication in the event of a medical emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An 80-litre commercial air cooler was installed which has reduced and maintain room temperature. The management team will continue to monitor the room temperature in the preschool room to ensure it remains at an ambient temperature.

Infection Control:

2. The handwashing policy was refreshed with all staff members, who have signed to say they read and understood the contents. The management team will continue to do spot checks to ensure the policy is being followed. The maintenance team is scheduled to install a children's level sink in the sanitary area.

Administration of Medication:

3. Emergency medication was replaced upon their return from holidays with the health care plan updated. Calendar reminders have been updated for all emergency medication to ensure it is replaced before it expires, this has been shared with the operation manager.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documentary evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Documentary evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

3. Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider been adequately addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23. Regulatory compliance 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) Two staff members present held a certification in first aid response (FAR) and were available to the children during the operational hours of the service.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position within the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the pre-school service.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of fire drills within the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 18 March 2025.
- (b) A record was available indicating the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with records demonstrating they were last serviced in August 2024.
- (2) (c) The registered provider ensured that the fire drill and maintenance records were available for review by the Inspector.
- (4) The registered provider ensured notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous positions throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b) The registered provider did not ensure that the maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms were undertaken, these were recorded as last being serviced on the 13 February 2024, this was also confirmed with management on the day of inspection. Potentially posing a risk of ineffective smoke alarms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) A full service was carried out on the fire system the following day. The management team have scheduled the next visit for 6 months' time with the company and set reminders for subsequent visits which have been shared with the operations manager.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider in relation to Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed, compliance has been met for Regulation 26.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School