

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KE132
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Cocoon Childcare- Celbridge
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Hazelhatch, Celbridge, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	W23 YV48
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Nicola Battams
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	20/08/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	68	PM	72
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Quigley & R. Brien
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	NA
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### Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Celbridge is one of 15 childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose-built single storey premises in a residential area of Celbridge, Co. Kildare. There are six care rooms in the service. The Wobbler 1 room caters for children aged 1 year. The Wobbler 2 room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Wobbler 3 and Toddler rooms cater for children aged 2 years. The Junior Preschool room caters for children aged 2 to 4 years, and the Preschool room caters for children aged 3 to 5 years. A dedicated sleep room is available for younger children. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The service currently employs 21 staff members including the service manager and a chef, 19 of whom work directly in the rooms with the children day to day.

There were 21 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection including the operations manager who was present on the inspector's arrival. An additional manager and two adults from other centres operated by the registered provider arrived following the inspector's arrival and were also working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work directly in the service but arrived during the morning and was present for the closing meeting.

### 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9 (1)(a)(b)(c),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4),(7)(a)(b)(c) – Management and recruitment,  
10 – Policies procedures etc. of a pre-school service,  
11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,  
16 (1)(i) – Record in relation to a pre-school service,  
19 (1)(b),(3) – Health, welfare and development of child,  
32 – Complaints.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulation 19 (1)(b),(3) – Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler, Wobbler 3 and Junior Preschool rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulation 10 – Policies Procedures etc. of a pre-school service.

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 information received by the Early Years Inspectorate on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

### 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

*(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.*

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (a)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise. Staff members confirmed during discussions with the inspectors that they were aware of the management structure in place in the service and aware of their role and responsibilities. The staffing roster in place evidenced that the person in charge or the named person to deputise were on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.

Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that 15 adults had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these 15 adults as detailed below. Regulation 9(2)(c) was assessed for all adults employed to work in the service.

(2)

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for the 15 adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for each of the adults employed to work in the service. The service 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 13 of the adults who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) There was evidence that 14 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. One of the adults who did not have the required qualification were in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

- (7) The registered provider demonstrated that some measures had been taken to ensure that employees were appropriately supervised and provided with sufficient information and training to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with the regulations as follows;
- Documentation reviewed evidenced that regular team meetings were taking place in the service and that a schedule was in place to ensure these meetings are carried out regularly.
  - Documentation reviewed evidenced that all adults employed to work in the service had engaged in Children 1st training in line with the Children First Act 2015.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (7)
- The registered provider did not demonstrate that they had taken all reasonable measures to ensure that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with sufficient information and training to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with the regulations as follows;
- There were no records of induction training available for 4 new staff members who had commenced employment in the service and were working directly with the children. The records available for one other staff member were incomplete.
  - There were no records available in the service to evidence that each staff member had read, understood, and would adhere to the policies and procedures in place. Some staff stated they were asked to read the service policies and procedures by the person in charge when they commenced employment. Staff members stated they were not asked to confirm they had read and understood the policies and procedures.

This is at variance with the staff training policy in place which stated every staff member will receive induction training either prior to commencing employment or on the day they commence employment, which will be recorded.

- Through a review of records and discussions with staff and the person in charge, it was evident that staff had not received regular support and supervision. Of the 19 staff who work directly with the children daily in the service, there were records of formal supervision meetings available for 2 staff, and records of an appraisal meeting occurring for 4 staff.

This was at variance with the service's staff supervision policy which stated that all staff members must have an appraisal meeting after three months and yearly thereafter, and that regular supervision meetings will occur, both of which are recorded on designated templates and stored in personnel files.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- All staff inductions have taken place and there is a planned full day induction for all new staff members on Saturday 13th September which will be facilitated by the centre management teams and operations department. Staff Interactions Tracker has been implemented to document and schedule all staff interaction meetings.
- Staff training cards were updated and implemented for all new team members to document training evidenced in service policies and procedures. Centre management team will continue to implement and document any policy changes and update team member training cards as required. A staff meeting was held by the centre manager on Tuesday 9th September to retrain with the team in the service high 5's and service policies. The centre manager has updated the team members training cards to reflect this training.
- Staff support and supervision meetings and probation meetings have taken place with the centre manager and team members.
- The service staff induction policy has been updated to include that all staff members will receive their induction within the first week of commencement of employment. Full day inductions will also take place during the busier periods such as September and January and will be facilitated by centre management teams and Operations Department.
- The centre management team will ensure to continuously update team members training cards with any further training held or policy changes to reflect that staff have signed that they have been trained in a specific area or on a new or current service policy.
- A staff interactions tracker has been implemented, and the centre manager has planned all upcoming support and supervisions. This will be actively updated by the centre management team, and they will continue to use this to keep track of all meetings held and upcoming.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspect

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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

For the purpose of this inspection, a sample of the required written policies, procedures and statements that are specified and required under schedule 5 of these regulations were reviewed. The following policies, procedures and statements were included as part of this inspection:

- The complaints policy
- The staff training policy
- The staff supervision policy
- The behaviour management policy

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the above policies were available and in operation in 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.*

*(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,*

## Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working with the children on both days of inspection. There were 17 adults working directly with 68 children on the morning of inspection and 72 children in the afternoon being supervised by 19 adults. The deputising person in charge, an area manager, and a floating manager provided relief cover when required.
- (2) At all times the minimum required ratio of adults to children was maintained.
- (8)(a) The staffing roster in place evidenced that at least two adults were present in the service at all times during the hours of operation.

## 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;*

## Compliance Information

- (1)(i) A staff roster was available in the service and was provided to the inspectors upon arrival.

## 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.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

#### (1)(b)

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place. The children moved freely – exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff throughout the inspection. All children were observed to spend time outdoors and were dressed appropriate to the weather. Older children used the toilet when they needed and younger children wearing nappies had these changed regularly and when required. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm individual engagement with the children.

The service provided snacks, meals and drinks to the children which were prepared on site. Staff sat with the children when eating, prompting conversation which promoted a sociable atmosphere. Staff provided children with help when needed whilst supporting their independence to self-feed. Children were assisted to clean their faces and wash their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the day.

Children who required sleep were facilitated to sleep after dinner time. Staff reported that children could sleep outside these times if required in line with individual care needs. The rooms where children slept were calm and conducive to sleep. Children who had soothers and comforters were offered these when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided the children with comfort and reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. Areas were available within the children's rooms where they could rest.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. 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, giving them cuddles and re-assurance.

#### (3)

On the day of inspection, the inspectors did not observe any care practices that were harmful to children. The behaviour management policy in place stipulated that such practices are prohibited in the service, this was verified during discussions with staff members on the day of inspection.

### 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 record was available in the service of a complaint which had been made. The person in charge detailed the procedures in place in the service for dealing with complaints, including maintaining a record in writing, as per the complaints policy in place. The person in charge and the registered provider stated that the complaint was being dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy in place.
- (3)

(a)(b) The person in charge stated they are aware of their obligation to detail the nature of any complaint made and the manner in which it will be dealt with. The person in charge stated a record of any complaint made will be kept in the service and available for inspection on the premises.

(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.