

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW176
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare- Blessington
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Address of Service:	Blessington Town Centre, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	W91 Y403
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Battams
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	26/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	82	PM	76
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and S. Early O'Brien
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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service was first established in 2008 and is located in the urban setting of Blessington Town Centre in Co. Wicklow. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between 0 to 6 years of age.

The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.30 hrs and 18.30hrs (including a sessional Early Childhood and Education Scheme (ECCE) service from 09.15 hrs to 12.15 hrs for 38 weeks of the year).

A school age service is also provided.

The premises is a detached purpose-built building with six pre-school rooms, one dedicated sleep room, an office, staff room and kitchen. There is a large outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

Twenty-four people are employed full-time in the service and there were twenty-two adults present on the day of inspection; this included the chef and maintenance person.

Also present on the day of inspection was the operations manager and two additional staff members from a second service.

Nineteen staff members were working directly with the children. The service manager and assistant manager were supernumerary and were available to assist as required and was engaged in facilitating the inspection. The registered provider arrived following the start of the inspection and assisted with the children's care on the day.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection plan was to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment, (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4), (6A)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1), (2), (8)(a)

Regulation 15 – Record of a pre-school child

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, General Safety and Infection Control

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b), (2)(c), (4)

Regulation 27 - Supervision

However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under:

Regulation 19– Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 29 – Premises (d)

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 manager 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as

the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the manager and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that twenty-four adults are employed in the service, this includes two chefs and the maintenance person. On the day of inspection, twenty-two adults from the service were present and four additional staff were there in a support capacity.

This included the registered provider, operations manager and two staff members from sister services.

All twenty-eight files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The manager was the person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The manager was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of twenty-eight adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for twenty-eight adults.

The service did not adhere 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 adults working in the pre-school. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

International police vetting was available for fourteen adults working in the service had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Twenty-five staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

(6A)

There was one adult employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion model.

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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were thirteen adults employed and present with 82 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)
The manager ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times. This was confirmed by reviewing the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The manager ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection by an authorised person.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(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)(a), (h)-(k).

The manager made sure that a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection by an authorised person.

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the day of inspection, all six pre-school rooms were not seen to be inviting or engaging play spaces for the children attending the service.

Materials were not displayed in a child centred manner. There were a limited number of age-appropriate toys available to the children in the rooms and props were missing from the activity tables preventing the development of play. The pre-school rooms did not have clear areas of interest and equipment were not laid out to promote the emergent interests of the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

All care rooms were refreshed and enhanced interest areas were developed to support the emergent interests of all children. The centre management team has been expanded to include a second assistant manager and supervisor. To support high quality care, the management team will conduct monthly room audits to ensure that learning environments are engaging and reflect the interests of all children.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)

Extensive photographic evidence of revised room layouts and areas of interest was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 19 (1)(a) has been addressed and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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 door to the service was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route from each care room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.

Infection Control:

- A cleaning schedule for each pre-school room was available and maintained.
- Hand washing by adults and children was observed before meals.
- A foot pedal bins were available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in the pre-school rooms.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time as was hand washing by adults and children before snacks and after using the toilet.
- Nappy changing was observed on the day of inspection and the practices were fully in line with the nappy changing practices of the service.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were aware of the key principles required for safe sleep of young children. In the Junior wobbler room where the children were in cots sleeping at 12 midday the room temperature was recorded at 22°C. There was written evidence that staff recorded the safe position, colour and breathing of children who are sleeping, at 10-minute intervals.

Cots were well spaced at 50cms apart and all cots had waterproof mattresses. The service had an adequate number of cots to accommodate the age profile of the children who required cots for safe sleep and low-level beds to accommodate the children who no longer slept in cots.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosures for two adults were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

2. An electrical cable in the Junior Pre-school room was not secured to the wall and was in easy reach of the children in the room. This posed an injury risk to children.
3. An electrical cable in Pre-school 2 was within easy reach of the children in the room. This posed an injury risk to the children.
4. Between 11.55am and 12.20pm the recorded room temperatures in five of the care rooms, Pre-school 1, Senior Wobbler, Pre-school 2, Junior Pre-school and Toddlers, were between 23°C and 23.7°C. Room temperatures need to be maintained in care rooms between 18°C and 22°C.
This was found on last inspection on the 8th of August 2024, and the corrective and preventive actions failed to stop the non-compliance from re-occurring.

Infection Control:

5. In all six care rooms the tables and chairs were visibly chipped and worn, which prevented effective cleaning of equipment for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting renewal applications were submitted by the centre manager on the day of inspection, and both disclosures are now on file
- 2 & 3. Trailing flexes were secured by the maintenance team in both care rooms on the day of inspection. The maintenance team is scheduled to replace laminate flooring in the Wobbler junior. Junior preschool, and Preschool 1 care rooms, with completion expected by the end of this year. The centre management team will notify the Operations team of any maintenance repairs required within the centre.
4. The maintenance team installed a wall mounted air conditioning unit in the wobbler room on the day of inspection, which has successfully maintained room temperature. Portable air coolers are available for all care rooms.

Infection Control:

5. A centre cleaner has been appointed to support the upkeep and hygiene of premises, care rooms, and equipment. The centre management team will actively monitor the effectiveness of the cleaning schedule and ensure all furniture is well-maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of renewed Garda Vetting, revised room layouts with cables secured and air conditioning unit installed, plus receipts of additional air conditioning units ordered were submitted with the CAPA response.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of receipts for replacement furniture ordered for care rooms was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The actions and proposed future actions will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 General Safety and Infection Control and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The manager ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a)(i-iv)

The manager ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the pre-school.

(b)

The manager had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school.

(4)

The manager was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it

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)

The manager was trained in FAR (First Aid Response) and available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within the premises.

(b)

The first aid box was available to the children attending the service at all times.

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 firefighting 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)

There was evidence of regular fire drills taking place within the service. The last fire drill took place on the 13th of June 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated August 2024 and 31st of March 2025 respectively.

(2)(c)

These records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the pre-school rooms.

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

During most of the day the manager was able to demonstrate that there was an adequate number of adults present in the pre-school to ensure that the children attending were supervised during their day.

Non-Compliance Information

At 11.05am while observing a nappy change by a member of staff, a child wandered into the sanitary area, from Pre-school 2 room and a threw a toy down one of the toilets. No adult from the room observed where the child was or came to bring him back to the room.

At 12 midday, while lunch was being served, there were three adults present in Pre-school 2 room, the adults present failed to intervene and stop the same child from knocking over two children's cups of milk, while they were trying to eat their lunches. The child involved was not having lunch that day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff have been retrained on our supervision policy. All staff are knowledgeable of the child's individual support plan in place and know how to implement it to best support transitions and mealtimes in the preschool room.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of a staff signed revision of supervision policy training was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above actions should address the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation the regulation 27 and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- In five out of the six care rooms, i.e. Pre-school 1, Senior wobblers, Junior wobblers, Junior pre-school and Toddlers, there was visible signs of wear on the counter tops, all the counter tops needed repainting or re-covering. In all six care rooms the children's tables and chairs showed visible signs of chipping, delamination and wear and tear.
 - The laminated floor coverings in Pre-school 1, Senior wobblers, Junior wobblers, Junior pre-school and Toddlers were showing visible signs of wear and needed replacement in certain areas.
- Furniture, environment and equipment need to be clean, repaired and maintained as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
- The maintenance team have replaced all counter tops in all care rooms. A deep clean of all chairs and tables took place, and replacement tables and chairs have been ordered. A centre cleaner has been appointed to support the upkeep and hygiene of premises, care rooms, and equipment. The centre management team will actively monitor the effectiveness of the cleaning schedule and ensure all furniture is well-maintained.
 - Repairs were carried out on floor beading in the Wobbler and Toddler care rooms, and all laminate flooring was deep cleaned and buffed. The maintenance team is scheduled to replace laminate flooring in the Wobbler junior. Junior preschool, and Preschool 1 care rooms, with completion expected by the end of this year. The centre management team will notify the Operations team of any maintenance repairs required within the centre.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d)
Photographic evidence of new counter tops, receipts for new table and chairs ordered and fully cleaned rooms were submitted with the CAPA response

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

The actions and proposed actions will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 29 and will be reviewed on next inspection.