

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:	08/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	54
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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 M. Redmond
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
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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 six 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 (ECE) 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

Nineteen people are employed in the service and there were eighteen adults present on the day of inspection. Fifteen staff members were working directly with the children. The service manager was supernumerary and was available to assist as required and was engaged in facilitating the inspection. Also present on the day of inspection was the operations manager and the chef. 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.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the manager and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that nineteen adults are employed in the service, this includes the fulltime chef. These files were reviewed. The registered providers file was also reviewed on the day of inspection as they were working directly with the pre-school children on that day.

(1)(a)

The service had a person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge 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 adults.

(c)

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

(d)

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

(4)

Nineteen 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.

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 17 adults employed and present with 54 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 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 premises was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All toys were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in each pre-school room was free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules for all pre-school rooms and for the remainder of the premises were available and maintained.
- Each pre-school room had access to a suitable sanitary area, with toilets and/or nappy changing facilities, running water, liquid soap and paper towels.

- Children’s soothers were stored in individual containers and named accordingly, cleaning and storing of soothers was included in the daily cleaning policy of the service.
- A foot pedal bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all pre-school rooms and the nappy changing areas.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was administered to a child, by a staff member and it was witnessed and documented correctly. Prior parental consent was required and there was evidence that parents are informed after medication has been administered.

Safe Sleep:

There was written evidence that staff recorded the position, colour and breathing of children who are sleeping, in addition to recording the room temperature, at 10-minute intervals. This practice was observed during the inspection.

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

Infection Control:

1. On the day of inspection, the washing of children’s hand following nappy change was not observed in any of the care rooms.
2. The nappy changing procedure did not clearly outline the correct steps to be taken to ensure effective infection prevention and control.
3. In the senior wobbler room, the children’s hands were not washed before having their lunch.
4. In the senior wobbler room, there was no effective system in place for the sterilisation of mouthing toys.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1-4
Following on from the inspection, a team meeting took place with emphasis on effective handwashing, our updated nappy changing procedure and sterilisation of mouthing toys within care rooms. Practical demonstrations took place to ensure that all staff are aware and understand the procedure in place. The centre management

team are actively monitoring effective handwashing and hygiene practices relating to mouthing toy sterilisation and nappy changing, and that mouthing toy boxes are in place each morning.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1-4
Photographic evidence of documentation signed by all staff members in retraining in relation to infection control issues was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above actions in relation to staff training and monitoring of staff will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation Regulation 23 Infection control points 1-4. These will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
The premises appeared to be of a sound and stable structure.
- (b)
The premises appeared to be safe and secure.
- (e)
The service is equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
On the day of inspection, room temperatures in junior toddler and senior wobbler rooms were not maintained within the required range of 18-22 C at any time during the day, despite fans in place and windows being opened.

Temperatures in senior wobblers were recorded at 12.20pm (24.4°C), 2.05pm (23°C) and 2.50pm (23°C). Room temperatures in junior toddler were recorded at 12.25pm (23.6°C) and 2.20pm (24.2°C). The mitigating measures did not reduce the room temperatures to within the required range. The ambient outdoor temperature varied between 19°C to 21°C. This was noted on last inspection.

(d)

In some of the care rooms there was visible signs of wear and tear within the rooms and on some equipment. The dividing doors into nappy changing areas of junior wobbler room needed varnishing, there was chipped plaster around some door frames and paint chipped on walls. In junior pre-school some of the children's furniture was worn and chipped and some counter tops were in need of cleaning and repainting. Furniture, environment and equipment need to be cleaned, repaired and maintained as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c)

The maintenance team checked all radiators and reset the dials so that heat cannot come through during the summer. Additional portable aircon units are also available if required. The centre management team have advised all staff that they are not permitted to adjust the radiator dials and will continue to actively monitor room temperatures and inform operations if an issue arises.

(d)

The maintenance team painted and varnished the care room countertops and door frames. Resources have been ordered to replenish and enhance learning environments within the centre. The centre management team complete a monthly maintenance list and share with both the operations and maintenance team. The centre management team and will complete monthly room audits to ensure a high standard of cleanliness is maintained and resources are in good condition.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d)

Photographic evidence of painted furniture and surfaces in several care rooms, in addition to an invoice showing the purchase for new play equipment appropriate to the age range for the children attending the service was submitted with the CAPA response.

(c)

No evidence submitted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

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Summary Comment

The actions for point (c) and the evidence submitted for point (d) will address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in Regulation 29 premises. These will be reviewed on next inspection.