

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024FL002
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Name of Service:	Cocoon Childcare
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Address of Service:	9 Cronan's Well Park, Mooretown, Swords, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 K2K8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nikki Battams
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo and E Saini
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).

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Description of service

Cocoon Childcare Swords is one of fifteen early years services operated by the registered provider across Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare. Cocoon Childcare Swords has been in operation since April 2024 in a purpose built 2 storey premises in Mooretown on the outskirts of Swords, north Dublin. There are 5 care rooms in the service, the Junior Wobbler room and Senior Wobbler room were located on the ground floor of the service, and the Toddler room Junior Preschool and Preschool room were located on the first floor. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional preschool care & education to children between the ages of 0– 6 years operating from 07:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager to oversee the day-to-day operational management of the service supported by a staff team of 18, including a chef who prepares and cooks all of the children's meals in the onsite kitchen. On the day of inspection, the registered provider and the company's operational manager were present 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 safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The scope of the inspection included the Preschool room, Junior Preschool room and the Toddlers room. A sampling process was used to assess Regulation 23 – Safe Sleep in the Junior Wobbler room.

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.

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN2081	30/06/2026	On review of the staff files, it was noted that international police vetting was not available for one staff member, who was present on the day of inspection and had access to children.
Status	The registered provider submitted corrective and preventative actions which were accepted and addressed the statutory Notice.	

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.

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(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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that 14 new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. In addition, Garda vetting for all staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal was requested for review. The 16 files were reviewed on the day, which included the registered provider, the quality manager, one adult hired by an external company and 13 new staff. The following information was noted.

- (a) Seventeen written validated references from past employers for 12 of the adults.
- (b) Thirteen written validated references from reputable sources for nine of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for 10 adults who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4)

Fourteen of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d) See statutory notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN2081 served.

(4) On the day of inspection, it was not possible to evidence if a major award at level 5 or above had been obtained in the case of one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider confirmed the evidence of the appropriate qualification has been obtained and added to the staff file. The central management team will ensure all required qualification documentation is readily available for inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of Letter of Eligibility submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been accepted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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,

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Compliance Information

(1)

On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2)

The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. In addition to staff based in the care rooms, there were three staff members available to work as relief throughout the day.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Junior Wobbler room there were 9 children aged 14 months to 18 months attending on a full day care basis, being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Senior Wobbler room there were 12 children aged between 1 year 9 months and 2 year 3 months, all attending on a full day care basis, being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Toddler room there were 12 children aged between 2 years 5 months to 2 years 11 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Junior Preschool room there were 14 children aged 2 years and 11 months to 3 years 2 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Preschool room there were 14 children aged 3 to 5 years being cared for by 2 staff members.

(8)(a)

The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times verified by staff rosters.

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

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Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

- The individual sleep needs of younger children were met, and this was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals as evidence by a review of the sleep records.
- Older children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff remaining close by for support if required.
- There was scheduled access to the outside area throughout the day, and children were observed to be given the choice to play indoors or outdoors. Those who chose to stay indoors had the chance to go outdoor later in the day.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The interactions between the staff and children were kind and caring, and soft tones observed to be used throughout the day. Staff were observed interacting with the children and supporting them when required during their play.
- Children were observed to be happy and relaxed and involved in a variety of activities that were readily accessible to them.
- Children demonstrated a sense of pride in their achievements during the session and were confident in themselves to share with the inspector and invite them into their play.

Physical and material environment

- The environment in the care rooms was found to be well-resourced, child-centred, and supported children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development through a balance of structured and open-ended play opportunities across well-defined interest areas.
- A range of books were available to the children in each care room, to support language development as well as to provide opportunity for rest and relaxation.
- On the day of inspection children had access to an outdoor play area. The area offered a change of environment and supported energetic play with lots of room for free running. The garden featured, a playhouse, slide, climbing equipment and sensory trays.

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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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall perimeter wall and a bolted gate.
- Window restrictors were present on all upstairs windows.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- Materials were observed to be in a good state of repair.

Infection Control:

- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after mealtimes.
- Soap was readily available to children to wash their hands prior to eating, after both toileting and nappy changes. Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks.
- Sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean.

Administration of Medication:

- When discussed, staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication. No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a designated sleep room with appropriate cots available to children.
- Sleep checks were observed to occur every ten minutes.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed on the walls of the service.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Records pertaining to a staff roster was held for adults working directly in the service on the day of inspection. However, the roster did not record adults who arrived after the inspection had begun. The adults did not sign into the premises on arrival. This could impede a safe evacuation in the event of an emergency.

Infection Control:

2. Bins within the care room were observed to be opened by hand for each time waste was disposed of. This increased the risk of cross infection.
3. Gloves were observed not to be routinely used when food was being served to the children. This increased the risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

4. Eight cots were present in the sleep room with six measuring spaced apart less than the minimum requirement. A minimum of 50cm separation is required between cots to ensure proper infection control and clear access.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider confirmed the following:

General Safety:

1. The maintenance team have been reminded to sign in on arrival. The operations support team members did not sign into the visitor's book, as they work directly with all centres daily and make their presence known to the centre manager on arrival. The sign in procedure has been reviewed with management to ensure all adults, including maintenance, operations personnel and visitors, are recorded on arrival and departure.

Infection Control:

2. Staff were retrained on the correct use of the pedal bins and reminded to only use their foot to operate the bin. Management will continue to monitor practice to ensure infection control procedures are followed at all times.
3. Staff confirmed that their hands were thoroughly washed prior to serving food. In line with the FSAI guidance, appropriate hand hygiene is required when handling food and it further states that 'gloves do

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not replace effective handwashing'. Management will continue to monitor practice to ensure food handling and hand hygiene practices.

Safe Sleep:

4. Sleep room layout was reviewed and repositioned to ensure a minimum separation of 50cm between cots. Management will continue to monitor layout to ensure the required 50cm separation between cots is maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copy of sign in book submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photo evidence submitted.
3. Copy of infection control policy signed by staff.

Safe Sleep:

4. Photo evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been accepted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid response (FAR), was immediately available at all times to the children attending the service.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box was always easily accessible and available to children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 76 children up until 31st of January 2027.