

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR080				
Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Leopardstown				
Address of Service:	Icon Centre, South County Bus Park Leopardstown Road, Leopardstown, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin				
Eircode:	D18 X5R3				
Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time				
Date of Inspection:	04/03/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>70</td> <td>PM</td> <td>73</td> </tr> </table>	AM	70	PM	73
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff S. Quigley
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

Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Leopardstown is registered to provide full day and part-time care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is one of twenty-five services operated by the registered provider. The service operates from eight care rooms in a purpose-built crèche facility on the ground floor of an office building in Leopardstown, South County Dublin. On the day of inspection seven rooms were open. There are two separate sleep rooms, a kitchen, office and staff room on the premises. Children have access to an outdoor area which is located at the side of the building. The service opens from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

The service currently employs 22 staff members including a manager, deputy manager, cook and housekeeper. The registered provider does not work in the service. On the day of inspection 19 staff members were working directly with the children. Two area managers arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival and did not work directly with the children.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby room (Baringo) Wobbler room (Namibia) Toddler room (Botswana) Preschool room (Kenya)

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 area managers, 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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both were on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- The inspection included a review of the required documentation for 10 staff members employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 03 June 2025. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the 10 new staff members employed. The following documentation was available;

- (a)(b) Of the 20 written and validated references that were required, 20 were available from a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for 22 staff members. Garda vetting disclosures from all staff members were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 10 adults employed in the service since the last inspection dated 03 June 2025 who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) had been carried out prior to 10 adults commencing employment in the service since the last inspection on 03 June 2025.
- (4) Records were available evidencing that 10 staff members employed in the service since the last inspection dated 03 June 2025 who were employed to work directly with the children held at least the required award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a letter of eligibility to practice deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE)

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day and part time services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 70 children attending the service being supervised by 16 staff members on the morning of the inspection and 73 children attending the service being supervised by 14 staff members in the afternoon.

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.

Compliance Information

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection. Staff members were attentive and responsive to the needs of the children throughout the day and were observed to respond to children in a calm and relaxed manner throughout the inspection. Individual daily reports were kept throughout the day to give to parents/guardians to provide for continuation of care.

Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to new activities and to alert them of mealtimes. The service provides all food for children. Mealtimes were social occasions with children and adults observed to sit together. Younger children were observed to feed themselves, with staff providing support when required. Bibs were provided to protect younger children’s clothing while eating their meals. Drinking water was available within the care rooms and children were encouraged to drink water regularly.

Nappy changes for younger children were carried out on a schedule, and staff were observed to promptly respond to children requiring a nappy change outside of the scheduled times. During this time, staff talked to children, supporting them to feel safe and secure. Older children were observed to use the toilet independently, and staff were available to provide support if required.

Children were encouraged to clean up after themselves and assisted to clean their faces and hands at appropriate times.

Children in the baby room had two sleeps according to their individual needs and children in wobbler and toddler rooms were placed to sleep as part of the room routine. The sleep rooms were calm and conducive to sleep. Children who had soothers were offered them when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided children with

comfort and reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. Areas were provided within all rooms where children could rest or take a break from activities. The outdoor area was equipped with toys and materials to support play experiences.

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:

- When the inspectors arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was enclosed, restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Anti-febrile medication and cleaning agents to include disinfectant sprays and liquids were stored on high shelves or in high cupboards.
- Toys and equipment in the indoors environment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- The outdoor area was observed to be suitable, safe and secure with domestic bins stored out of children's reach and all outdoor play materials maintained and in good condition free from hazards.

Infection Control:

- Both the indoor and outdoor environment were maintained in a clean condition; staff were observed to clean toys and equipment between the morning and afternoon sessions.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, and pedal operated bins.
- The children and staff members washed their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection. Care plans were available for children who required emergency medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were familiar with safe sleep guidelines. Sleep logs were recorded in the dedicated sleep rooms and care rooms where children slept. Children's individual observations included room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Children slept in standard cots and low-level beds in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire and evacuation procedures were on display in the care rooms and corridors.

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 service provided evidence that an adult trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions throughout the service.