

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:	03/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	85	PM 83
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	TUSLA, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare		
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and R Flynn		
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. There were two a separate sleep rooms and sanitary accommodation is provided together with an outdoor area which is located at the side of the building. The service opens from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. There is also a kitchen, office and a staff room on the premises.

Staffing

The service employs twenty two people. The service has a designated person in charge who is also the manager and two deputies who were not assigned to care rooms but available to help out when required. There was an additional adult available to cover lunch breaks. The area manager 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 area of governance, information and records, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels

Regulation 16 – Information and records

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child

Regulation 23 – Safety

Regulation 25 – First Aid

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19, health, welfare and development of the child and regulation 23, Safety. ...As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler Naimibia, Toddler Botswana, Toddler Safari, Acacia, Serengeti and Madagascar.

A sampling process was also used for records regulation 16 (1) (j) and (k).

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 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 who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The inspection focused on the recruitment records for four staff employed since the last inspection on 19th November 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows;

(a)(b)

Of the eight validated, written references that were required, all were available from a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the four adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required for the four adults and was available for these adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that the procedures specified in (9)(2) were carried out prior to the adults commencing employment in the service.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or 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)
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 care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were eighty five children attending the service being supervised by eighteen adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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

(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

(1)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and all meals are prepared and cooked onsite. Meals were provided at regular intervals. Dinner was served between 11:30am and 12:00pm. Younger children were given bibs for dinnertime. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meal. Staff supported younger children who needed assistance with their meal. The children were supervised by the staff when eating who encouraged the children to chat and eat at their own pace without being rushed.

Older children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required. Children requiring nappy changes were changed regularly and when required. Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspectors and were engaged with the children throughout the inspection. Comfort was offered to children promptly when required. The children appeared happy and content at their play throughout the inspection and were provided with freedom of choice in the materials they wished to use.

Positive approaches to behaviour management were used by the staff who were warm in their approach and manner to the children. Staff took time to provide explanations to children for example in relation to why they should use kind hands and share toys. The staff were observed to be warm and friendly in their interactions with the children on the day using soft tones of voice when speaking with them. Children were comforted by the staff when they were upset. The staff listened to the children and responded to their cues for example when a child in the Wobbler Namibia room became upset, they immediately comforted and reassured them.

A parent of a child starting in the service was facilitated to stay for a time in the care room with their child to assist the process of settling into the service.

An interactive software application was being used in the service which provided information to parents on the child's day in real time. The staff had created family walls in the playrooms with photographs of the children and their families' creating links between the service and home.

The care rooms were resourced with a range of toys and equipment suitable for the age ranges of the children which were arranged in defined interest areas such as home corners and transport areas. Open low levels storage systems were used to display the play equipment allowing the children to easily access the toys. Age-appropriate books to support language development were provided in each room near rest areas with soft matting and cushions. Selections of tabletop activities available in the playrooms including jigsaw puzzles and blocks, sorting and matching activities prompted the development of children's fine motor skills.

The outdoor area provided a change of environment from the care rooms during the day. The area was covered with an artificial impact absorbing surface. Ride on toys, climbing equipment slide and climbing frame were available for the children to play on.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered providers had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending.

General Safety:

The entrance door to the service and all other entrance and exits were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored safely out of reach of children. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. There were no hazards identified in the indoor or outdoor play environments.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after outdoor play and before meals. Waste was managed

appropriately with the use of pedal bins throughout the service A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers. Individual bed linen was provided for children and was stored separately when not in use. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required. All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

Administration of Medication:

The service had an administration of medication policy in place. There were documented care plans available for children attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep for example children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on sleep mats. Sleeping children in were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals throughout the service and written records of these checks were maintained.

Fire Safety:

All fire exits were clear of obstruction. Regular monthly fire drills took place with staff detailing the procedure to the inspectors.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The room temperatures in the Wobbler Namibia were not maintained within the required temperature ranges of 18°C to 22°C as follows:
 - At 11.05am the temperature in the Wobbler Namibia room was recorded at 23.1°C whilst the inspector was present in the room.

Infection Control:

2. Children in the Wobbler Namibia were observed mouthing toys. There was no system in place in the room to sterilise these toys. Staff did not remove them from circulation this poses a risk of cross contamination.
3. The nappy changing practice observed was inadequate for infection control purposes due to the following:
 - Staff did not wash their hands before nappy changing.
 - The children were redressed with the same gloves used for nappy changing.
 - Staff did not wash their hands after nappy changing.

- Staff opened the lid of a bin to dispose of a nappy with the same gloves on.
- Children’s hands were not washed after nappy changing.
- Staff wore soiled gloves while returning children to the care rooms.
- Staff wore soiled gloves when cleaning the change mat.

Safe Sleep:

4. The room temperatures in the Toddler Safari and Toddler Botswana rooms were not maintained within the required temperature ranges of 18°C to 22°C whilst children slept as follows:
 - In the Toddler Botswana room at 12.15pm was recorded at 23.1°C.
 - In the Toddler Safari Room at 12.37pm was recorded at 23.9°C.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The ICON maintenance team, have control over the temperatures of our rooms. We have asked the maintenance team to lower the temperature setting which has been actioned.

We have also arranged for air conditioning units within these rooms to be serviced and thoroughly cleaned. This will ensure that they are functioning efficiently and will help maintain appropriate room temperatures throughout the service. Management will continue to monitor the temperature levels regularly to ensure compliance. Staff have been trained in the steps to take if a room gets too warm.

Infection Control:

2. Following the inspection feedback the staff team receive comprehensive retraining on the critical importance of prompting good hygiene practices, whereby the sterilisation of the mouthing toys and the risk of the cross contamination between the children. The staff will continue to receive ongoing training in this area.
3. All staff have been retrained on the nappy changing policy, emphasising the critical importance of the handwashing of the children and the staff and the general hygiene at the nappy room. Additionally, the training included comprehensive guidelines on the proper use of the gloves and the bin during the nappy

changing process, whilst highlighting both the practical aspects and the reasons behind this essential practice. Ongoing monthly training during staff meetings is implemented to ensure that all staff members are fully informed and competent regarding the necessary procedures involved in nappy changing.

Safe Sleep:

- The air conditioning units in these areas are scheduled for a full annual service and deep cleaning. This will enhance their efficiency and support consistent temperature regulation during operations. Management will continue to check and track temperature levels regularly to ensure they remain within acceptable limits. Staff have been instructed to take the following steps, inform management, open internal doors and use workstations to secure the area, and open windows to increase airflow and ventilation.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

No evidence submitted

Infection Control:

2 and 3 Signed training card submitted.

Safe Sleep:

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23.

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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills in the service was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 14 May 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on 11 April 2025. The smoke alarms were serviced on 26 November 2024.