

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR081
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Giraffe Childcare Stepside
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Belarmine, Enniskerry Road, Stepside, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D18 R202
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	05/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	88	PM	86
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA, Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F Carty and R Flynn
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Stepside 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 apartment building in Stepside, 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 rear 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 thirty people. The service has a designated person in charge who is also the manager and an additional manager who were not assigned to care rooms but available to help out when required. 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, 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 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child

Regulation 23 – Safety

Regulation 26 – Fire

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 Cameroon, Toddler Masai Mara, Preschool Karenga, Toddler Namibia, Toddler Botswana and Pre school Serengeti.

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 inspector(s) 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

*(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 ten staff employed since the last inspection on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows;

(a)(b)

Of the twenty 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 ten 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 ten 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 adult's commencing employment in the service.

(4)  
Records were available evidencing that the ten 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.*

#### 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 eight children attending the service being supervised by twenty three adults on the morning of the inspection and eighty six children being supervised by seventeen adults in the afternoon.

(8)(a)  
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times as demonstrated by the roster.

### 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*

*(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

(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 11:00am 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. Independence was promoted in the Preschool rooms during dinnertime with children serving their own meal from containers. Staff sat with children in these rooms eating the meal and promoting a sociable atmosphere.

Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspectors and were engaged with the children throughout the inspection. 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. The adults fostered positive relationships with the children by offering support through attentive listening, responsive interactions, and gentle guidance. They engaged kindly with the children, comforting children when they became upset. Group activities, such as cooperative play and shared meals were designed to develop communication skills, strengthen social bonds and help children build friendships

Staff supported the children to manage their personal care. They prompted the children to clean their hands and faces at appropriate times, assisting the younger children as needed. Staff supported children's independence with toileting, prompting them to use it routinely. Children who wore nappies had these changed at regular intervals and in between when required. Each child had a change of clothes available for use if necessary.

The children regularly washed their hands supervised and helped by the staff as needed for example before eating, after using the toilet and playing outdoors. Boxes of tissues were available at low levels and were observed to be used by staff members in the care rooms to clean a child's nose when needed.

The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after dinner. They slept in cots or low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. The children were made comfortable for sleep with their outer clothing and shoes removed and soothers given to those who used them. Children who had a differing routine or were tired were facilitated to sleep outside of these times. Rest areas were available in each room for children to take time out and rest during the day.

Evidence of maintaining connections with families was observed throughout the service. Pictures of children's families were displayed in each care room. There was a strong ethos of inclusion evident in the service with a number of books, various language displays and all cultures of the children represented with monthly activities developed to incorporate various traditions and beliefs.

The service used a two-way communication app during the inspection, sharing information with parents/guardians in real time regarding activities including sleep, meals and nappy changing.

The playrooms 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 construction areas. Open low levels storage systems were used to display the play equipment allowing the children to easily access the toys of their choosing. Selections of tabletop activities available in the care rooms including jigsaw puzzles and linking 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. The area was sectioned into two areas, one for the younger children and one area for older children. 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 nappy changing, toileting, 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.

## 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 was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 29 May 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number and type of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced in April 2025.