

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----|-------|
| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DS137 | | |
| Name of Service: | Giraffe Childcare Rathfarnham | | |
| Address of Service: | Loreto Abbey, Grange Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16. | | |
| Eircode: | D14 R270 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Dearbhala Cox Giffin | | |
| Service type: | Full Day | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 27/03/2025 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 54 | PM 55 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K |
| Inspection undertaken by: | C. Harte, E. Griffin and H. Sutherland |
| 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 Rathfarnham is a private childcare service and is one of twenty-five childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day care and education to pre-school children from 0-6years. The service participates in the Early childhood Care and Education scheme and operates from 7:30am-6:30pm. The service is located in a residential suburb of South Dublin and has six care rooms.

| Room name | Age range |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Baby Namibia | 1 year – 1 year 4 months |
| Wobbler Safari | 1-1.5 years |
| Toddler Madagascar | 2-2.5 years |
| Toddler Baringo | 2 years 3 months - 3 years |
| Preschool Zambezi | 3-4 years |
| Preschool Botswana | 3-5 years |

The service has secure outdoor areas. There is one designated cot room located beside the wobbler Namibia room. The premises also includes a kitchen, staff room and managers office.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs twenty-three staff to work in the service including the person in charge two designated deputy persons in charge, seventeen early years professionals, a housekeeper, a chef and relief chef. The registered provider does not work directly with the children attending 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included baby Namibia, toddler Safari, toddler Baringo and toddler Madagascar.

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 director, 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 two named persons to deputise. A designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service on the day of inspection. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge confirmed there are currently 23 staff employed by the registered provider to work in the service. The files of eleven staff who had commenced employment since the last inspection were reviewed. A review of records maintained by Tusla demonstrated

that Garda vetting disclosures were dated within three years for all existing staff. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Sixteen written and validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Six written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 11 staff members. 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 available for 11 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to eleven adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that ten adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

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) There were 54 preschool children being cared for by 13 adults on the morning of inspection. The person in charge, deputy person in charge and area director were available to provide assistance in the care rooms as required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of all staff were maintained within the staff files and displayed on a notice board in the hallway.
- (b) The safeguarding statement displayed within the service detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult child ratios were displayed outside each care room.
- (d) (e) A noticeboard in the hallway outlined the type of care or programme provided and the facilities available within the service.
- (f) The opening hours and fees of the service were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway.
- (g) The registered provider maintained the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.

- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) Following a review of a sample of ten records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.
- (k) Following a review of a sample of ten records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

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

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The service had a calm and welcoming atmosphere, and children were observed to be engaged in a range of activities when the inspectors arrived in the service.
- Staff were observed to invite children into the sanitary area for care practices. When children showed reluctance, the staff demonstrated patience and used age-appropriate strategies to encourage nappy changing and toileting and support a positive experience.
- The service had a four-week menu displayed which consisted of two meals and two snacks supplied by the service daily. During mealtimes staff were observed to encourage children to self-feed and drink regularly. The staff assisted the children as necessary.
- Staff supported children's comfort for sleep by removing any soiled clothes following their meal, heavy layers and shoes before they slept.
- Children were dressed appropriately for the weather during play outdoors.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The care rooms had defined play spaces which suited the age and developmental stage of the children.
- Toys and materials were stored on low-level shelving which allowed children to access them with ease.

- A range of books were available to children in the care rooms to support engagement in early literacy.
- The large outdoor area included range of equipment to promote fundamental gross motor skills such as climbing frames, slides and tricycles. The space provided opportunity for movement and children were supported by staff to engage in activity and play.

Non-Compliance Information

Physical and Material Environment:

1. The toy wooden work bench in the toddler Baringo room did not include a suitable variety of supporting resources to encourage children's play. Themed resources help promote extended play opportunities and exploration for children.
2. Four of six battery operated toys were not working in the wobbler Namibia room. This prevented the toys from being used as intended by the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The toy wooden work bench in the toddler Baringo room has been replenished with a variety of equipment enabling children to explore and extend their play opportunities in this area within the room. Management and staff will ensure that all areas are fully equipped with suitable materials in each room and will make them available for children to play with providing opportunities for play and learning.
2. Following the inspection the batteries in the four of the toys were replaced. Management and staff will ensure that battery operated toys are checked and replaced when required within the Namibia room.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have been addressed.

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 entrance was securely locked with a keypad coded lock when the inspectors arrived preventing unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised.
- A colour coded system was in place for plates and placements to help staff clearly identify children with specific dietary requirements.
- Fruit for snack was observed to be appropriately prepared and sliced.
- Furniture in the care rooms was observed to be durable, clean and suitable for use.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water, disposable handtowels and foot pedal operated bins were available to support hygiene practices.
- Children's soothers were stored in labelled individual containers.
- Staff were observed to clean and disinfect tables following mealtimes.
- Cot mattress had waterproof covers.
- Windows were open to provide adequate ventilation in the care rooms.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated how medication is store out of reach of children in specific, labelled containers.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to physically check sleeping children at 10 minutes intervals and a record of these checks was maintained.

Fire Safety:

- Staff were observed to bring attendance records to the garden to support safe evacuation in the vent of an emergency.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A radiator accessible to children had a surface temperature that exceed 43°C and posed a risk of injury. At 10.46 am the radiator surface temperature was 46.1°C.
2. Sections of damaged plastic edging with sharp edges were observed on the perimeter of three outdoor areas and posed a potential risk of injury.

Infection Control:

3. Hand hygiene practices were not in line with HPSC guidance in the wobbler Baringo room. There was no handwashing following time in the garden or after nasal care practises which posed an infection control risk.
4. Four cots were observed with unclean bed linen which posed an infection control risk.
5. A build up of dust and debris was observed under the changing mat in the wobbler Safari changing area which posed an infection control risk.

Administration of Medication:

6. Packaging of medication that formed part of a child's emergency medication care plan was not in English. This posed a potential risk of incorrect administration and administration of potentially expired medication.

Safe Sleep:

7. The recommended ambient sleep temperature between 18-22°C was not maintained in two rooms were children over one year old were sleeping. The following room temperatures were recorded:
 - Wobbler safari was 23.4°C at 12.48pm.
 - Toddler Madagascar was 24°C at 12.25pm.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The temperature of the radiator on the corridor outside the children's base rooms was reduced and a cover was securely placed on the top of it. Maintenance examined the radiator and made it secure with a fixed cover on the top if and ensured that it is thermostatically controlled to ensure a safe temperature at all times.

- The plastic edgings around the perimeter of the play areas were removed and all areas of the garden checked. Management and staff will complete and document daily safety checks in the outdoor play areas to ensure the space is well maintained and free of hazards.

Infection Control:

- Staff have received training and been refreshed on the importance of hand washing on arrival from the garden and during nasal/personal care practices. We will ensure that children's hygiene within the centre is always of the highest priority.
- The four cot sheets had been washed but unfortunately were marked on inspection, however they have since been replaced with new sheets. Cot sheets will be monitored and replenished when worn/stained or as needed.
- All areas of the Safari changing room was deep cleaned. Management will ensure to complete spot checks in the nappy changing areas to ensure hygiene practices are maintained.

Administration of Medication:

- The manager addressed this with the family on the evening of the inspection and removed the antihistamines from the cubby and disposed of them. Children's individual care plans have since been reviewed. Medication must be provided by parents/guardians and handed to a member of management in its original labelled container as dispensed by a pharmacist including the child's full name, prescriber's instructions for administration, clear storage instructions in English, the date it was dispensed, and the expiry date. Management has reminded parents of our procedures and will continue to review all medication and ensure ICP's are in line with policy.

Safe Sleep:

- Room temperatures are monitored and preventative actions put in place, such as opening windows and doors to reduce the base temperatures. During the inspection it was acknowledged by the inspector that the temperatures in the Wobbler and Toddler room were reduced and maintained at 20°C. Management and staffing will ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to ensure room temperatures are maintained at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

- Staff training log.

- Photographic evidence.

Administration of Medication:

- Photographic evidence.

Safe Sleep:

- No supporting documents submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) A record was maintained of all fire drills which occurred in the service. The record showed that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on the 1st March 2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. The certificates reviewed showed that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 1st May 2024 while the smoke alarms had been serviced on the 29th January 2025.