

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY082			
Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare IFSC			
Address of Service:	Lower Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1.			
Eircode:	D01 TX93			
Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time			
Dates of Inspection:	12/02/2026			
Date 2 of Inspection:	16/02/2026			
No of pre-school children:	AM	56	PM	50
Day 2	AM	60	PM	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K</p>
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte, T. Nelson & J.A McKimm
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 IFSC is a privately owned full day care service located in Dublin City Centre. The service is one of twenty-five childcare services operated by the registered provider and caters for a maximum of 92 children, aged 0-6 years, Monday to Friday from 07:30am – 06:00pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service operates from a purpose-built building with seven care rooms, two cot rooms, two additional indoor play areas, a kitchen, sanitary facilities, and an office. The care rooms are as follows:

Room name	Age group
Baby Acacia	12-18 months.
Wobbler Cameroon	18 months - 1.5 years
Wobbler Baringo	1 year 3 months - 1 year 8 months
Toddler Safari	1 year 10 months - 2 years
Toddler Serengeti	2 - 3.5 years
Toddler Zambia	2 years 3 months - 2 years 8 months
Preschool Kenya	3 - 5 years

An enclosed outdoor space is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs 25 staff to work within the service including the designated person in charge, deputy designated person in charge, 19 early years professionals, two auxiliary staff, a chef and an area director who works across other premises owned and operated by the registered provider.

On day one of the inspection there were 22 staff present including the area director, designated person in charge, two auxiliary staff, the chef and 17 staff working directly with the preschool children attending the service across the day. A review of the roster demonstrated that seven staff were not present for the full day.

On the morning of day two of the inspection there were 20 staff present including the area director, the designated person in charge, the deputy person in charge, one auxiliary, the chef and 15 staff working directly with preschool 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

Day one of this inspection was unannounced and day two was announced. The inspection 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. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby Acacia, Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Cameroon and Toddler 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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

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.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and this was outlined on the staff display in the hallway.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that nine new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Eight of these new staff members work directly with the children. On the days of inspection, a total of four students were present on an educational work placement programme. A total of 13 files were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks:
- (a) Seventeen written and validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Nine written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 13 adults were reviewed. 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 10 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult
- (4) Evidence was available to show that eight staff members who worked directly with the children held 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.
- (7) (a) Discussion with staff members and management and a review of a sample of 18 staff induction forms and 14 staff support and supervision records, demonstrated that staff had received appropriate information and had been trained in the service policies and procedures. Staff induction consisted of a variety of topics including behaviour management, infection control and child safeguarding. Files also included documented evidence of supervision with staff reflecting on areas for learning, management workload and keep children safe discussions.

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

- (2) The adult child ratios were maintained correctly through the two days of inspection. For example:
- On the morning of day one of the inspection there 17 staff members available to care for the 56 children present.

- On the afternoon of day one of the inspection there were 17 staff members available to care for the 50 children present.
- On the morning of day two of the inspection there were 18 staff members available to care for the 60 children present.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure an adequate number of staff were available to meet the care needs of the children on day one of the inspection in a timely manner. The following was observed in the baby Acacia and toddler Serengeti rooms:

- children who demonstrated a need for comfort could not be assisted as staff were attending to the needs of other children,
- children were observed to engage in negative behaviours that required support which went unaddressed by staff as they attended to other children
- transitions were prolonged which led to frustration for children.

These are further detailed in the noncompliance section of Regulation 19.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

An overall review of transitions, age and needs of the children took place, and a new routine was put place to ensure additional support from part time staff and management in particular rooms. Staff also took part in additional training where required. The Management team has increased in capacity adding additional support, close observation and supervision has helped the operations of the centre at specific times and staff are more aware what to do. Additional staff are also due to start in the coming weeks.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Staff training cards

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under regulation 11 has been addressed.

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

(1) (b) The following practices were observed to be in place to support the children attending on day one of the inspection:

- Mealtimes were observed to be social occasions. Staff advised how meals are prepared and supplied daily by the service. On day one of inspection the main meal was chicken chasseur with rice. Staff were observed to react promptly to children's cues for additional portions. Staff were familiar with individual children's preferences for meals. The weekly menu was displayed in the hallway.
- Children were assisted to wear bibs during mealtime and were given support with feeding as needed. Drinks were available throughout their meal.
- Soft music and dimmed lighting helped create a restful environment during sleep time. Staff were observed to offer gentle comfort as children settled for sleep.
- Children's shoes, heavy clothing and bibs were removed prior to sleep.
- Older children who did not sleep were provided the opportunity of a quiet space for rest and relaxation.
- Children were observed to use the indoor activity street area on the ground floor as an additional play space allowing for gross motor movement.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Staff struggled to respond adequately to care needs of children in the baby Acacia room on day one of inspection from 12.15pm-12.29pm and again at 1.00pm-1.21pm. While one staff member was present children were observed to demonstrate clear signs of upset by crying and seeking interaction. Despite the efforts of the staff member, they were unable to meet the needs of all children at this time. It is acknowledged when brought to the attention of management arrangements were made to provide support.
2. Nappy changing practices in the toddler Serengeti room did not allow for a supporting one to one interaction as children's peers repeatedly entered the sanitary area during the care practice.

3. Delayed lengthy transitions and a lack of planned activities in the toddler Serengeti room on day one of the inspection which resulted in children being disengaged leading to disruptive and challenging behaviours that on occasion went unobserved by staff.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. On the day of the inspection, while in ratio, the baby room had only recently opened and so the children were quite new to the centre and did require additional support for this reason. A second staff member was present in the room the following week and received training on meeting care needs and practices. The management team have been closely monitoring this room and staggering new children's start dates.
2. Staff in Toddler Serengeti have been retrained on toileting/ care practices during nappy changing/ toileting times. The management team has been monitoring this closely and noted the approach is working better.
3. Staff in Toddler Serengeti has been retrained in curriculum planning and added a more structured daily routine to the children's day. The management team will monitor this closely and supported staff change within the rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Staff training cards

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:

- Management was observed to confirm authorisation to collect for an adult who arrived to collect a child to ensure they were a designated person with consent from the parents.
- Windows on the first floor of the building were observed to have safety restrictors in use during the inspection.

- Hazardous items such as nappy bags and cleaning agents were safely stored out of children's reach.
- The staircase was covered with a non-slip flooring and had a low-level handrail to assist children.
- The kitchen door was observed closed during the inspection to prevent children from accessing potential hazards.

Infection Control:

- Children had individual bed linen.
- Sanitary areas were observed free from clutter and not used for storage of additional items supporting infection control procedures.
- Staff were observed to wear gloves and aprons during nappy changing in the wobbler Cameroon room.
- Children's water cups and nappy creams were individually labelled.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored in its original container and clearly labelled.

Safe Sleep:

- Children's bibs were removed prior to sleep, this supported safe sleep practices.
- Staff members were observed to physically check the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children and a record was maintained for checks completed every ten minutes.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Trailing flexes accessible to children in the wobbler Cameroon and toddler Serengeti rooms posed a potential risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

2. Handwashing practices in the toddler Serengeti room were at variance with the service policy and HSPC guidance that details handwashing should be conducted with running water and liquid soap. Children's hands were washed using water and cotton wool before mealtime. This posed a potential infection control risk.
3. On day one of the inspection the table in the toddler Serengeti room was not sufficiently clean before mealtime to support environmental hygiene practices. This posed a potential infection control risk.
4. A build-up of dirt and debris was observed in the following areas which posed a potential infection control risk.
 - The nappy changing unit in the wobbler Cameroon room.
 - The nappy changing unit in the toddler Serengeti room.
 - The children's toilet in the toddler Serengeti room.

- The floor, wall and skirting by the bin the toddler Serengeti room.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The trailing flex has been enclosed. Staff are aware of the health and safety issues this can lead to and will report in their daily diaries.

Infection Control:

2. All staff were retrained on our Infection Control Policy which includes handwashing. The management team will closely monitor this during their daily interactions in the rooms.
3. All staff was retrained on our Infection Control Policy that includes hygiene practices. The management team will closely monitor this during their daily hygienic practices.
4. A deep clean was carried out in all areas. The Management team have been doing more infection control checks throughout the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

- Staff training cards.
- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

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

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1) There was a complaints policy maintained which outlined the following:
- (a) The procedures to be followed when making a complaint.
 - (b) The way complaints would be dealt with.
 - (c) The procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.
- (2)
- (a) The registered provider ensured a mechanism was in place to maintain a record of any complaints received.
 - (b) A sample review of records maintained since July 2025 demonstrated complaints were managed in line with service policy.