

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY082
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare IFSC
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Address of Service:	Lower Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	26/08/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	44
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson and L.A Webster
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
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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 08:00am – 05:00pm. 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
Wobbler Acacia	Room not in use.
Wobbler Baringo	1 – 1.5 years
Wobbler Cameroon	1.5 years – 2.5 years
Wobbler Safari	2 – 2.5 years
Toddler Zambia	2 – 3 years
Toddler Serengeti	3.5 – 4 years
Preschool Kenya	4 – 5 years

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

Staffing

The registered provider employs twenty-one adults to work in the service, including the area manager, the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, fifteen early years practitioners who work directly with the children, a chef and two cleaners. On the day of inspection, the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, eleven early years practitioners and one cleaner were present when the inspectors arrived unannounced in the service. The area manager arrived at approximately 12pm and remained in the service to support the inspection team. Two early years practitioners and one cleaner arrived in the service at approximately 1:00pm.

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, safety and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 9(1)(2)(3)(4) Recruitment and Management, Regulation 15(1) Record in Relation to Pre-School Child, Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child, Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler Cameroon room, Toddler Serengeti room and Toddler Zambia room.

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

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 26 August 2025 under Regulation 23, in relation to a non-compliance identified under Regulation 23. A response was received from the registered provider which mitigated the risk identified on the 27 August 2025. See body of report for details.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and deputy person in charge were rostered to be present all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on and when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.
- (2) The full staff files of fifteen adults employed to work in the service, including the area manager and fourteen adults employed since the last inspection, dated 4 March 2024, were reviewed. The following was observed:
 - (a) Twenty-eight written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Two written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the fifteen adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for thirteen 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 fifteen adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the fifteen adults 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.

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) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection. In the morning there were eleven adults caring for forty-two children and during the afternoon there were ten adults caring for forty-four children. In addition, the person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to provide support in a supernumerary capacity where required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff members were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

1. A sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All of the 12 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.
- (3)
- (c) The children's records were available and open for review by the inspectors as authorised persons.

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 on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:

- Staff members were observed to use positive and respectful language on the day of inspection, engaging in meaningful interactions with the children in their care. Decision making was encouraged by staff members who were observed to actively supervise and guide the children throughout the day.
- A daily routine was evident on the day of inspection, staff members gave regular reminders and offered the children support with transitions between activities, mealtimes and nappy changing. Visual prompts were also displayed in the care rooms as additional supports.
- Staff members were observed to resolve minor conflicts and disagreements in a calm and prompt manner while listening to, supporting and offering comfort to the children.
- Mealtimes were observed to be a sociable and pleasant event, with staff members sitting alongside the children, engaging in meaningful conversations and offering support and encouragement to the children. Additional portions of food were available if required and children were given plenty of time to enjoy their meal. Water was readily available to the children in the care rooms.
- During sleep time, the blinds were drawn and soft music played in the background, creating a relaxing environment for sleeping children. Alternative activities were made available to the children who did not want to sleep.
- Staff members were observed to tend to children's individual personal needs promptly, offering discreet supervision for toileting and assisting with hand washing and blowing noses. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required.

Non-Compliance Information

1. A child was observed to be upset throughout the morning of the inspection. Staff members in the care room were observed to offer comfort and support to the child at times; however, the child was observed to wander through the care room displaying signs of upset and crying at intervals during the inspection and did not receive the level of care required to adequately support them during a time of distress. It is acknowledged that the person in charge and deputy person in charge spent time in the care room, offering comfort to the child.
2. Children in the Toddler Zambia room were observed to play in an area of the garden that had limited equipment and resources, which impeded the children's opportunities for play. A child was observed to enter an area of the garden which was separated by a plastic fence and bring toys back to the group. It is acknowledged that a staff member then brought additional toys to the area for use by the children. Toys and equipment should be readily available for use by the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All staff have received updated training on care practices and how to support children who require additional comfort throughout the day. Management have been observing the staff interactions and monitoring the children's wellbeing.
2. All staff have received updated training on the service's play policy and how to support the children's interests in the care rooms and during garden time. New equipment was also purchased. Management will continue to monitor garden play closely.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
2. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 19.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed:

- The care rooms were designed to support the age and developmental stages of the children attending the service, equipment and materials were stored at a low level to encourage the children’s independence decision making skills.
- Low level tables and chairs were available for use by the children which allowed them to engage in tabletop activities and meals comfortably.
- Toys and materials were grouped into defined interest areas with adequate props and supporting equipment to support engaging, spontaneous play experiences. Home corners with dolls, cots and tea sets and cosy areas with soft pillows and a selection of books were available to the children.
- Materials including jigsaws and puzzles, cars, trains, animals, musical instruments and construction toys were available to the children, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play.

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 entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- A visitor book was available at the front door. The inspectors were asked to sign in and sign out at their arrival to and departure from the service.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Flexes and cords were secured safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The care rooms and sanitary areas were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Staff members were observed to support children with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day, before eating and after activities and toileting.
- Foot-operated pedal bins were used in the care rooms, ensuring the hygienic disposal of waste and reducing the risk of repeated touch to surfaces.
- Cots and sleep mats were placed 50cm apart.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed to physically check and record the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years old in the cot room and care rooms.
- Heavy items of clothing were removed before children slept.
- Appropriate bed linen was used.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.
- The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The windows in a first-floor care room were observed to be opened without the safety restrictors while children were playing in the room at 11:10am and again at 03:21pm. Furniture was observed to be positioned underneath the windows, increasing the potential risk of injury to the children. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to this.
2. Nappy bags were observed in a child's low-level cubby in the Toddler Zambia room, which was accessible to the children and posed a potential risk of suffocation.

Infection Control:

3. Two potties, which were stored in separate sanitary areas, were observed to have bodily fluids in them. This is at variance with the service's toilet training policy which states that potties will be cleaned and disinfected after each use. The floor around one of the potties was observed to be wet with an unknown liquid, further adding to the potential risk of cross contamination.
4. A staff member was not observed to wash their hands after handling a potty which contained bodily fluids. It is acknowledged that the staff member wore gloves while handling the potty and disposing of the liquid.
5. A staff member was not observed to change their disposable apron or clean the changing mat between four nappy changes.
6. The children's sanitary area in the Toddler Safari room was observed to be cluttered with a towel stored on top of the toilet seat. This poses a potential risk of cross contamination.
7. Children's soothers were not stored hygienically in the Toddler Zambia room.
8. A visible build-up of dirt was observed in the following areas, posing a potential risk of cross contamination and reducing the effectiveness infection control measures:
 - The floor, door frames and baby gate in the Toddler Zambia room.
 - On the door frame outside the Preschool Kenya room.
 - On a changing mat and changing unit in the upstairs sanitary accommodation.

Safe Sleep:

9. Two children were observed to wear bibs while sleeping. This posed a potential risk of suffocation.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Discussions, retraining and role play was carried out with the staff to ensure there is no potential risk of injury to a child and that the staff understand what corrective action to take should a similar situation arise again. The management team have been carrying out more safety checks throughout the day.
- Staff in Zambia has been re-trained on the risk of placing nappy bags at a low level. Management and staff will monitor this so there is no recurrence. Staff will also use the safety check booklet in place.

Infection Control:

- Staff received updated training on the sterilisation and storage of potties and the areas that they are located. Management will monitor this closely during their daily interactions in the rooms.
- All staff received updated training on the service's infection control policy which includes handwashing. Management will closely monitor this during their daily interactions in the rooms.
- All staff received updated training on the service's nappy changing policy. Management will closely monitor this during their daily interactions in the rooms.
- Staff received updated training on cross contamination. The room was thoroughly cleaned and staff understand this standard is to be maintained. Management team will closely monitor this during their daily interactions in the rooms.
- Staff received updated training on our soother policy. Management will closely monitor this during their daily interactions in the rooms.
- Staff and the centre cleaners have received updated training on infection control measures and the standards expected within the service. Management team will closely monitor this closely.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff have received updated training on the safe sleep policy. Management will closely monitor this during their daily interactions in the rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
- Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Infection Control:

- Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

4. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
5. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
6. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
7. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
8. Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

9. No evidence submitted. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 16 December 2025.