

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY313
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Milltown
-------------------------	----------------------------

Address of Service:	Mount St Anne's, Milltown Road, Milltown, Dublin 6, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	D06 E6R6
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
-------------------------------------	----------------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	24/06/2025
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	94	PM	91
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare, W91 E6H2
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 Milltown is a full day care service which is one of 25 childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service provides full day and part-time care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday however, at the time of inspection the service had reduced their operating hour during the summer months to 8.00am to 5.00pm.

The service is located in a purpose-built premises at ground level of an apartment complex in Milltown, South County Dublin. There are nine care rooms in the service. On the day of inspection, eight care rooms were open. The Baby Botswana rooms cater for children aged 0 to 1 year. The Baby Acacia, Wobbler Kilimanjaro cater for children aged 1 year. The Toddler Serengeti room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Toddler Safari room caters for children aged 2 years. The Preschool Madagascar and Preschool Kenya rooms caters for children aged over 3 years.

There are three designated cot rooms in the service, and an enclosed outdoor space is available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 25 staff including a manager, deputy, a cook and a housekeeper. There were 26 staff working directly with the children during the inspection. This included a manager and two adults from other centres operated by the registered provider who arrived following the inspector's arrival. There were also two students present during the morning of the inspection.

The area manager arrived during the afternoon of the inspection.

The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present during the inspection.

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

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

- 9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4) – Management and recruitment,
- 11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- 16 (1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in relation to pre-school service,
- 19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
- 29 (c) – Premises

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 the following care rooms: Toddler Cameroon, Baby Acacia, Wobbler Kilimanjaro, Baby Botswana 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.

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*

(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 nineteen staff employed since the last inspection on 24th July 2024. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows;

(a)(b)

Thirty four verified references from a past employer and four from a source other than a previous employer were available for the adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirement to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International Police vetting was available for all nineteen adults as they have lived outside the State as an adult for a period exceeding six months.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were completed for all adults prior to commencing employment in the service.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the nineteen 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 94 children attending the service being supervised by 26 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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:

- (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

(h) The attendance records of children in the Toddler Cameroon, Baby Acacia, Wobbler Kilimanjaro, Baby Botswana and Toddler Serengeti rooms were digitally recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(i) The staff roster was available on the day of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service.

(j) A sample of 18 medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k) A sample of 30 accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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 registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place.

Nutritious and varied food was offered to children at regular intervals throughout the day. Mealtimes were relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children as adults engaged with them helping when required. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and were helped when needed; an adult chair was available to facilitate the feeding and nurturing of babies.

Drinking water was readily available to children throughout the day indoors and outdoors.

The staff supported the children to manage their personal care. They provided the children with bibs to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating. The children's nappies were changed routinely and in between when required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required and adults were observed to engage attentively with children during the procedure. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.

Sleep routines were reflective of children's needs which promoted good habits around sleep. Young children attending the Baby rooms had their sleep needs accommodated on an individual basis

Adults used effective information sharing processes, such as an interactive software application and verbal handovers, which promoted consistency and continuity of care for children attending the service.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name and interacted with them in a positive manner using gentle tones and positive language. The staff comforted children promptly if they became upset, offering reassurance and cuddles.

Non-Compliance Information

Some care practices observed on the day of inspections were not suitable as follows:

- The designated sleep time in place in the service did not provide any flexibility to accommodate the individual sleep needs of some children attending the Toddler Serengeti room. At 12.02pm children began getting ready for bed. At 12.07pm the lights were turned off and the room was made conducive with sleep. Children began jumping on beds and running around the room. At 12.17pm one child was asleep whilst the other nine were awake. The children were playing with toys shouting and jumping on beds. This behaviour continued with minimal intervention from staff. This behaviour continued for a further hour at times children were observed climbing on the sleeping child. By 1.21pm three children remained awake.
- In the Baby Botswana room, at 12.10pm a baby was observed making hand gestures which staff had advised meant the child was looking for a bottle. At 1:00pm the child was given a bottle. The individual care needs of this child were not met.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

- The provider acknowledges the anomalies in practices during this period of sleep time observed by the inspector on the day of inspection. The staff team has been provided with further training in assessing and understanding each child's requirement of need for rest and sleep, including how important it is to meet all children's individual needs for rest and sleep along with providing a needs lead approach to support children who wish not to rest at prescribed times, along with how to identify rest patterns for all children present in their group. As part of the training staff explored how play opportunities and activities should be presented to the children at correct intervals within the rest periods of their routines. The staff have been guided on how and when is the right time to intervene to ensure rest and sleep is a smooth transitional phase for the children. Ongoing training and supports will be provided to all staff throughout the setting to ensure rest and sleep provisions are correct, also that the children's individual sleep needs are accommodated in line with company policies and practices. The management team will carry out observational sleep checks on all rooms and provide further training as required.
- The staff team have received additional training and guidance regarding recognising children's cues, and gestures. Along with understanding the importance of responding and meeting the needs of the child in the first instance. We acknowledge this non-identity of a child's cues went unnoticed by the team members. Therefore, we provided additional supports for the team by budding/teaming up with more

experienced members of the group who will lead by good example and role model to support their growth and confidence in understanding the care practices needed and required within the early years sector. To provide ongoing training with the staff team, with opportunities to learn methods that include non-verbal communication in children. The team will be encouraged to observe and write down notes on gestures identified in practices or one to one care times used by the children and invite parents to share their knowledge and awareness they have regarding their child's expression of communication.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Training cards.
2. Checklist for sleep times.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documentation were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 19. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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 to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access and other exits were secured to prevent children exiting unsupervised. Toys and play equipment observed in use by children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. There were no trailing flexes or cables observed and medicines were stored safely.

Infection Control:

The pre-school rooms and adjoining sanitary facilities were in a clean condition. Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary accommodation were available. Staff members were observed sweeping the floors and cleaning the tables after meals and messy play. The wash hand basins were equipped with liquid soap and warm water to support effective handwashing.

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.

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. Medication was stored correctly in the service.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs were maintained whilst children slept. Individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Cots and low-level beds were available for sleep.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A cleaning agent in the Cameroon room was not stored out of reach of children. This poses a risk of poisoning if ingested.

Infection Control:

2. Some handwashing practices observed on the day of inspection posed a risk of cross contamination as follows:
 - Children's hands were not washed in the Baby Botswana or Acacia rooms prior to dinner.
 - Staff did not wash hands after wiping children's noses in the Baby Botswana room.
3. Some nappy changing practices observed on the day of inspection were at variance with the service policy as follows:
 - Staff did not wash their hands prior to nappy changing. Staff and children's hands were not washed following nappy changes.
 - Gloves were not removed following nappy changing and staff were observed to wipe the changing mat and go back to the care room with the same soiled gloves on.

4. In the Toddler Serengeti children were observed to jump on beds with shoes on prior to children sleeping posing a risk of cross contamination.
5. Children in the Toddler Serengeti room were observed to sleep on beds which were not their designated beds. The bed linen used was stored individually and each bed was labelled with the child's name. This poses a risk of cross contamination.
6. The outdoor area was not maintained in a clean condition. There were discarded tissues and packaging and a sock scattered throughout the outdoor area.
7. Communal blankets were used for sleep in the Toddler Serengeti room. Staff stated the blankets were not stored individually and were washed weekly. This posed a risk of cross contamination.

Safe Sleep:

8. The floor mats in use in the Toddler Serengeti room were not appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children in that room or were in line with appropriate sleep facilities as per Tusla's Safe Sleep Guidance document.
9. Sleep checks observed in the Baby Boswana were at variance with the service policy. Staff were observed not to physically check sleeping babies who were aged between 0 and 1 year and recorded that they had done so in the service app and written documentation.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. All chemicals are stored in a locked cabinet in the base rooms out of reach of all children, the manager developed signs which are placed on all units, ensuring that they are locked at all times. Both the staff team and housekeepers have received training on the importance of keeping chemicals out of reach of children. On going training will be conducted with all staff and spot checks will be carried out on a regular basis to ensure this is protocol is actioned.

Infection Control:

2. Following the inspection feedback the staff team received comprehensive retraining on the critical importance of prompting good hygiene practices, along with the importance of washing children's hands before all meal and snack times, included in this training session was the importance for staff to ensure their own hands are washed thoroughly after assisting a child with nose wiping or cleaning. Training

covered correct handwashing techniques, when hand hygiene must be carried out, and how these practices help prevent the spread of illness. Refresher training, along with demonstrations and observations will be carried out regularly by the management team to heighten the awareness of handwashing and protocols required under policy. The management team has updated the visual posters as a reminder to staff about handwashing and these are placed at all sink areas in the centre.

3. All staff have been retrained on the nappy changing policy, emphasising the critical importance of handwashing prior to the task and after the nappy changing task is completed. Additionally, the training included comprehensive guidelines on the proper use of gloves 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. The management have placed signage on all changing room doors to heighten the awareness of the procedure for staff.

4. The staff team has received intensive retraining on the importance of safe sleep and its provisions to the children along with the importance of effective infection control measures in line with policies and practices. The team have been reminded to enforce best practices at all times with the age profile, providing clear instructions to support the children in having an understanding that the sleep beds are for resting time and not play time, the team are aware that all children's footwear must be removed prior to the sleep beds being placed down to prevent cross-contamination or injury. This is part of the daily routine for both children and staff; therefore, the staff must follow the guidance given to make sure there is no anomalies in practices. The management team will conduct observations daily at these key times to ensure that care practices, routines and active supervision is being followed by the team to ensure ongoing compliance.

5. Following the inspection feedback, this matter was addressed immediately by the management team. An overview was conducted regarding the points raised which were immediately actioned and addressed. We can confirm that each child has a clearly labelled sleep bed, the children have been guided on the positioning of their beds daily, the team has been advised that it is critically important to establish a positive routine daily for children regarding sleep and rest. All bedding is clearly labelled and storage within each child's cubby; therefore, limiting the risks for cross infection. The team received

comprehensive re-training on all the above procedures. The management team will supervise and monitor bed allocations along the storage of the bedding to ensure ongoing compliance.

6. Following the inspection feedback, the outdoor area was thoroughly cleaned, and all waste was removed. A cleaning checklist has been introduced for the outdoor area at the start and end of each day to ensure the area is hygienic and well maintained.
7. The management team will carry out audits to ensure there are no discrepancies to practices regarding the storage and laundering of all bedding.

Safe Sleep:

8. Following the feedback and clarification given by the inspectors regarding the correct cocoon floor beds to be used for children aged 16mths to 2 years, we since have purchased new contour cocoons that have been agreed by inspectors in line with Tusla's Safe Sleep Guidance. The management team will conduct a review on sleep provisions ie; use of floor beds coinciding with the age profile of the children attending the service on a quarterly bases to ensure suitability of the sleeping facilities.
9. The staff have undergone intense re-training on the importance of carrying out the physical sleep checks required in line with safe sleep and company policy, this also involved the staff to be reminded when to complete and record the timings of all children's sleep patterns. The management will conduct regular check's to monitor compliance for all sleep provisions, ensuing the policy and practices are completed correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Signed training documents.

Infection Control:

2. Signed training documents and posters.
3. Signed training documents.
4. Signed training documents.
5. Signed training documents.
6. Cleaning checklist
7. Signed training documents.

Safe Sleep:

8. Invoice and photographs.
9. Signed training documents.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documentation were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Compliance Information

(c)
There was no malodours present in the service and care rooms and sleep rooms were maintained at the required temperatures.