

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL100
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Giraffe Childcare Northern Cross
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Retail Unit 14, Burnell Square, Northern Cross, Malahide Road, Dublin 17
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D17 FD93
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	71	PM	70
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L.A Webster and E. Griffin
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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

Giraffe Childcare Northern Cross is a privately owned full day service that is located in North Dublin. The service is one of twenty-four services that is operated by the registered provider. The service is registered for a maximum of 98 preschool children aged from 0-6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is registered to operate from 07:15 to 18:45pm but is currently operating at 07:30am to 18:00 pm. The service is based on the ground floor of a building and is comprised of eight care rooms. The care rooms include:

Room name	Age group
Wobbler Acacia	11 months-15months
Wobbler Baringo	1-2 years
Wobbler Safari	1.5-2.5 years
Toddler Cameroon	2-3 years
Toddler Botswana	Not in use
Toddler Serengeti	2.5-3.5 years
Pre-school Masi Mara	2.8-3 years
Pre-school Kenya	4-5 years

There is a designated cot room that is shared between Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Baringo that is accessible from both care rooms. Each care room of the service is equipped with its own sanitary facilities. There is an office, kitchen, staff room and an enclosed outdoor play area that is towards the rear of the service, which is divided into two sections which are used by the children for outdoor playtime.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work within the service and employs 28 adults that work in the service. This includes an area support manager, person in charge, a deputy person in charge, 23 childcare staff, and two ancillary staff which are the chef and the housekeeper. On the morning of the inspection there were 26 adults present including the person in charge, 21 adults working directly with the children and the two ancillary staff. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection. Shortly after the inspection commenced, the area manager arrived and remained at the service to help facilitate the inspection process.

### 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 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 19 Health Welfare and Development of Child, and Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Safari and Wobbler Cameroon.

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 manager, person in charge, deputy 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.*

*(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 required.
  - (b) A review of the roster evidenced that 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 further evidenced through discussion with staff.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with the person in charged showed that there are currently 28 staff employed by the registered provider to work within the service. The files of 15 new staff who had commenced employment following the previous inspection on the 22 February 2024 were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff that are currently employed within the service.
- (a) There were 24 written and validated references available from past employers.
  - (b) There were 6 written and validated references from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 28 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.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that all 15 adults who worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification that is deemed of equivalence by the minister

### 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) On the day of inspection, there were 71 children being cared for by 21 adults in morning and 70 children being cared for by 20 adults in afternoon. Additionally, the person in charge and the area manager were available to provide support in the care rooms as needed.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children within the rooms.

### 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 in the service:
- Staff were observed to be kind, respectful and caring towards their interactions with the children, which created a calm atmosphere in the service.
  - Children were engaged in musical and reading activities to support younger children's language and numeracy development. This was further promoted during an activity where the staff asked questions about different animals and then extended on the children's existing knowledge through sounds and words.
  - During a water play activity, children were provided with waterproof aprons to ensure their clothes were protected.

- Mealtimes were observed to be very interactive, and children were supported by staff to eat independently and stepped in when needed. Children were given time to sit down, eat and digest their food. In discussion with staff, fresh food is prepared on a daily basis and should a child request additional food, it was available.
- Individually labelled beakers of water were available to the children at all times.
- Garden timetables were observed to be displayed to ensure children get adequate times to enjoy the outdoor space and children were observed to engage in outdoor play during the inspection.
- Adequately sized tables and chairs were available to the age and developmental stage of children who wished to engage in tabletop activities.
- A child was observed to have a small wet patch on their top, and this was immediately seen by the staff member, who promptly changed the child.
- Staff members supported children with nasal cleansing in a kind and supportive manner.
- Designated cosy areas were available within the rooms that allowed for children to rest and included comfortable materials such as cushions and soft toys.
- The equipment observed were themed and labelled, promoting a sense of spontaneous play for children.
- Transitions were observed to be smooth and considerate during nappy changing times. Children were gently directed to the changing area and the staff ensured to explain to the children what was happening. Nappy changes were observed to be in line with the procedures visible on the wall and staff ensured that these interactions were meaningful and created a strong sense of safety for the children.

### 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 to the service was appropriately secured upon the inspector's arrival. The service entrance operated through a buzzer system that allowed entry into a main hallway and a second door is coded and securely locked to prevent children from leaving the service unsupervised and restrict any unauthorised access to the service. Additionally, the outdoor area was securely fenced and gated.
- The care rooms were in good condition, with no visible hazards or trailing wires observed.

- Blind cords were securely attached to the wall and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and locked away out of reach of children.
- Shelving units were firmly anchored to the wall to ensure stability and safety.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.
- In discussion with staff, the service operates a nut free zone and a popcorn free zone. Additionally, staff reiterated their knowledge and understanding of beaded jewellery and ensured that it would be immediately removed if observed within the service.
- Staff ensured that individual placemats with the children's photo are coloured and themed into allergy or no allergy colours to ensure safe food intake.

### Infection Control:

- Upon arrival, it was observed that the service was clean and hygienic and up to date cleaning schedules were available and observed within the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and wall mounted paper towels were available for appropriate hand washing practices. Both staff and children were observed to show familiarity with routine handwashing after nappy changing, dinner time and after free play
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order.
- An ambient temperature of 16-22°C was maintained in the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- Within the sanitary room, children had individually labelled storage areas for their nappies, creams and wipes to avoid any cross contamination.
- Children's soothers were stored in their own individually labelled containers and in discussion with staff, they ensured that the soothers are frequently sanitised and checked for wear and tear.
- Upon observation, it was evident that children had individual bed linen that was clean and in good condition. This was further reinforced by staff, who reiterated their laundry routines.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of inspection. Through discussion, staff were familiar with the practices required for the administration of medication to children attending the service.
- Observation showed that medication was stored safely and out of reach of children.

- In discussion with staff, it was evident that they were aware of medical care plans for children and where the emergency medication is stored. In addition to this, staff were aware of the procedures to take in relation to potential anaphylaxis and the administering of emergency treatment if the event occurred

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff were noted to be aware of safe sleep practices and children were observed to be monitored while sleeping every 10 minutes. Staff ensured to document this through paper format highlighting the children's breathing, position, and colour of each child.
- Cots were positioned at 50cms apart, cots and mattresses were observed to be in good condition.
- Appropriate bedding in line with Tusla's guidance on safe sleep was provided to children who were under two years of age.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained for sleeping children under one years of age.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over two years of age.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the inspection
- All fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 25 - First aid

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*

*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*

*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge was trained in First Aid Response (FAR), expiry date of February 2026 and was immediately available to the children attending the service. Additionally, the person in charge ensured that two staff held up to date FAR certification and were immediately available to the children as needed.

(2) (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, and unobstructed if needed to access quickly.

(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available at all times to the adults caring for children attending the service.

### 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.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The records available demonstrated that fire drills are held monthly within the service and the service conducted a fire drill on the 16 May 2025.

(b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm systems in the premises.

- Records demonstrate that the firefighting equipment had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place on the 10 February 2025
- Records demonstrate that the smoke alarms have been serviced on a quarterly bases with the last service taking place on the 11 April 2025.

(4) A visual notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was consistently displayed around the service.

### 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 pre-school service was adequately insured, with an expiry date of 16 December 2025