

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL101		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Giraffe Childcare Blanchardstown		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Block 3, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15.		
<b>Eircode:</b>	D15 X5TE		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dearbhala Cox Giffin		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/03/2026		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	67	PM 68

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor 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. Finnegan Hayes
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager.

### 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).

### Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Blanchardstown is a privately owned full day service that is located in North Dublin. The service is one of twenty-five services that is operated by the registered provider. The service is registered for a maximum of 90 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 07:30-18:00pm Monday to Friday. The service is a stand-alone building that is comprised of seven care rooms two cot rooms, two additional indoor play areas, a kitchen, sanitary facilities, a staff room and an office. The care rooms include:

Room name	Age group
Baby Baringo	1-1.5 years
Wobbler Safari	1-2 years
Wobbler Cameroon	1.5-2 years
Toddler Madagascar	2-2.5 years
Toddler Botswana	2-2.5 years
Pre-school Masi Mara	2.5-3.5 years
Pre-school Kenya	3-5 years

There is an enclosed outdoor play area that is towards the rear of the service, which is divided into three sections which are used by the children for outdoor playtime.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work within the service and employs 26 adults that work within the service. This includes an area support manager, person in charge, 2 deputy persons in charge, 20 childcare staff, and two ancillary staff namely the chef and the housekeeper. On the morning of inspection there were 25 adults present including three staff who are employed in other giraffe branches. The registered provider was not present on the day of 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
- Review of CCTV

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 and 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 the rooms Baby Baringo, Wobbler Safari and Wobbler Cameroun.

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 as a result of information received by the inspectorate on 10 March 2026.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector and inspection registration manager wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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.*

*(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;*

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and  
(c) these Regulations.

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
  - (b) The two designated people in charge were on the premises when the inspector and inspection registration manager arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
  - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.
- (2) It was confirmed by the deputy person in charge that there were 12 new adults employed since the last inspection on the 24 July 2025. The files and qualifications of these 12 adults were reviewed as part of the inspection along with the files and qualifications of two supporting staff members present on the day; the file of the third support staff had been reviewed previously. Furthermore, Garda vetting disclosures for two staff members whose files had been reviewed on the last inspection were reviewed.
- (a) Twenty written and validated references were available from a past employer.
  - (b) Eight written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 16 adults. 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 14 adult 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 14 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.
- (7) (a) Staff training was reviewed for existing and new staff members within the service. Documentary evidence showed that all adults had read the policies and procedures of the service. The deputy person in charge reiterated to the inspector that active supervision and training was ongoing for new staff who had begun work within the service.

- A sample of seven new staff induction records were reviewed as part of the inspection. This included an induction handbook sign off, six-month probation forms, and training cards which included the following:
  - Child protection procedures
  - Supervision of children
  - Processes to be followed in relation to safeguarding.
  - A speak up policy for staff in the event safeguarding concerns arise.
  - Competency based areas for discussion
    - Communication
    - Teamwork
    - General work habits
    - Core standards; familiarisation with policies
- A sample of ten long term staff training records were reviewed and this included supervisory and support documents, in addition to policy sign offs and training cards namely 'Being my best', that is provided by management to support the ongoing supervision, and practice supports for long term staff within their roles. In discussion with management and observation, engagement with these records were on a regular basis.
- Documentary evidence showed that all adults working within the service had completed their mandatory child safeguarding training. In discussion with the inspection team, new and long-term staff reiterated their knowledge, understanding and processes to follow in the event of identifying any child protection concern.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There were 19 adults caring for 67 children in the morning and there were 18 adults caring for 68 children in the afternoon. In addition, the deputy person in charge, and the area support manager were available to provide support in the care rooms where required.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection.

### 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.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

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

- Staff were observed to be kind, respectful and caring towards their interactions with the children, which created a calm atmosphere in the service.
- It was observed that children were engaged in water play and bubble activities in the morning that provided a fun and sensorial experience.

- Mealtimes were observed to be interactive, and children were supported to eat independently and staff stepped in to help 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.
- Staff were observed to adequately meet the needs of a child who became upset. The staff member responded in a timely manner offering comfort and reassurance in a gentle and calming manner.
- Individually labelled beakers of water were available to the children at all times.
- Adequately sized tables and chairs were available to the age and developmental stage of children who wished to engage in tabletop activities.
- 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (3) Staff were observed to treat children kindly on the day of inspection with no harmful or prohibited practices observed, however information received by the Early Years Inspectorate regarding an incident which occurred on 09 March 2026 was viewed on CCTV by the Early Years inspectors. This footage demonstrated shortcomings of some care practices and was not in line with the service policy.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The companies operational and HR policies were immediately followed relating to a care practice concern. The relevant bodies were notified and were supported in obtaining the required information. The staff team were met with both individually and as a team to discuss topics relating to care practices and retraining occurred on specific policies and procedures. Along with the retraining, the management team have increased their floor-based supervision and additional training will be ongoing.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 19(3).

### 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.
- A sample of four accident and incident records were reviewed, maintained and confirmed to be in line with the services accident and incident policy.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.
- 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.
- 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:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and wall mounted paper towels were available for effective handwashing.
- Foot operated pedal bins we observed to be in good working order.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- Children's sanitary area was observed to be clean and in good condition.
- Children's nappies, wipes, and creams were individually stored and labelled to avoid any cross contamination.

### Safe Sleep:

- Lighting was subdued in the sleep rooms and soft music was played.
- Heavy clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Staff were observed to physically monitor the children at 10-minute intervals and written records of these checks including the position, breathing and the colour of the children were maintained.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years old in care rooms.

### Fire Safety:

- 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 VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

*A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:*

- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment.*

### Compliance Information

- (d) The registered provider notified the Inspectorate in writing within three working days of an incident that had occurred at the service on the 09 March 2026.

## 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

- (1) The registered provider ensured that 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)(b) A complaints logbook was retained and a record in writing is kept of complaints made to the provider. The inspector viewed two complaints received to the service since the last inspection and records show that the complaints were duly dealt with in line with the services policy.