

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL101
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Blanchardstown
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Address of Service:	Block 3, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	20/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	53	PM	55
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes, E. Griffin & Y. Kelly
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 Blanchardstown is a privately operated full day care service located in a business park in North Dublin. The service is one of twenty-four childcare services operated by the registered provider. The service caters for up to 90 children aged 0-6 years per day in a purpose-built building with seven care rooms, two cot rooms, two additional indoor play areas, a kitchen, sanitary facilities, a staff room and an office. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The care rooms include:

Room name	Age group
Baby Baringo	11-15months
Wobbler Safari	1-1.5 years
Wobbler Cameroon	1.5-2 years
Toddler Madagascar	2-2.5 years
Toddler Botswana	2.5- 3 years
Preschool Masai Mara	2-3 years
Preschool Kenya	3-4 years

Baby Baringo and Wobbler Safari's rooms each have a designated cot room attached to the care room and each care room in the service is equipped with its own sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor space available to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs a total of 25 staff including person in charge, support manager, deputy manager, 19 childcare staff, two housekeepers and a cook. An area manager arrived at the service at 11:35am and was present for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations.

The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

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.

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, support manager, 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) (b) There was a designated person in charge and two named persons who can deputise if required. The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure was evident in the service and a visual representation of the management structure and roles within the service was displayed in the entrance hall.

- (2) A review of the roster and conversation with the management showed that there are currently 25 staff employed in the service. The files of all 25 staff were reviewed along with the file of a student who was present on the day of inspection.
- (a) Thirty-seven written and verified references were available from a previous employer in relation to 23 staff employed in the service.
 - (b) Fifteen written and verified references were available from a source other than a previous employer in relation to the 10 staff members and the student employed in the service.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in relation to all 26 adults.
 - (d) Police vetting was available in relation to eighteen adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that twenty-two staff members who worked directly with the children in the service 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) There were 53 preschool children being cared for by 17 adults on the morning of inspection. The person in charge, deputy person in charge and support manager were available to provide assistance in the care rooms as required.

- (2) Ratios were maintained on the day of inspection. The following was observed:

Room	Age range	No. of children	No. of Adults present	Adults required
Baby Baringo	11-15months	3	2	1
Wobbler Safari	1-1.5 years	5	2	1
Wobbler Cameroon	1.5-2 years	6	2	2

Toddler Madagascar	2-2.5 years	7	2	2
Toddler Botswana	2.5- 3 years	7	2	2
Preschool Masai Mara	2-3 years	12	3	2
Preschool Kenya	3-4 years	13	3	2

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (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

- (1) The registered provider ensured adequate records of the following information were kept.
- (a) Information regarding the name, position, qualifications and experience of staff were maintained in the staff files.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and aged profile of the children registered to attend was listed in the statement of purpose and function.
 - (c) Details of the adult child ratios were displayed outside each care room.

- (d) The type of care programme provided was detailed in the play and curriculums policies.
- (e) Information of the facilities available was displayed on a noticeboard in the entrance hall.
- (f) Details of the opening hours and fee were displayed on the parent's noticeboard.
- (g) Eighteen policies and procedures which the service is required to have under schedule 5 were available for review.
- (h) A software application was used to record the daily attendance of the children including times in and out.
- (i) A copy of the roster which detailed the daily working hours of each staff member was available.
- (j) A sample of twenty medication administration records were reviewed all of which were completed in full.
- (k) A sample of twenty-five accident and incident record forms were reviewed all of which were completed in full.

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 the following care practices were in place:

- Mealtimes were observed to be timely and pleasant experiences for the children. Documentary evidence and conversations with staff showed meals and snacks were provided regularly throughout the day. A four-week menu plan ensured a variety of food was provided to the children. The menu showed that children receive three meals and two snacks daily including; breakfast, mid-morning snack, dinner, Tea and an evening snack.
- Staff advised that alternative meals were available, and food preferences were catered for. Additional portions were observed to be made available at mealtimes and an alternative meal was observed to be provided to one child at dinner time. Drinks of water were available throughout the day in individually labelled beakers and milk was made available during meals.
- Nappy changing was done on a set schedule and as needed to ensure the children's comfort. Nappy changing was observed to be a calm and relaxed experience for the children.

- Parental engagement and information sharing was conducted via a software application and on arrival and collection. A review of the software application showed that information such as food intake, sleep, toileting and activities were recorded and shared with parents. A parent’s noticeboard was displayed in the service and time for information sharing was also observed to be given to the parents as they arrived in the care room when dropping children off.
- The care rooms were designed and equipped with suitable materials based on the ages and developmental stages of the children present. Children had freedom of movement within the rooms, and children were observed to access the outdoor play area on the day of inspection.
- Staff were warm and responsive when interacting with the children. Staff showed good knowledge of the children likes and dispositions and were empathic when speaking of the children especially those settling in who required additional comfort and reassurance.
- Children were assisted with self-care tasks such as nose wiping as required.

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 layout of the care rooms with defined areas of interest, an adequate supply of props and supporting equipment facilitated choice and supported engaging and spontaneous play experiences.
- Toys and materials were accessible on low level shelving which allowed children to access them independently.
- Low level tables and chairs were available for use by the children which allowed them to engage in tabletop activities and meals comfortably.
- A selection of books which were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children were available to encourage early literacy development supporting children’s language development.
- Cosy areas were available in the care rooms to provide children a comfortable place to rest or engage in quiet activities.

- The outdoor area was divided into three sections and provided opportunities for a variety of play experiences including gross motor and imaginative play. Play equipment included a playhouse, climbing wall, scooters and bikes and a mud kitchen with props.

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 secure on arrival to the service. Staff were observed to attend the door to allow access to visitors. A second door provided a containment area and prevented visitors leaving the entrance hall and accessing the care rooms without the knowledge of staff.
- High handles were present on all care room doors to prevent children leaving the care rooms unsupervised. Two doors which were fitted with thumb turn locks at adult height provided additional preventive measures to stop the children leaving the service unknown to staff.
- The garden area was secured with coded locks to prevent children leaving the area unsupervised.
- Cleaning supplies were secured out of reach of the children.
- Windows were open to allow fresh air to circulate.

Infection Control:

- Warm water and dispensed soap and paper handtowels were available to facilitate adequate hand washing.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in care rooms and sanitary areas for hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Cot mattresses were waterproof which provided an easy to clean surface.
- Adequate space of 50cm was provided between cots and sleep mats to limit the spread of infection.

Administration of Medication:

- Detailed health care plans were available in the care rooms of children who required them. Staff were aware of the care plans in place and the procedure to be followed in the event of an emergency medical event.

- Adequate processes were observed to be in place to ensure medication was given to the children as required for example a consent form and instruction was observed to be communicated to the staff in Baby Baringo on the day of inspection for a child who required antibiotic medication while a parent was observed to be called to give verbal consent for pain relief medication for a child who staff observed to require the medication on the day.

Safe Sleep:

- Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep for example children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on sleep mats.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in rooms where children were sleeping.
- Sleeping children in were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals throughout the service and written records of these checks were maintained.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation plans were displayed throughout the service.
- Attendance records were completed in a timely manner which will support the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire emergency.
- Staff were aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency.
- Fire exits were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Adequate handwashing was not observed to be completed in Wobbler Safari room before mealtimes where staff were observed to clean the children's hand with wet cotton wool. Warm running water and soap are required for handwashing to prevent the spread of infection in line with the service policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The service have undertaken staff re training on the handwashing policy. This was completed with the whole team of staff on the 21/11/24. Regular retraining will be done using our staff training nights and regular audits of the practice in the rooms will be carried out to ensure best practice is being followed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff training records were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and that a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service.
- (2) (a)(b) Adequately stocked first aid boxes were observed in the service. These were stored out of reach of the children but available to staff as needed.