

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| I TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015FL102 |
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| Name of Service: | Giraffe Childcare Clonsilla |
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| Address of Service: | Station Court Road, Clonsilla Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15 |
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| Eircode: | D15 XY81 |
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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: | 08/04/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 118 | PM | 116 |
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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 D08 X01F |
| Inspection undertaken by: | E. Griffin, C. Kerrigan 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Clonsilla is a privately owned full day care service in Dublin 15. The service is one of twenty-four services operated by the registered provider. The service is registered for a maximum of 148 preschool children aged 0-5 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service operates from a purpose-built single storey building including eleven care rooms. The care rooms include:

| Room name | Age group |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Bably/Wobbler Baringo | 1-2 years |
| Wobbler Acacia | 1.5-2 years |
| Wobbler Cameroon | 1.5-2 years |
| Wobbler Masi Mara | 1.5-2 years |
| Toddler Kilimanjaro | 2-2.5 years |
| Toddler Serengeti | 2.5-3 years |
| Toddler Safari | 2-2.5 years |
| Toddler Botswana | 2-2.5 years |
| Preschool Madagascar | 3-4 years |
| Preschool Kenya | 4-4.5 years |
| Preschool Zambezi | 4-5 years |

There is a designated cot room and each care room in the service is equipped with its own sanitary facilities. There is an office, a staff room, a kitchen and an enclosed outdoor play space.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and employs 39 adults to work in the service. Adults employed include an area support manger, person in charge, two deputy persons in charge, 33 childcare staff, two of whom were employed under the access and inclusion model and two ancillary staff a chef and a housekeeper. On the morning of the inspection there were 37 adults present including the person in charge, 32 adults working directly with the children and the two ancillary staff. In addition, there were two students on work experience supporting the children in the care rooms in a supernumerary capacity. The Registered Provider was not present on the day of the inspection. Shortly after the inspection began the area support manager arrived and remained on site 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 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child, Regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby/Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Cameroon, Wobbler Masi Mara and Wobbler Acaci.

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

8 April 2025

An immediate action notice (IAN) was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection in relation to a significant risk identified under Regulation 23. Further details are available in the body of the report. A response which adequately addressed the concern was received on 9 April 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area support manager, management, staff, students 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 named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed 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 staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge confirmed there are currently 39 staff employed by the registered provider to work in the service. The files of the 39 staff and the files of the 2

students present were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) There were 49 written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were 33 written and validated references available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 39 staff members and for the 2 students. 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 32 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 eleven adults before employment commenced.
 - (4) There was documentary evidence available that the 37 adults who worked directly with children attending the service held a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

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 118 preschool children being cared for by 32 adults on the day of the inspection. In addition, the person in charge and the area support manager were available to provide assistance in the care rooms as required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection.

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 sample of 25 children's registration records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that the information required under (a)-(i) was maintained for each child.

(3) (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspection team were available for inspection by the 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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs:

- At morning snack time children were observed to be offered wheat crackers and a selection of fruit sliced up into small pieces. The service also provided a hot meal option for children which was prepared on site, for example, at dinnertime creamy chicken, broccoli with mashed potatoes was served at 11.30am. There was an alternative food option of pasta was available, and extra food was available if required. Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- There were cosy areas with a soft mat, cushions and books for rest and relaxation present in each care rooms.
- The presence of a 'Family Wall' display, a 'Birthday Time' display, personalised placemats and the children's artwork was displayed throughout the care rooms in the service this demonstrated a sense of identity for the children. In addition, children had their own individually labelled box to store their belongings.
- The children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection. This supported their social, cognitive, and gross and fine motor development.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff within the service spoke to each other in a respectful and professional manner, demonstrating to children, positive interactions.
- The staff were observed to interact continuously with the children. For example, during tabletop activity time and mealtimes the staff sat beside the children and offered encouragement and support when required.

- Children were observed to have the freedom to move freely in their care room and independently choose their activities and play experiences. Activities and materials available were suitable for the age and stage of the children in the care rooms.
- Language used by staff was observed to be kind and supportive during nappy changing procedures observed the children were spoken to in a reassuring and friendly manner throughout the nappy changing procedure.
- Care rooms had a visual daily routine on display and staff were observed to give children verbal reminders in advance from moving from one activity to the next activity. This provided the children with a sense of stability, security, and predictability.
- Children’s language development was supported through small group discussions, songs, and storytelling, which were observed during the inspection.
- Parents/guardians were given information on their child’s food intake, toileting, activities, sleep via an electronic communication application and informal chats at the door.

Equipment and Materials

- The layout of the care rooms facilitated these choices as the toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children. For example, the Baby/Wobbler Baringo room was spacious with a focus on sensory materials which allowed for lots of exploration. In the Masi Mari room there were mark making materials and cause and effect battery operated toys easily accessible to the children. All toys and materials were themed and labelled allowing for spontaneous play opportunities.
- There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in each care room.
- An outdoor play area was available for the children with a soft ground surface. There was a solid climbing structure with varying levels of challenge for the children. The equipment and toys available included building blocks and various ride on equipment providing learning opportunities for children.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children basic care needs were observed not to be met at all times in one of the care rooms. Evidenced by the following.

Basic needs:

1. Although it is acknowledged that additional portions of food were available in the service the staff in one room did not provide additional food to a child who indicated they were hungry and requested more hot food having eaten the portion provided. Staff advised there was no additional portions of hot food available. This child was observed to scrap their bowl and was given water.
2. Water was not freely accessible to children in one of the care rooms. This prevents their ability to self-regulate hydration
3. The transition from pre-mealtime to sleep time was not carried out in a timely manner in one of the care rooms. Evidenced by the following.
4. Dinner was brought to the care room at 11.24 but not served to the children. At 11:39am a child was observed to point and make sounds towards food indicating they were hungry, food was not served until 11:45am, potentially causing unnecessary stress.
5. Children had their hands washed after dinner and were guided to sit on a mat from 12pm till 12.16pm waiting their turn to be put down for sleep time. During this time children appeared tired and restless and showed signs of wanting to go to bed for example yawning and thumb sucking.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Extra portions of food are given into the rooms, staff and chef were re-trained (staff will contact chef/ management if more food is needed). Management will carry out regular checks to make sure the children are getting the right size portions of food.
2. A water station has been implemented in the room. Management will carry out the regular checks if water is offered to the children during the day. The water station also gives the children an opportunity to request water themselves by pointing or verbally depending on their individual abilities.
3. Additional staff member is helping to support transitions in the room. Management will continue to check and support the rooms during the busy times of the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence of staff training card
2. Photographic evidence of new water station and documentary evidence of staff training card.
3. Documentary evidence of staff roster.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 19.

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 premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were securely gated reducing the risk of unauthorised access. Children who were brought out to the outdoor play areas from indoors were observed to be supervised.
- The kitchen was not accessible to the children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach to the children.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Blind cords were secured safely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels. Children were observed to be familiar with the routine of handwashing after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to allow hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Individual bed linen was used for the sleeping children and staff were familiar with the washing schedule.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There were cleaning schedules on the wall of the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Windows in the care rooms and sanitary rooms were observed to be open which allowed for circulation of air and reduced the risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

- Outer clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.

- Children under two years of aged were provided with a cot for sleeping. Children over two years of aged were provided with their own individual sleep mat and individual bed linen.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one the age of one slept.
- A sleep log was maintained while children slept. Staff were observed to physically check and recorded the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every 10 minutes.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The floor in front of the fire door in the Baringo room was observed to be cracked, exposed and sloped. This posed a pinch risk and a trip hazard.

Infection Control:

2. Nineteen of the twenty cots in sleep cot room were not positioned 50 cm apart while children aged between 1-2 years were sleeping. Cots were observed to be positioned close to each other. Distance between 19 of the 20 cots varied between 20cm to 45 cm apart. This posed a cross-infection risk.

Administration of Medication:

3. The service did not ensure the safe administration of prescribed emergency medication. Evidenced the following.
 - Emergency medication was administered to a child without documentary evidence of a prescription.
 - Signed parental consent was not available for medication which was administered within the service. It is acknowledged documentation showed parents were aware of the doses administered.
 - The emergency medication was not stored in the original box and was not labelled with the child's name.
 - There was no evidence of a medical care plan available. A medical care plan enables staff to identify and accurately administer medication and treatment when required and identifies steps to follow in the event the child needs medical attention.

This posed a significant risk to the child. An immediate action notice was issued on the day of the inspection. A response was received by the person in charge on 9 April 2025 which mitigated these risks.

Fire Safety:

4. The layout of the cot room did not support the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency. Evidenced by the following:
 - The corner of the cot room was observed to be cluttered with storage.

- A door which led to a fire escape route was obstructed by the positioning of a cot directly in front of the door.

This posed a risk of safety for children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The floor was levelled, and new lino was put on. Management will carry out regular room audits and any issues will be addressed with the maintenance team.

Infection Control:

2. The cot room was rearranged to ensure compliance. Management will carry out checks to make sure there is the right distance between the cots.

Administration of Medication:

3. The Immediate Action Notice was responded to on 9th April 2025. Staff were re-trained on our Medication Administration Policy. An update was communicated to the parents through our FAMLY communication app, and it was also put on the multiple doors in the centre. Management is taking responsibility to talk to parent when the child needs any medication and complete the form.

Fire Safety:

4. The cot room was rearranged to be in compliance with fire safety regulations and our fire escape route plan. Management will carry out the regular checks to make sure none of the fire exits are obstructed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of floor levelled and new lino.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of the cot room rearranged.

Administration of Medication:

3. Documentary evidence of staff training card and the medication administration letter to parents/guardians.

Fire Safety:

4. Photographic evidence of cot room rearranged, and fire exits unobstructed.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified 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) There was evidence to show that four adults hold certification in First Aid Response training, three adults were available during the duration of the inspection.

(2) (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on a shelf in the care room.

(b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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) A record of monthly fire drills was available in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 7 April 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in April 2024. Smoke alarms were serviced on 20 March 2025.
- (2) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway in the service and the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children in attendance. The insurance certificate is valid until 16 December 2025.