

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE129
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Celbridge
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Address of Service:	Block B, M4 Business Park Maynooth Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 KW6F
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	15/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	87	PM	78
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & R. Phillips
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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Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Celbridge is a full day care service provided by Giraffe Childcare Limited which operates 25 childcare services. 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 07:30 to 18:00, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose-built ground floor premises within a business park in the outskirts of Celbridge, Co Kildare. There are 10 care rooms in the service. The Wobbler Acacia room caters for children aged 11 months to 1 year. The Wobbler Masai Mara and Toddler Namibia rooms cater for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Wobbler Baringo room caters for children aged 1 year. The Toddler Botswana and Toddler Kilimanjaro rooms cater for children aged 2 years. The Preschool Serengeti room caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. The Preschool Madagascar room caters for children aged 3 years. The Preschool Zambeze and Preschool Kenya rooms cater for children aged 4 to 5 years.

There are four designated cot rooms in the service. A fully enclosed outdoor space is available to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 27 staff including a manager, a chef and two housekeepers. There were 22 staff working directly with the children during the inspection who were supported by the manager. This included two adults from another centre operated by the registered provider who arrived following the inspector's arrival. The area director 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:

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- 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.

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

- 9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,
- 11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- 19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 20 (1)(b) – Facilities for rest and play,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
- 25 (1),(2) – First Aid.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

- 19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 20 (1)(b) – Facilities for rest and play,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Acacia, Toddler Namibia and Toddler Kilimanjaro rooms and the outdoor area.

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.

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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.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN0941	15/04/2026	A person trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) was not available to the children at all times. The staff roster evidenced that there was no person available to the children with the required FAR training between 17:00 and 18:00 each day during the week of inspection.
Status	Action was taken immediately by the registered provider following service of the Notice and the registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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 on the premises throughout the inspection.

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(2)

The inspection focused on the full recruitment records for nineteen adults employed since the last inspection on 19 May 2025 and two adults from another centre operated by the registered provider who were present during the inspection. In addition, Garda vetting for two adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows.

(a)(b)

Of the 42 validated, written references that were required, 36 were available from a past employer and 6 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the 23 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 required and was available for 19 staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for 18 staff members. One staff member held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)

Through a review of documentation and discussion with the manager it was evident that the registered provider had not sourced a past employer reference for one new staff member from their most recent employer.

(3)

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Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to one adult commencing in their role in the service, as detailed above under regulation 9(2)(a).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)

At the time of appointment, two references were obtained for the staff member in question, both of which were relevant and validated in line with our recruitment procedures. We made efforts to obtain a reference from the most recent employer; however, this was not available to us at that time despite follow-up attempts with the staff member.

Since then, we have successfully secured a reference from the most recent employer, and this has now been added to the staff member's file.

We remain fully committed to maintaining full compliance with all regulatory requirements in relation to our recruitment procedures. We will ensure that references are actively requested, followed up, and secured from the most recent employers for all staff prior to commencement of employment, and that all documentation is fully verified and retained on file.

(3)

Our recruitment process requires that references are always requested and sourced from the most recent employer in the first instance. This is our standard procedure for all appointments.

In this particular case, while a reference from the most recent employer could not be obtained despite reasonable efforts, we secured the next two available meaningful references.

We always make reasonable and documented efforts to source references from the most recent employer prior to commencement of employment and will ensure we have these on file. We remain committed to full compliance with all regulatory requirements and to maintaining robust safeguarding and recruitment procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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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 87 children attending the service being supervised by 22 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

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

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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)

Meals were provided at regular intervals and drinking water was accessible to children in the Toddler Namibia and Toddler Kilimanjaro rooms children throughout the day. Dinner was served from 12:00. All children were given bibs for dinnertime. Staff sat with children during their dinner and children in the Toddler Namibia and Toddler Kilimanjaro rooms were encouraged to feed themselves. Staff were observed providing an additional portion to a child who requested more in the Toddler Kilimanjaro room.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required and children's hands and faces were cleaned after meals. Children's wet or soiled clothing was changed promptly. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. There was a designated nap time for children. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection times and through an online application detailing information on food, sleep and nappy changes. Parents were observed in the service during drop off and collection times.

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A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the side and rear of the premises and had shock absorbent surfacing. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. All children were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Inspectors observed that suitable care practices were not in place having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs as follows.

1. The registered provider did not take all required measures to ensure that water was accessible at all times to children in the Wobbler Acacia room which was at variance with the healthy eating policy in place. It is acknowledged that there was a water station in the care room, however, this was out of reach of children. Staff were observed offering children a short drink before and after their dinner and tea, but water beakers were moved out of reach of children by staff during their meals. Allowing children to drink water as needed maintains hydration, aids digestion, prevents constipation, and regulates body temperature.
2. Mealtime practices observed in the Wobbler Acacia room were at variance with the healthy eating policy in place and did not provide the children with opportunities to develop independence or for social interaction and meaningful engagement. Opportunities for self-feeding at dinner were not provided to the children in the Wobbler Acacia room who were aged 11 months to 1 year and developmentally ready to attempt spoon-feeding. Staff were observed spoon-feeding children in turn during dinner time and teatime on the day of inspection. Not allowing children who are developmentally ready to attempt self-feeding can delay the development of fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, independence, and healthy eating habits.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1. Immediate action was taken to ensure that drinking water is accessible to children at all times in the Wobbler Acacia room. Staff were reminded and re-trained on the importance of maintaining continuous access to water in line with the healthy eating policy. The water station was reviewed and repositioned to ensure it is within reach and consistently available throughout the day, including during meals and outdoor activities.

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- Staff have received further guidance to ensure that children are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop independence and self-feeding skills during meals. Spoon-feeding will only be used where developmentally appropriate, and children will be encouraged to self-feed in a supportive manner.

Management will ensure that water is consistently available and easily accessible to children throughout the day, including during meals and outdoor activities and will ensure that staff support positive mealtime practices, encouraging children's independence and self-feeding skills in an age-appropriate and supportive manner, in line with best practice

Supporting documentation submitted

Written and photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Appropriate rest facilities were not provided for all children under 2 years in the Toddler Namibia room. On the day of inspection, two children aged 23 months were observed on foldable floor mats which were not fitted with firm, flat, waterproof and breathable mattresses. This may impact the safety and quality of sleep for children under 2 years.

This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 19 May 2025. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

Two children who were four days away from their second birthday and were in the process of transitioning onto floor beds. This transition was carefully managed, the children were fully supervised at all times and slept peacefully, however we acknowledge the sleep requirement and sleep plans are now in place for these children. Following the previous inspection, additional cots and an additional cot room had been put in place to ensure all children under two are accommodated in cots. Sleep plans are in place for all sleeping children

There are currently no children under two sleeping on floor mats, and we remain committed to maintaining full compliance.

All children under the age of two will be provided with a cot for sleeping. Sleep plans are completed in partnership with families to ensure each child's individual needs are met and documented. These plans are reviewed regularly. In addition, risk assessments will be completed for any child transitioning between sleeping arrangements.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

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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 adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff and children in the Toddler Namibia and Toddler Kilimanjaro rooms were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate.
- Children's nappies were changed in line with the service's nappy changing policy to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

Administration of Medication:

- There were documented care plans available for children attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff working in the rooms with the children were aware of the treatment plans and demonstrated knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.
- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the service policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were carried out and documented every 10 minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.
- An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping on low beds.

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Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Some handwashing practices observed were inconsistent and at variance with the policy in place in the service posing a risk of the transmission of infection. In the Wobbler Acacia room children and staffs' hands were not washed before mealtimes.
2. The children attending the Wobbler Acacia room were of an age where they explored toys with their mouths. During the inspection there was no attempt made to remove toys when mouthed despite the room having a designated box for this purpose. The toys remained in use between the different children posing a risk of the transmission of infection.
3. A child in the Wobbler Acacia room was observed to have their face cleaned after their tea with a cloth that was in use for cleaning counters and tables posing a risk of the transmission of infection.
4. Bed linen was not stored separately to prevent cross contamination in the Toddler Namibia and Toddler Kilimanjaro rooms. Sleep mats were observed stored stacked on top of each other with the bed linen attached. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered on a weekly basis.

Safe Sleep:

5. There was no sleep plan and associated risk assessment in place for two children aged one year who slept on foldable mats during the inspection. This is at variance with the policy in place in the service which detailed the requirement for sleep plans and risk assessments to be in place for children under 2 years of age who sleep on a floor bed, in line with current Tusla guidelines on safe sleep.

Fire Safety:

6. In the cot room adjacent to the Wobbler Acacia room, a cot was observed blocking a fire exit. This may impede the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of a fire on the premises. It is acknowledged that a staff member moved the cot when it was brought to their attention by the inspectors.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Hand hygiene practices in the Wobbler room have been reinforced. Staff have received refresher training to ensure that children's and staff members' hands are washed appropriately before and after meals,

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outdoor play, and activities. Management will continue to monitor compliance through regular spot checks to ensure consistent implementation.

2. Procedures have been strengthened to ensure that any toys mouthed by children are immediately removed, cleaned, and sterilised before being returned to circulation. Management will carry out regular spot checks to prevent cross-contamination and ensure adherence to infection control procedures.
3. The practice regarding the use of face cloths has been reviewed. The interactions and practice on the afternoon of the inspection was reviewed and while management could not identify a cloth used for cleaning the table being used to clean a child's face, the procedures for cleaning children's hands and faces has been reiterated to all staff to ensure that only designated face cloths are used for children and training refreshed on this.
4. Bed linen is laundered weekly and more frequently if and when required in line with hygiene procedures. Bed linen is now stored separately from the beds to prevent cross-contamination and sleep mats are stored appropriately. The centre has two housekeepers who support the daily cleaning and laundry procedures.

All relevant procedures and practices have been reviewed and recommunicated to staff. Refresher training has been completed with the staff. Management will ensure that all the health, safety and welfare of the children is in line with infection control.

Safe Sleep:

5. Sleep plans are now in place for all children who require them. The two children referenced have now turned two years of age; however, management has reiterated that sleep plans must be completed for all children who sleep in the setting. Any child under the age of two using a floor bed would have an appropriate sleep plan and risk assessment in place, in line with policy and Tusla guidelines.

Fire Safety:

6. The issue identified regarding cots partially obstructing the fire exit has been addressed immediately. The cots have been repositioned to ensure that the fire exit remains fully unobstructed. Management acknowledged the importance of this and will ensure that fire exits are always kept clear.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Written and photographic was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Safe Sleep:

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Fire Safety:

Photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

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

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN0941 served.