

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DS001
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare - Shackleton
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Address of Service:	Unit 1, Shackleton Mill, Shackleton Vale, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78R7P0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	89	PM	95
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	S Quigley and H Sutherland
Title:	Early Years Inspector(s)

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 Shakleton is a large early years service which is located in a residential area of Lucan, South Co Dublin. Care and education are provided on a full day, part time, and sessional basis to preschool children aged six months to six years. The children are allocated to one of ten care rooms dependant on their age and stage of development. The premises is a purpose built two storey building with three care rooms located on the ground floor and seven on the first floor. A large outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises which is divided into two separate play spaces.

Staffing

The service currently employs 33 staff members including a designated person in charge, a cleaner, and 2 cooks. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. On the day of inspection, 34 staff members were present and 2 adults on a work placement programme. The area manager arrived at the service to facilitate a feedback meeting at the close 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ 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. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Safari Room, the Wobbler Baringo Room, the Preschool Kenya Room, and the Toddler Serengeti Room.

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 person in charge, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

Following a discussion with the appointed person in charge it was confirmed that 20 adults had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 19 June 2024. Documentation required under Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these 20 adults as detailed below.

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were 2 references each available for the 20 adults.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all adults employed.
 - (d) Eighteen of the adults required international police vetting, the required documentation was available for each of the adults.
- (4) Fifteen of the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One adult who did not hold a recognised qualification held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE). Four of the adults did not require a qualification.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 89 children present in the service being supervised by 28 adults on the morning of the inspection, and 95 children being supervised by 29 adults in the afternoon. The persons in charge provided relief cover to the care rooms when required.

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 children appeared content during the inspection, engaging in free play and activities. Most children spent time outdoors and were dressed in coats appropriate to the weather. Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in small groups with adults when eating. The adults engaged them in conversation and promoted social skills. Drinks were accessible to the children indoors and outdoors and were offered with meals.

The adults supported the children to manage their personal care. They reminded and assisted them to wash their hands and clean their noses when needed. Staff provided regular opportunities for children who were toilet training to use the toilet and gently encouraged and guided independence. Children wearing nappies had these changed at designated times and staff stated they are changed in between if needed. Staff used opportunities when providing personal care for warm one-to-one interactions. Older children used the toilet independently. Areas with soft seating, cushions and mats were available in the rooms for children to rest or take a break from activities.

The adults demonstrated warmth in their interactions with the children, responding to their cues and speaking kindly to them in gentle tones. Transitions from activities to care routines ensued smoothly and were well managed with staff using songs and explaining in advance to the children what was going to happen next. Staff recorded information on the children's day including nappy changing, sleep, activities and meals eaten which they reported is shared with parents. Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and family photograph walls. A keyworker system was in place and displayed in each care room to support secure relationships between staff and children.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Adequate and suitable facilities were observed to be available for the preschool children to rest during the day in accordance with their age and stage of development as follows:

- Two designated cot rooms were available in the service for younger children aged one year to engage in needs led sleep in accordance with their individual care routines.
- Standard cots were available and in use in the service for all children aged one to two years to sleep. The cots were fitted with appropriate mattresses, fitted bed linen and cellular blankets as required.
- Padded floor mats with fitted bed linen were available and in use for children aged two years and over to sleep.
- Care rooms where older children slept were observed to be made conducive with sleep at designated times with room darkening window blinds and relaxing music.
- Designated rest areas were available in each care room for children to rest or take a break from activities as required.

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

The inspectors found through observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard the children attending:

General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and detailed the safe sleep procedures in place in the service during discussions with the inspectors. Sleep logs were maintained in the cot rooms and the care rooms where children slept, and individual observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An electrical cable from a phone hanging on the wall in the Preschool Kenya Room was hanging in reach of the children posing a risk of harm to a child.

Administration of Medication:

2. A sample of medication records were reviewed during the inspection. Four of the records reviewed were incomplete and at variance with the administration of medication policy in place in the service. This posed a risk of harm or overdose to the children receiving the medication, and may negatively affect the continuity of care given to a child as follows:
 - Three of the four records had no documented evidence that a second staff member was present to witness the administration of medication to a child.
 - One of the four records did not detail the dosage of medication that was administered to a child.
 - Two of the four records had no documented evidence that the parents had been informed that medication had been administered to their child.
 - Three of the four records did not detail the time medication was to be administered to the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The cord cable connecting the handset to the phone base was clipped up to ensure no cord is hanging low. All phones are secured to the walls, and all phone cords have been checked. The cords will be secured as needed to ensure no children are within reach of them.

Administration of Medication:

2. Following the inspection, the service reviewed the four medication forms and acknowledged the presence of some record-keeping gaps, these gaps have since been completed. Upon review of these, accurate medication was given and verified by a second member of staff despite the staff signature gap. However, training was provided to staff members. A sample copy of the medication form has been placed in all rooms to ensure all staff complete the form accurately leaving no gaps of information. A member of management administers all medication and will ensure the form is completed in full.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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)

An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were stored in conspicuous locations within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of inspection.

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.

(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 written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place on the 29 October 2025.

(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system had been serviced in January and October of 2025.

(4)
The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.