

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL100
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Northern Cross
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Address of Service:	Retail Unit 14, Burnell Square, Northern Cross, Malahide Road, Dublin 17.
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Eircode:	D17 FD93
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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:	03/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	80
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and Elizabeth Finnegan Hayes
Title:	Early Years Inspector. Inspection and Registration Manager

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

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Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Northern Cross is a privately owned full day service that is located in North Dublin. The service is one of twenty-four services that is operated by the registered provider. The service is registered for a maximum of 98 preschool children aged from 0-6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is registered to operate from 07:30am to 18:00pm. The service is based on the ground floor of a building and is comprised of eight care rooms. The care rooms include:

Room name	Age group
Wobbler Acacia	10 months-14months
Wobbler Baringo	12-15 months
Wobbler Safari	1.5-1 year 11 months
Toddler Cameroon	2-2.5 years
Toddler Serengeti	2.5-3 years
Toddler Botswana	3-4 years
Pre-school Masi Mara	3-4 years
Pre-school Kenya	4-5 years

There is a designated cot room that is shared between Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Baringo that is accessible from both care rooms. Each care room of the service is equipped with its own sanitary facilities. There is an office, kitchen, staff room and an enclosed outdoor play area that is towards the rear of the service, which is divided into two sections which are used by the children for outdoor playtime.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 23 staff to work in the service. This includes an area manager, person in charge, deputy person in charge, a chef, a housekeeper and 18 early years professionals. On the morning of the inspection there was 19 adults present including the person in charge, 18 adults working directly with the children and 1 ancillary staff. The registered provider does not work directly 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:

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- 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. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler Baringo, Wobbler Safari and Toddler Serengeti.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that:

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.*
- (b) A review of the roster showed that either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service on the day of inspection.*
- (c) There was a clear management suture in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.*

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- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that seven new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Six of these new staff members work directly with the children. A review of information demonstrated that garda vetting disclosures for existing staff were all in date.
- The registered provider had completed the following checks:
- (a) Eight validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Six validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for seven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for seven adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that six staff members who worked directly with the children 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.
- (7) (a) Through discussions with staff and sample documentation reviewed on inspection there was evidence to show that staff had been provided and received training on policies and procedures.
- Training included topics such as building access, communication, Children's First, safe handling of children, health and safety, behaviour management and supervision of children.
 - A sample review of fourteen records showed staff had been provided with an opportunity to meet with management for support and supervision.

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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.

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults available to the children attending the service to meet their care needs.
- There were 17 staff providing care to children present on the morning of the inspection when the inspector and inspection and registration manager arrived unannounced.
 - The person in charge was also available to provide support across the care rooms.
- (2) The adult child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection. A review of the room attendance records showed there were sufficient staff allocated to the care rooms for the numbers of children in attendance.

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 following practices were observed in place to support the children attending:
- The atmosphere within the care rooms was calm and pleasant. Staff were responsive to children's needs and engaged with them throughout the morning joining them in play and conversation. Staff were observed to regularly check in with the children.

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- Staff used strategies such as low tones, eye contact and child friendly language when communicating with the children. A child who became upset was promptly responded to and offered comfort and reassurance from a staff member.
- Staff supported children through minor disputes in an age-appropriate manner.
- Transitions on the day of inspection were observed to be smooth as staff gave clear guidance to children and kept them informed of the daily routine.
- Children were supported with self-care skills such as hand and nose hygiene.
- Nappy changing practices were observed to be regular, and children were invited to have their nappy changed in a calm manner. Staff engaged pleasantly with the children throughout the care practice.
- Children were assisted to remove footwear and heavy clothing items prior to sleep and provided with bibs during mealtimes supporting comfort.
- Mealtimes were regular and staff were aware of children's dietary preferences.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured there was a complaints policy maintained which outlined the following:
- (a) The procedures to be followed when making a complaint.
 - (b) The way complaints would be dealt with.
 - (c) The procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.
- (2)
- (a) Management advised there was currently no complaints received on file and that there is a mechanism in place to record complaints.

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(b) Management confirmed if a complaint was received it would be handled in line with the service policy.