

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS003
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Name of Service:	Giraffe Childcare Liffey Valley
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Address of Service:	Liffey Valley Office Campus, Liffey Valley, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
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Eircode:	D22 W026
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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:	20/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM	69
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate – Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill and Linda Magee
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Giraffe Childcare Liffey Valley is one of a multiple of 34 childcare services operated privately by the registered provider in the Dublin region. The service is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care and caters for children from 0 to 6 years. The service operates from 07:15 to 18:00, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose built two storey premises in an urban area of west Dublin. Eight care room were available. Four rooms are located on the ground floor; Baby Acacia caters for children aged 1 year. Wobbler Serengeti caters for children aged over 1 year and under 2 years. Wobbler Namibia caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. Toddler Cameroon caters for children aged 2 years. Four rooms are located on the first floor, Toddler Baringo caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. Toddler Masai Mara caters for children aged 3 years. Junior Pre-school Botswana caters for children aged 3 to 4 years and Pre-school Madagascar caters for children aged 4 to 5 years. A separate cot room is also located on the ground floor. There are two, fully enclosed outdoor play areas on the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 26 staff including a manager, cook and domestic staff. On the day of inspection 17 staff were working directly with the children. The designated person in charge was available to provide additional support to staff as required. The area director, a manager and staff member from another service operated by the registered provider arrived after the inspection. The staff member subsequently supported staff and worked directly with the children. The registered provider does not work 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:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- 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. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child and Regulation 19 Health welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler Acacia, Wobbler Serengeti, Toddler Masai-Mara and Junior Pre-School Botswana.

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 director, manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The deputy person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service. A review of the staff roster showed that a deputy person in charge was on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.

(2) Following a discussion with the person in charge, a review of records and the staff roster, it was confirmed that 12 adults commenced employment in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 12 May 2025.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of the 13 adults including the staff member who arrived from another service as detailed below.

The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda vetting were reviewed for 15 adults including the area director and manager who arrived after the inspection commenced.

- (a) Twenty-four written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) A second written verified reference for one adult was from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 15 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 in respect of adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as adults.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the 12 adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE). One adult employed for ancillary duties 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 particular reference number 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,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 69 children attending the service being supervised by 17 adults on the day of inspection. Additionally, a relief staff member arrived from another service to work directly with the children and the deputy person in charge was available to relieve staff for their breaks.
- (8)(a) The staff roster provided to the inspectors by the person in charge showed that a minimum of two staff members were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 12 child records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) The records available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
- (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
- (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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;*

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A review of staff files found that four staff members did not have a complete written record of all previous work experience as adults. Unexplained gaps were identified in their employment history and the required documentation accounting for these gaps was not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(1)(a) All staff Cvs were reviewed and updated to acknowledge the periods not detailed. This non-compliance was communicated with the HR department for future employees and a companywide audit is currently taking place on this matter.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of updated Cvs.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted supporting evidence in keeping with the actions stated meeting the Regulatory requirement.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Throughout the inspection, staff were observed to interact positively and respectfully with children, supporting their learning, development and wellbeing through warm, responsive and age-appropriate interactions. Staff consistently communicated with children at their level, sitting on the floor alongside them, which promoted meaningful engagement.

A variety of play materials were easily accessible from low level open shelving. Children participated in a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities that reflected their interests and stages of development. They were observed painting, completing jigsaw puzzles independently, and engaging in a small-group creative activity with staff where they constructed a swimming pool. Children were actively involved, enthusiastic and excited throughout the activity. Staff extended children's learning by asking open-ended questions, such as what they would like to put in the water, encouraging language development and their imagination.

Children were encouraged to participate in everyday routines, fostering independence and a sense of responsibility. For example, children helped distribute placemats at mealtimes. Staff sat with children during

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

lunch, creating a relaxed and social mealtime experience. Drinking water was freely available throughout the day and at mealtimes.

Children's personal care needs were attended to in a respectful, responsive and nurturing manner. Staff provided bibs to protect younger children's clothing during meals and supported children to clean their hands and faces afterwards, encouraging the development of self-care skills. Nappy changing was carried out as required, with staff maintaining children's dignity and communicating warmly throughout these interactions. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently, promoting their confidence.

Children had opportunities to rest and relax during the day, with each room providing a designated cosy area. At sleep time, staff created a calm and restful environment by closing the blinds, playing gentle music and remaining with children to comfort and reassure them. Staff soothed children to sleep through gentle reassurance, such as stroking their backs

All children had regular opportunities to participate in outdoor play and physical activity. Children moved freely within the outdoor environment and engaged in activities including running, using the slide and riding bicycles. These experiences supported their physical development, coordination, and overall wellbeing.

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 doors to the service were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering and to ensure children could not exit unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of children's reach. Childproof locks were provided on low level cupboards.
- The kitchen and storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- Cord blinds were secured safely.

Infection Control:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The environment was clean and a record of cleaning was available.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available to support effective hand hygiene practices.
- Staff supported children to wash their hands after toileting, after outdoor play and before meals.
- Children's nappies were changed in accordance with the nappy changing policy.
- 50 cm of spacing was provided between cots for infection control purposes.
- Pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to take to ensure medication is given safely if needed, including obtaining prior written parental/guardian consent and having a witness present.
- A sample of administration of medication records reviewed were completed correctly by staff.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children every ten minutes.
- Standard cots were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's developmental needs.
- The cot room and care rooms where children slept were maintained at the correct temperature.
- A sleep log was available for review, detailing the room temperature, breathing pattern, colour and position of the child.

Fire Safety:

- Staff when spoken to demonstrated familiarity of the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.
- Clear visual displays of the fire evacuation routes and procedures were prominently displayed throughout the service. The designated fire escape routes were marked and free from obstruction on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. It was identified, following discussions with staff in Wobbler Acacia and Wobbler Serengeti, that soothers were not being sterilised in accordance with the service's infection control policy posing a potential

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

infection control risk. Staff advised that soothers are washed in warm water before being placed in the child's individual container. However, the Infection Control Policy states that "soothers should be washed in warm soapy water and then sterilised in the sterilising unit /sterilising liquid when a child is finished using it."

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All staff have been retrained on the soother sterilising and comforter storage policy. New sterilisers for the rooms have been purchased and a training card signed off by staff after training. Chef will collect the sterilisers and ensure sterilisation is completed daily. Management and supervisors will follow up daily to ensure the proper sterilisation and storage of soothers/comforters and continue supporting during sleep/rest times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence of staff training.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted supporting evidence in keeping with the actions stated meeting the Regulatory requirement.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Staff were observed to provide active supervision at all times. Children were consistently supervised by both sight and sound by staff who positioned themselves appropriately both in the indoor and outdoor environments.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured. A copy of the insurance certificate was displayed in the service and was valid until the 16 of December 2026.