

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS118			
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Creche & Montessori			
Address of Service:	24 Barton Drive, Grange Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.			
Eircode:	D14 HP57			
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	12/03/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	26
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K			
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and E. Finnegan Hayes			
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).

Conditions if applicable Not applicable.

Description of service

Little Harvard Creche and Montessori is one of seventeen services operated by the registered provider. Little Harvard Creche and Montessori provides full time, part time and sessional care and education to children from 2 to 6 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The hours of operation are from 7.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. A registered school age care service also operates at the premises.

The service operates three care rooms for the pre-school children, Pod 4 is on the first floor, Pod 3 and Pod 2 on the ground floor. Pod 1, Pod 2 and the Studio room catered to school aged children in the afternoon the day of the inspection. Each room has a sanitary area adjacent to it. In addition, there is an office, kitchen, and outdoor area on the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs nine staff to work directly with the early year's children including the person in charge and chef. Two additional staff members arrived at the service from other branches of the service to provide cover for lunchbreaks. An area manager arrived to the service at 2:15pm to meet with the inspectors and attend the closing meeting. 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:

- 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.

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

An immediate action notice was issued on the day of the inspection in relation to an observed risk under Regulation 23. A response which addressed the non-compliance was received from the registered provider on 13th March 2024. Please see body of report for details.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)(b) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and three staff listed to deputise in their absence. A review of the roster and conversation with staff showed that the person in charge or a named deputy was present on the premises during the opening hours of the service. The person in charge was present on the premises when inspectors arrived in the service.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place in the service and staff were clear on their role and responsibilities.

(2) A review of the roster and conversation with the person in charge confirmed that two new staff have joined the service since the last inspection. The files of two new staff and two staff who came to the service from another premises on the day of the inspection were reviewed.

(a) Three written and verified references were available from a past employer.

(b) Five written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all early year's staff listed on the roster and two staff who came to the service from another premises. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eleven staff.

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 from two countries for four staff members who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months.

(4) The four staff members whose files were reviewed and 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 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) On the day of the inspection the registered provider ensured there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. The manager was available in a supernumerary position and available to cover in rooms as needed.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection.

Room	Age group	Time	No. of children	Staff available	Staff required
Pod 2	2 years 8 months - 5 years	10:08am	22	2	2
Pod 3	2 years 6 months - 5 years	10:05am	22	2	2
		2:40pm	12	2	2
Pod 4	3-4 years	10:00am	11	1	1
		2:38pm	14	2	2

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 service ensured the child's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated by the following examples:

Basic Needs:

- The children drinks were individually labelled and accessible throughout the day encouraging independence.
- Children were given sufficient time to enjoy their meals facilitating mealtimes to be a social occasion for the children to engage with their peers.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- Staff were observed to engage with children in their play choice using gentle tones encouraging the extension of play and children's ideas.
- Childrens artwork was observed in the care rooms promoting a sense of belonging.
- Staff advised that monthly observations are shared with parents. Partnership with parents and sharing of learning experiences supports children's wellbeing and development.
- Photos were displayed of children's families supporting a link between home environment and childcare service offering sense of security.

The Physical and Material Learning Environment:

- Children had access to a range of resources in the care rooms including construction toys, small figures and resources for imaginative play proving opportunity for a variety of play experiences.
- A roster demonstrated children had daily access to the outdoor area which contained a slide and climbing frame providing for fundamental gross motor movements.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

1. Children in Pod 4 were not given adequate time to engage in an activity as instructed by the staff on the day for example following circle time staff instructed the children to go to the cosy corner and take a book while the next activity was prepared. Children were observed attempting to get books when the staff member began calling them back to the activity tables just seconds later. Six children did not have time to engage with a book before being called for the next activity. Children require adequate time to complete activities to ensure they don't feel pressure and the support familiarity and predictability in their daily routine.

- The books in Pod 4 were not displayed in an easily accessible way to support children's engagement with early literacy experiences. Books were observed to be stored in a plastic box between two sofa's in the cosy area. This restricted access when children tried to access the books together and limited visibility as to what books were available. Books should be displayed in such a way as to promote engagement and be easily accessible to the children in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- Training was conducted with staff regarding appropriate time given to children to transition between one activity to another and how to foster a positive and supportive environment for learning and play.
- A book holder has been put in place to display the books appropriately.

Preventive Action

- Training has been provided. Local management will ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 19 going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of books.
- Staff sign off on training.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have been addressed.

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 main entrance was securely locked with a buzzer system when the inspectors arrived. This prevented children from exiting unsupervised and unauthorised persons from gaining entry to the service.
- Window restrictors were observed in place.
- Radiators were observed to be mounted at head height and out of reach of children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children.
- High shelving was securely mounted to the wall.

Infection Control:

- Children in Pod 3 were observed washing their hands before a mealtime.
- Warm running water and liquid soap were available in sanitary areas to support hand hygiene.
- Tables were appropriately cleaned following mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored out of reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A cloth towel was hung on the back of the toilet door of Pod 3 and observed to be used for hand drying this is not in line with HSPC guidance for hand drying and posed a risk of cross contamination.
2. Children lunches brought from home containing perishable items such as yogurts, cheese and ham were observed to be stored in their bag and not refrigerated. This is posed a risk of bacteria forming and is not in line with the food and nutrition guidelines for pre-school services.
3. Children in Pod 2 did not wash their hands after playing outdoors, this posed an infection control risk.
4. The sofa cover in Pod 3 and sofa in Pod 4 was observed to be torn and frayed this prevented effective cleaning.

Administration of Medication:

5. A staff member was unaware of the correct dosage of medication to be administered to a child with an allergy. This posed a potential risk of incorrect administration. It is acknowledged a care plan was available for the child.

Fire Safety:

6. A gate located in the garden area, which forms part of the fire evacuation route for two care rooms was observed to be locked with a padlock. Although a key was available in a coded key box mounted to the wall adjacent to the gate three staff members were not aware of the code to access the box and the lock was observed to have some rust present and was difficult to open. This may impede the safe evacuation of the children in the event of an emergency. An immediate action notice was issued on the day of the inspection.
7. Staff sign in and the transition log of children who moved care room on the morning of the inspection was not updated in a timely manner. The following was observed:
 - A staff member who signed into Pod 3 at 9:30am was not on the premises when the inspectors arrived at the service. The staff member returned to the premises at 11:00am.
 - Children who transitioned room in Pod 2 at 11:00am did not have an updated record when reviewed by the inspector at 11:40am.
 - Children who transitioned room at 11:00am in Pod 3 did not have an updated record when reviewed by the inspector at 11:24am.

This posed a potential risk of hindering safe evacuation of the premises and of incorrect information being provided to the fire services in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

1. The cloth towel was removed from the toilet in Pod 3.
2. Staff have been reminded about the importance of storing children's lunches in the fridge.
3. Staff have been reminded of the importance of handwashing following play time in the garden.
4. The sofas in Pod 3 and Pod 4 have been replaced.

Administration of Medication:

5. All staff have been instructed in the importance of administering the correct dose of medication and to familiarise themselves with the required dosage on regular basis.

Fire Safety:

6. The lock in system has been changed in accordance with the Immediate Action Notice issued of the subject of the previous correspondence.
7. Staff have been instructed regarding the importance of completing the transfer log of children from one room to another in a timely and professional manner to ensure accuracy of registers.

Preventive Action

Local and Senior Management will ensure compliance with Regulation 23 during the course of visits and inspections of the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- Staff sign off on training.
- Photographic evidence of new sofas.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff sign off on training.

Fire Safety:

- Staff sign off on training.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

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) The registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills was maintained in the service. The record showed that fire drills were conducted monthly and the last one recorded was on the 6th February 2024.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was available for review in the service. The record showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 21st December 2023 while the smoke alarms were last serviced on 20th March 2023.

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 for the number of children in attendance.