

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: 10/07/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	28
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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 T. Nelson
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 the service 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 2 was closed on the day of the inspection.

Pod 1 and the studio cater to school aged children. Pod 2 is used for both preschool and afterschool children. 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 eleven staff to work within the service including the person in charge, deputy person in charge and six EYP a cook and two school aged practitioners who were observed working with early years children on the day of inspection. An additional six staff are employed to work with school aged attending the premises. A company director attended the service to help facilitate the inspection. The registered provider does not work directly with the children attending 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

1. Regulation 9(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4), (7)(a) Management and Recruitment.
2. Regulation 11(1), (2) Staffing Levels.
3. Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) Records in relation to the Preschool Service.
4. Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child
5. Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child.
6. Regulation 25 First Aid.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Pod 3 and Pod 4.

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 company director, 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.*

(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 if required.
 - (b) A review of the staff roster and discussion with management demonstrated that a designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises the week of the inspection for the duration of the opening hours of the service. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived.
 - (c) The service had a management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with management showed that there are currently 11 staff employed. The files of 9 adults were reviewed as part of the inspection process, 6 staff who had commenced employment since the last inspection, two staff members used for cover whose files were not previously reviewed and one company director who attended the service on the day. Garda vetting disclosures for 3 existing staff were also reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider has completed the following checks:
- (a) Eleven written and validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Seven written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 12 staff members. 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 6 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to show that the procedures required under (2) has been completed prior to the start date of all staff members.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that 6 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) There was no evidence available to show that two staff who worked directly with preschool 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.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All of the service preschool staff are qualified, and their qualifications are on file. A number of children who were moving to our afterschool room this year were in the care of afterschool staff for a short period of time on the day of inspection. In future Regulatory Notice EYI-RN11.1 issued in February 2025 will be adhered too. Management have been made aware of the relevant regulatory notice and advised to comply with it in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

None

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(4) has been addressed.

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) There were 29 preschool children being cared for by 7 adults on the morning of the inspection. The person in charge was available in supernumerary capacity to assist in care rooms.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct during the inspection. Although ratios were correct it was observed that unqualified staff were providing direct care, this is detailed under regulation 27.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (h) Attendance books to record the arrival and departure of children on a daily basis where available. These records were not accurately maintained on the day of the inspection. Further information is detailed under Regulation 23.
- (i) A staff roster was available.

Non-Compliance Information

- (j)
 1. The service was observed to have two types of form in use to record medication administration. One form type in use did not include a section for parents to sign to confirm they had been informed of medication administration. This posed a potential risk of sharing inaccurate information resulting in a safety risk to children.

2. The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for medication administration. A sample of 13 forms were reviewed and 8 were observed incomplete. The incomplete records did not include a parent's signature confirming they had been informed of the medication administration. Of the 8 incomplete forms reviewed 7 of these records were completed on the template form that did not include a space for parents' signature. This posed a potential risk of sharing inaccurate information resulting in a safety risk to children.

(k)

1. The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for accidents and incident. A sample of 15 forms were reviewed and 7 were observed to be incomplete.
 - Two records did not include the child's full details.
 - Five records did not include the date of the parents' signature to show they were informed of the accident.

This posed a potential impact of sharing inaccurate information resulting in a safety risk to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(j) Points 1 and 2

Updated forms are now in use at the service. The outdated forms have been withdrawn. Management has informed staff to fully complete all relevant records and to ensure that the signatures of all concerned are adhered thereto.

(k) 1. Training has taken place with all staff with regard to the completion of incident and accident forms. Staff have been advised to ensure that the forms are completed in full, including the full names of children and the signature of the parents obtained. Local, regional and senior management will regularly inspect all forms to ensure that they are completed in full.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Template forms.
- Record of staff training.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 has been addressed.

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 to be in place to support the children attending:

- Mealtimes were observed to be social occasions and children were given ample time to enjoy their meal. A four-week service menu was available to review, and staff advised how food is supplied and prepared by the service for children attending full day care. The main meal on the day of inspection was a shepherd's pie with vegetables and mashed potatoes. Children were given drinks with their meal and gently encouraged by staff to try the vegetables.
- Children's privacy during toileting was supported with the use of individual cubicles with doors and staff offered assistance as needed.
- Drinks were stored on low level shelving and accessible to children throughout the day.
- Children were observed to access the outdoor play area. Staff ensured children wore sun protection and brought drinks to outside during playtime.
- Children in Pod 3 were observed to move freely around the room selecting toys and equipment which was suitable to the age and stage of children present in the room.
- Staff joined the children at their level during play and engaged them in stories by asking questions and allowing opportunity for the children to discuss.

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 staircase had a low-level handrail to assist children.
- Fruit was observed to be appropriately sliced for children.
- Materials and equipment were observed well maintained and suitable for use.
- There were no trailing flexes observed.
- Window restrictors were fitted.
- Cleaning products were stored out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- Windows were open for ventilation throughout the building allowing air to circulate.
- Electric hand dryers, dispensed soap and warm water were present in the sanitary areas to support hand hygiene practices.
- In Pod 3 the cleaning record including items such as the doors, toilets and equipment was observed completed up to date.
- Children were supported to wash their hands before mealtimes and following toileting.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was labelled and stored out of reach of children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation routes were observed clear of obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An ambient care room temperature between 18-22°C was not maintained in Pod 3 where children over the age of three were playing. The following was observed:
 - At 10.55am the temperature was 23.1°C
 - At 12.32pm the temperature was 25.6°C
 - At 2.05pm the temperature was 26.3°C

It is acknowledged that staff took measures to help reduce the temperature such as lowering blinds, opening windows and using a plug in air cooler. Management arranged for a second plug in air cooler for the care room and informed the inspectors it arrived at 2.30pm. The temperature of the care room was observed to reduce after the use of the second air cooler.

2. Six of nineteen suncreams stored in a box were not individually labelled. This posed a potential risk of skin irritation if a cream was wrongly administered to a child.

Administration of Medication:

3. The care plan for a child was not readily available or easily accessible for all staff in the event of an emergency. The availability of detailed care plans provides clear guidance to staff on when medication is required and how to administer, reducing the risk of delayed administration in the event of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

4. Attendance records were not maintained in a timely manner. At 11.04am a review of attendance records with staff and management demonstrated that three children who were present in the service were not signed in on any roll book. In addition, a fourth child who was present in the service was recorded on a room transfer sheet and not signed in on a roll book. Some staff had advised they would bring only the roll book in the event of emergency evacuation. The service fire safety policy advises all children must be signed in and out accordingly onto the attendance record and that staff members will take the roll book in the event of a fire. This posed a potential risk of hindering safe evacuation from the premises in the event of an emergency.
5. Staff were inconsistent in their understanding and explanation of the services fire evacuation procedures. Staff informed the inspectors of varying approaches of how children are accounted for in the event of an evacuation. Some staff referenced the use of a room transfer sheet and roll book while other referred to only a roll book. This posed a potential risk of hindering safe evacuation from the premises in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Additional air conditioning units have been supplied and are now available at the premises. Management will ensure that sufficient air temperature control units are in place at all times.

- Training has taken place with staff advising them that all suncreams should contain the name of the child to whom it is to be administered. Local management will verify that all suncreams are labelled with the child's name before use, and senior management will monitor ongoing compliance with Regulation 23 to prevent future occurrences.

Administration of Medication:

- Copies of all care plans, containing relevant and up-to-date information, will be kept in each room to ensure staff have access to them at all times. To prevent recurrence, local management will review care plans regularly for accuracy and ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 23.

Fire Safety:

- Training has taken place with staff regarding the completion of attendance records. All records will be completed in a timely manner. Management will conduct regular audits of attendance records and provide refresher training to ensure all information are completed on time and accurately in line with regulatory requirements.
- Detailed training has taken place with all staff regarding the evacuation of children in the case of a fire. A fire drill has been conducted, and clear guidance has been given to staff regarding how children are to be accounted for in the event of an evacuation. Local Management will schedule and record regular fire drills, ensuring all staff are confident in evacuation procedures and in accurately accounting for every child during an emergency. Senior Management will ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 23 going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.
- Record of staff training.

Administration of Medication:

- None.

Fire Safety:

- Record of staff training.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 has 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) A review of available documents and conversation with management demonstrated that a person qualified in First Aid Responder training was available during the operational hours of the service to the children attending the pre-school on the day of inspection.

(2) (a)(b) An adequately equipped first aid box was available and easily accessible to staff if required and was stored out of reach of children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

1. The registered provider did not ensure that children were adequately supervised at all times during the day. On the morning of the inspection at 10.38am six preschool children were under the supervision and care of unqualified staff. Management advised the children were on a settling in period that morning with the afterschool group, the children were observed in their main care rooms at 12.00pm after returning from the afterschool group.

This is in breach of the Early Years regulatory notice Definition of Enrolment in a School Age Service February 2025 which outlines the decision of the early years inspectorate; criteria for recognising a school-age and the time frame for settling in periods of 10 working days before the start of school.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Management has been instructed that in future years to fully comply with the definition of enrolment of school age children. A copy of the Regulatory Notice EYI-RN11.1 issued in February 2025 is available at the facility and management have been made aware of the contents of same. Local and senior management will ensure that this regulatory Notice is complied with in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

- None.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 27 has been addressed.