

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	Tu2015FL169		
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare		
Address of Service:	Unit 7, Rosemount Business Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D11 NN12		
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	04/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	79	PM 78
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. Griffin		
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 childcare is a privately operated full day care service located in an industrial area in North Dublin. The service is one of 19 operated by the registered provider. The service is based in a two-storey converted industrial unit and is comprised of seven care rooms, six of which were open on the day of inspection. The care rooms which were open are Wobbler room 1 catering for children aged 12-18 months, Wobbler room 2 catering for children aged 1-2 years, Toddler room 1 catering for children aged 2-3 years, Playschool room catering for children aged 2.5-3.5 years, Junior Montessori room catering for children aged 3-4 years and the Senior Montessori room catering for children aged 4-5 years. The service also has a kitchen and office. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the side of the premises. The service also operates a registered school aged childcare.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 24 staff including the person in charge, deputy person in charge, chef, cleaner, and bus driver. There were 21 staff present on the day of the inspection 17 of which were observed working with early years children including the person in charge and a regional manager who arrived at the service after the inspectors.

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 16 Record in Relation to a Pre-school Service, Regulation 19 Health Welfare and development of Child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler room 1, Wobbler room 2, Toddler room 1 and Toddler room 2.

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, regional manager, 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 as needed.
- (b) The designated deputy was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.
- (c) Inspectors' discussions with staff and a review of documentation demonstrated that there was a clearly defined management structure in the service should the named person in charge be unavailable.
- (2) A discussion with the person in charge and review of available documents showed that three new staff had commenced employment since the last inspection in August 2023. The files of these three staff were reviewed along with a Garda vetting disclosure which our records showed had expired since the previous inspection.
- (a)(b) Six written and verified references were available for three staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four 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 three staff members who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (3) A review of three new staff files demonstrated that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed to their role and having contact with children attending the service.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that three staff members 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.

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

- In the Wobbler 1 room two staff were caring for 7 children aged 1 year – 18 months.
- In the Wobbler 2 room two staff were caring for 10 children aged 1-2 years.
- In the Toddler 1 room two staff were caring for 12 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Toddler 2 room 2 staff were caring for 11 children aged 2-3 years.
- In the Playschool room 2 staff were caring for 12 children aged 2.5 – 3.5 years.
- In the Junior Montessori room 1 staff member was caring for 7 children aged 3-4 years.
- In the Senior Montessori room 3 staff cared for 20 children aged between 4-5 years.

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:

- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*

(f) the opening hours and fees;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(b) The service Tusla certificate was displayed within the service and detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide care.

(c) (d) (e) (f) The statement of purpose and function, outlined the adult: child ratios, the type of care or programme provided and the facilities available; and the opening hours of the service.

(h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.

Non-Compliance Information

(k) A review of accident and incident records showed that all the necessary details are not recorded. The following was observed in a sample of 30 records:

- The manager's signature was not recorded on three records.
- There was no date beside parent/guardian signature on four records.
- There was no parent/guardian signature on two record forms.
- Two forms had not been completed with the child's full name and date of birth.
- One form did not include the date of accident, the child's full name, date of birth of the child and the name of the person filling out the form.

This was a non-compliance on the previous inspections in October 2022 and August 2023. The preventive action provided by the registered provider has not been sustained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

All records were reviewed and corrected. Staff received additional training. Local management will ensure accident and incident forms are signed by management prior to parents signing the documentation.

Preventive Action

Local, Regional and Senior Management will inspect accident and incident books during the course of visits to ensure compliance with all aspects of this regulation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff training log.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance 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-

(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) Basic Needs:

- Meals were freshly prepared daily on site. Staff reported the weekly food menu is shared with parents/guardians.
- Children's drinks were available within their reach throughout the day promoting independence and self-care skills.
- A sense of identity and belonging was fostered for the children with the presence of 'Family Wall', 'Birthday Time', 'All About Me' and the children's artwork on display throughout the service.

Supporting Relationships:

- In the care rooms, a record was kept of the children's daily routine including food and drink intake, nappy changes and sleep times were documented for communication with parents/guardians.
- Staff were observed to sit with children during mealtimes facilitating a social occasion and encouraging children to self-feed assisting when necessary.

Physical and Materials Environment:

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and suitable to the needs of the children. There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in each care room. Cosy areas with soft seating, soft mats and cushions for rest and relaxation were present.

- The layout of the rooms facilitated choice as the toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. Children were observed to take part in free play, small group, and large group work.
- In the Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 care rooms, the play materials available to the children included: Home areas with play kitchens with supporting equipment and play food, range of construction toys to include wooden puzzles, jigsaws, cubes, plastic building blocks, play tools and toolboxes; toys for transporting such as trucks and diggers; music instruments; small characters of animals and dinosaurs; and push along toys. Arts and crafts materials directly accessible to the children.

(1)(b)

- In the Toddler 1 room and Wobbler room 2, children's independence was supported as they were encouraged to take off their own shoes before sleep time.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs, flashcards and storytelling which were observed during the inspection.
- Turn taking and sharing was promoted in the Toddler 2 room, this was evidenced by children working collaboratively together at activity time and taking turns to play with toys.

Non-Compliance Information

19(1)(a) Basic Needs

1. The needs of all children were not met prior to sleep in the Wobbler room 2 between 11:28am-11:54am. While the atmosphere was calm and supportive of the children's needs earlier in the morning before sleep the environment within this room became disordered. Children engaged in potentially risky behaviours and behaviours that required support. The following was observed:
 - Children in cots stood, jumped, and rocked them vigorously.
 - A child in a cot reached out and pulled another child's cot towards them so that the end of the cots were touching.
 - Children in cots became restless and cried.
 - Children in the care room waiting to have their nappy changed before bed pushed one another. A staff member commented on this verbally from the changing bay but could not resolve the issue by intervening as they were engaged in a nappy change at the time. The staff member called for the second staff member who was in the cot room and advised the children she would come and help as one child continued to push another.

Staff in the room intervened with children intermittently but at times did not observe the children's behaviours or support the situation fully as they attended to other task such as nappy changes, cleaning and preparing cots for sleep over responding to children's needs. This is not in line with services safe sleep policy that states staff will help children relax by creating a calm atmosphere.

2. Nappy changing time was not observed to be child led. Evidenced by the following, fourteen children were brought in to a small, enclosed area outside the sanitary room at 10.38am. During this time children were observed to be uncomfortable and four of the children were crying. Two of the children were trying to open the child gate to get back into the main care room. The inspector asked the two staff members why the children who were visibly upset were being kept in a small, confined place. Staff replied that they normally change all the children at one time as it is quicker but today it had not gone smoothly. One staff member took seven of the children back to the care room at 10.43am to read them a story. The other staff member remained in the cubicle to change one child's nappy while six children sat on the floor watching. During this time at 10.46am two of the children took off their shoes and were playing with the nappy bin, one child pushed another child on the floor. The staff member who was in the middle of nappy changing a child had called for the other staff member for help as she could not assist the child who was crying on the floor after been pushed. This was not a comfortable nappy changing experience for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

1. Staff have been reminded of the importance of engaging with children directly to ensure that any potential risky behaviour is addressed immediately and that at least 50 cms of space is provided for between each cot. The importance of close interaction, supervision and our Safe Sleep Policy has also been once again brought to the attention of all staff.
2. A meeting was held with staff reminding them of the importance of compliance with all aspects of the Little Harvard Nappy Changing Policy.

Preventive Action

Local and Senior Management will regularly inspect to ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 19.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff training log.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed, and 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 entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The radiators were observed to have protective covers.
- Electric sockets were observed to have protective covers.
- Glass doors were observed to have visibility strips.

Infection Control:

- Windows were opened throughout the day to allow fresh air to circulate in the care rooms.
- The pedal operated bins in all care rooms and sanitary areas were working.
- Handwashing facilities supporting effective hand hygiene practices included liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Individual bed linen was available to the children and was stored in individually labelled bags

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were knowledgeable of the care needs of a child with emergency medication and the steps to take in the event administration was required.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep needs for children between the age of one to two years of age, were facilitated with access to cots for sleep.
- The sleep needs of children over two years of age were met through the provision of low beds.
- Children were provided with cellular blankets for sleep.
- Shoes and heavy clothing were removed from children before they slept.
- The temperature of the cot room and the Toddler care room where children over 1 year were sleeping was maintained between the requirement of 18°C- 22° C.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

On the day of inspection, the following was observed which posed a risk in injury for children.

1. The radiator cover in the Toddler 1 room was observed to be broken with a nail prodding out.
2. There was a trailing flex from a speaker accessible to children in the Toddler 1 room.
3. Cleaning agents were not stored safely out of the reach to the children, the door of the kitchen positioned just off the Senior Montessori Room was not locked where cleaning agents were observed to be stored at the children's level. It is acknowledged a lock was put on this door after the inspector mentioned the risk to the person in charge.

Infection Control:

The practices in the service did not ensure that effective infection control measures were in place to reduce the spread of inspection. Evidenced by the following:

4. Cots were not placed 50cms apart which posed an infection control risk. This was a non-compliance on previous inspections in October 2022 and August 2023.
5. Seven children in Toddler 1 room did not have their hands washed before snack time at 11am.
6. During nappy changing time staff were observed to repeatedly touch the pedal operated bin with their hands while disposing of nappies and hand towel paper.
7. While wearing the gloves used for nappy changing a staff member was observed to assist two children with hand washing.
8. There was no toilet roll in the sanitary area for Toddler rooms 1&2 from 12:11pm to 3:27pm in one of the two toilet cubicles observed to be used by children.

Administration of Medication:

- Expired antifebrile medication was observed in the Wobbler 1 fridge. This is not in line with service policy that states any expired medication will be returned to parent or guardian and recorded in the medication diary.

Fire Safety:

- During sleep time in the Toddler 1 Room the emergency exit was obstructed. Low beds were observed to be placed in a way which restricted movement in the room and posed a potential tripping hazard.

- One labelled emergency exit was observed to be obstructed by three sleep mats with sleeping children placed directly in front of the exit.
- Four sleep beds were positioned less than 50cm apart which impeded a clear walkway through the care room.

Fire exits need to be unobstructed and walkways to be kept clear to ensure the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The radiator has been repaired.
- The speaker has been removed from the room.
- A lock has been placed on the door and cleaning products are stored out of children reach.

Infection Control:

- Management inspected the cot room and have ensured cots are 50cm apart.
- Staff have been reminded of the importance of handwashing.
- Staff have been retrained in hygiene practices during nappy changing.
- Staff have been advised on the correct procedure for use of gloves.
- Staff have been advised to replace toilet rolls as soon as necessary.

Administration of Medication:

- The expired medication was removed immediately and returned to the child's parent/guardian. Notices are now in place to remind staff of the importance of checking medication expiry dates.

Fire Safety:

10. Immediately repositioned the sleep mats and beds to ensure the emergency exit was unobstructed. Sleep beds were adjusted to ensure a minimum of 50cms between each bed, providing a clear walkway through the care room. A room inspection was conducted to ensure all emergency exits and walkways were clear and unobstructed.

Preventive Action:

Local and senior management will inspect the service to ensure compliance across regulation 23.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Staff training log.

Administration of Medication and Fire Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the 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 six adults were trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) & (b) The first aid boxes which were easily accessible to adults and available on the premises were suitably equipped.