

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:	02/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	60	PM 63
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes & C. Harte		
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 17 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 1.5-2 years, Toddler room 1 catering for children aged 2-2.5 years, Playschool room catering for children aged 2.5-3 years, Junior Montessori room catering for children aged 3-3.5 years and the Senior Montessori room catering for children aged 3-5 years. The service also has a kitchen and office. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 18 staff including a cook and a cleaner, fourteen of whom were present on the day of inspection. Two area managers and a staff member from another branch attended the service on the day of inspection to provide cover for lunchbreaks. The registered provider does not work 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler room 1, Wobbler room 2 and Toddler room 1.

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 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 a person to deputise in their absence. A review of the roster and conversation with staff showed that the person in charge or a deputy is present on the premises during the opening hours of the service. The deputy 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 management showed that there are currently 18 staff employed in the service. The files of these staff and the files of three staff who attended the service on the day of inspection to assist in the care rooms were reviewed.

- (a)(b) The required number of references were available.
- (c) Garda vetting was available for all 21 staff members.
- (d) Police vetting was available in relation to nine staff members who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that 18 staff who worked directly with the children in the service 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

- (2)(d) Police vetting was not available in relation to three staff who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months.
- (4) Evidence was not available to show that one staff member 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. It is acknowledged that a letter from the college in which the person studied was available which confirmed the course would be complete in June 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(d)
- Staff member 1- A review of travel dates showed that they did not live in another country for more than 6 months.
- Staff member 2- Police vetting has been requested and is in process.
- Staff member 3- Police vetting has been requested.
- Management and staff from our HR department will ensure all police clearances are sought and in place before employment is commenced.
- (4) Staff member completed her training in June but was awaiting her certification. Management will ensure that transcripts are in place prior to staff starting, this was an oversight, as the service should have applied for a temporary arrangement for student to work in settings during the summer period per email from Tusla on the 8th of June 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 9 (2)(d) in relation to one staff member and Regulation (9)(4). The registered provider has made documented attempts to obtain vetting for the other two staff, regulatory compliance remains outstanding until this vetting is obtained and kept on file at the service.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) Ratios were not maintained at all times throughout the day for example;

Room	Time	Age & number of children	Adults present	Adults required
Toddler Room 1	12.11-2:00pm	10 children (2 aged 1-2 years old) (8 aged 2-3 years old)	1	2
Playschool room	12:38-2pm	15 children (11 aged 2-3 years old) (4 aged 3-5 years old)	1	3

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) Roster has been updated and is being followed to ensure adequate staffing during sleep time in the toddler room 1 and playschool room. Management has updated the roster and will ensure all rooms are maintaining ratios throughout the day. Senior management will conduct audits on a regular basis to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

The staff roster including break cover was reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 11.

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:

- (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

(j) The service maintained a record of medication administered to the children in the service. The sample reviewed were complete in full, with all necessary details recorded.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) The roster did not reflect the staffing in the service for example;
- Three staff listed had ceased employment; two of which had not worked in the service since 2022 the other ceased employment in June 2023.
 - One staff member listed does not work during the summer months.
 - Annual leave of three staff was not recorded on the roster.
 - Four core staff who have recently commenced employment and were present on the day of inspection were not recorded on the roster.

(k) A review of the accident and incident record showed that all the necessary details are not recorded on each record and the parents are not provided with a copy of the report in line with the service policy. The following was recorded in a sample of 15 records;

- The manager signature was not recorded on 12 records.
- The parent signature was not recorded on one record.
- One record from an accident which occurred the morning before inspection had not been completed with the following information; service name, date of accident, surname of child or the parent signature.

This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in October 2022. The preventative action provided by the registered provider has not prevented the issue recurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(i) Roster has been reviewed and updated with management and senior management. Senior management will conduct audits to ensure that the roster is updated on a weekly basis.

(k) All accident and incident reports will be communicated to management after an accident or incident occurs and management will sign off on accidents and incident forms then. Management will check on all accident and incident reports on a daily basis to ensure all are completed correctly and signed by staff member, parent and management. Senior management are concerned that this non-compliance has re-occurred. Monthly inspections will be carried out by the senior management team to ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 16.

Supporting documentation submitted

The staff roster and minutes of a team meeting were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances under Regulation 16.

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:

- A warm and welcoming atmosphere was evident on arrival in the service with staff and children engaged in a range of activities during the initial visit to the care rooms.
- Children were supported with self-care tasks and care was given to their appearance for example children were supported to clean their noses and hands and faces were observed to be washed following mealtimes.
- Nappy changing was a relaxed positive experience which was done on a set schedule and as needed to ensure the comfort of the child.
- Heavy clothing and shoes were removed before naptime to ensure the children's comfort.
- Transitions were observed to be calm and organised in Wobbler room 2 and Toddler room 1. In Toddler room 1 the low beds were prepared in one area of the room before children sat down to eat lunch. When the children finished lunch one staff member settled them into their beds while the other staff member tidied up after lunch. This ensured the transition to naptime was calm and relaxed for the children.

Physical and materials environment:

- Individual boxes and coat hooks were available and labelled for storage of the children's items.
- A range of photos of the children engaged in activities and children's artwork was displayed throughout the care rooms which promoted the children sense of achievement and belonging.
- Children were supported and encouraged to engage in a range of activities throughout the day including sensory play, songs and music.

Supporting Relationships:

- Interactions between staff and children were observed to be kind, caring and playful. Staff were observed comforting children who were settling into the service while supporting them to interact with their peers.
- Staff were observed to be knowledgeable with regard to the children's needs, preferences and dispositions for example staff spoke in detail about the care needs of one child who was receiving therapeutic support.
- Staff record information about the children throughout the day including what food they eat, nappy changes and sleep. Staff discussed the service open door policy and the daily handover given to parents each day about their child.
- Staff were observed to be supportive and warm toward a parent who collected their child early on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Sleep was not observed to be child led and staff advised the children have designated sleep times for example, a child in Wobbler room 1 was observed to be woken from their sleep at 11:36am as the children in Wobbler room 2 were preparing for sleep in the cot room while in Wobbler room 2 a child was observed to fall asleep at the table at 11am. Staff advised that the child does this every day but once they wake the child he/she is fine to eat lunch and that the child can't be put to sleep as the cots are in use. This practice is not in line with the service policy which states that the child's routine and choice will be recognised in relation to sleep.
2. In Wobbler room 1 two children were observed to be contained to a low chair with table attachment for an excessive period of time. The two children were placed in the chairs having woken from sleep at 10:53am and 10:59am respectively. Staff advised this was earlier than they would normally wake. The chairs were placed near a wall mounted toy for entertainment until 11:15am when they were moved to the table where no toys were provided until 11:22am when lunch was served. The children were then removed from the highchairs at 12:25pm and 12:28pm respectively. Highchairs should not be used to contain or restrict the movement of children for periods of more than 15 minutes outside of mealtimes.
3. Drinks were not accessible to the children in Wobbler Room 1 or Wobbler room 2 and were not provided in a timely manner when children were eating for example in Wobbler room 1 two children were provided with a drink 7 minutes after receiving their lunch, 11 minutes later a further five children still had not received their drink while in Wobbler room 2 two children had finished eating and left the table before drinks were provided.

- An adequate selection of books was not available to the children in Wobbler room 1 or Wobbler room 2 for example four books were available on the bookshelf for use eight children present in Wobbler room 2 while the books in Wobbler room 1 were not accessible to the children as they were stored on the window ledge above the children's reach. Unlimited access to books supports children's independence and ability to choose activities while also supporting their cognitive development.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Staff were spoken to regarding the importance of demand / child led sleep and that children should not be woken during sleep period, extra cots have been placed in our wobbler 2 room to ensure that demand sleep can be facilitated throughout the day. Training has been conducted with our staff regarding our sleep policy.
- Training has taken place with our staff to ensure that this cannot occur again in the future. Staff are aware that children should not be placed in chairs for long periods of time.
- Drinks are now placed on a trolley and table at a low level in our wobbler room 1 and 2 which are easily accessible to the children at all times. Staff have been spoken to about the importance of having drinks available to the children during all mealtimes and throughout the day.
- New books have been placed in all our classrooms. Books in our wobbler room 1 and 2 are accessible to all children within the classroom at all times, as all books are now placed in a box on the floor and on low level shelving. Local and regional management will ensure that books are always accessible to children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos and training records have been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 19.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that adequate and suitable furniture, materials, and equipment were available in the care rooms. The following was observed;

- Tables and chairs which were an appropriate size and suitable to the age and stage of development of the children were available.
- Low shelving was provided for storage of toys and materials.
- A wide variety of toys and equipment which were grouped thematically were available in the care rooms.
- The outdoor area was fitted with large wooden structures which promoted a range of play experiences.

Non-Compliance Information

1. A number of battery-operated toys were observed to not be working for example;
 - Nine of 11 battery operated toys in Wobbler room 1.
 - Three electronic books in both Wobbler room 2 and Toddler room 1.
 - Two large cars in Wobbler room 2.

This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in October 2022. The preventative action provided by the registered provider has not prevented the issue recurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All battery-operated toys have been removed in our wobbler room 1 and replaced with non-battery operating toys. Management have removed all battery-operated toys from our classrooms. Particular emphases will be placed on complying with all aspects of regulation 21.
2. All electronic books in our wobbler rooms and toddler room have been removed and have been replaced by non-electronic books. Management have removed all battery-operated toys from our classrooms. Particular emphases will be placed on complying with all aspects of regulation 21.
3. Two large cars in our wobbler room 2 – batteries have been replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff meeting notes have been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 21.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service has a healthy eating policy and operates a three-week menu containing a variety of food. All food is provided by the service and prepared daily by the service chef. The menu includes three meals and one snack; breakfast is served from 7-9am, lunch is served at 11am, dinner is served at 2 pm and a snack is served at 4pm. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to eat ham, turkey and cheese ciabattas for lunch and cod goujons, mashed potatoes and vegetables for dinner. Children were observed to eat fruit after their ciabattas in Wobbler room 1 and Toddler room 1. Additional portions of food were available for children who wanted more. Mealtimes were observed to be a relaxed social occasion and children were provided with time to eat their food. Specific dietary requirements and parental preferences were catered to in relation to food for example a dairy alternative is provided.

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 was secured with a coded lock which prevented unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- An external door from Toddler room 1 which opened into the carpark was secured with a thumb lock which prevented unauthorised persons accessing the service and prevented children leaving the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors were fitted with high handles which prevented children leaving care room unsupervised.
- Water was thermostatically controlled to prevent injury from scalding.
- Nappy changing units were sturdy and suitable for use.
- Cleaning spray was stored out of reach of the children.
- Blind cords were secured appropriately.

Infection Control:

- The nappy changing procedure was completed in line with best practice and the service policy.
- Nappy changing and sanitary areas were maintained in a clean manner.
- Childrens beakers were individually labelled.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes and washed daily.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were aware of the procedure for safe sleep and maintained regular physical checks of children while they slept. These checks were recorded promptly.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- Staff were aware of the procedure for evacuation in the event of a fire emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The plastic on the entryway to one of the playhouses in the garden was broken and had sharp edges which posed the risk of injury to the children.

Infection Control:

2. Staff were observed using their hand to open the pedal operated bin the nappy changing area in wobbler room 2. This is an infection control risk and posed a risk of cross contamination.
3. The pedal operated bin in the nappy changing area in Wobbler room 1 was not observed to open when the pedal was pressed. Pedal operated bins are required for infection control purposes. A second bin was available in the room however this was not in use on the day of inspection.
4. The mat used for nappy changing in Wobbler room 2 was cracked in the centre exposing the inner lining. This did not allow for easy and hygienic cleaning of the mat.
5. A roll of paper towel was not hygienically dispensed in the nappy changing area of Wobbler room 2 posing a risk of cross contamination due to excessive touching of the inner tubing.
6. Cots were not placed 50cms apart which posed an infection control risk. This is recognised on the cot room checklist by staff having been marked with an X each day. This was a non-compliance on the previous inspection in October 2022. The preventative action provided by the registered provider has not prevented the issue recurring.

Safe Sleep:

7. An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was not maintained in rooms where children were sleeping. It is noted that the inspector's calibrated thermometer was at variance to the service thermometer and showed a temperature of up to 2 degrees higher. The following temperatures were recorded;
 - Toddler room 1 was 21.6°C at 12:04pm and 20.4°C at 12:35pm following intervention from the staff member to cool the room.
 - The Cot room was 22°C at 10:42am and 22.2°C at 12:55pm.
 - The Playschool room was 22.3°C at 12:11pm.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Playhouse in garden was removed by our maintenance team during the inspection. Management will remove any broken equipment in the classroom or garden area to the outside area beside our general waste bins to ensure no risk can occur to any child.

Infection Control:

2. Staff have been instructed that the opening of the bins should be foot operated only. The bins were replaced immediately with bigger foot pedal bins.
3. Pedal bin in wobbler room 1 was replaced immediately. Staff will ensure that they inform management straight away of any broken bins to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
4. Nappy changing mat was replaced immediately. Staff have been spoken to regarding informing management of any broken equipment in the classrooms, nappy, toilet and garden area.
5. Blue roll dispenser has been placed in our wobbler room 1 and 2. Management will ensure that the blue roll is dispensed correctly to reduce the risk of cross contamination.
6. One cot has been removed from the cot room, and placed into our wobbler room 2, alongside another cot. Our Safe sleep policy and the completion of cot room paperwork has been subject to the re-training of our staff. Please see agenda of staff meeting and review of policy and paperwork training card.

Safe Sleep:

7. Additional air conditioning units have been placed in the cot room, toddler room and playschool room to ensure that the correct temperatures are being maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos and staff training records have been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.