

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE081
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard
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Address of Service:	Beech Park Easton Road, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 E683
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	19/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	80	PM	78
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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	NA
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Description of service

Little Harvard (Beech Park) is 1 of 21 early years services operated by the registered provider. It is located in a two-storey purpose-built premises located in Leixlip, Co. Kildare. The service is registered to accommodate children aged one to six years, on a sessional, part-time and full-time basis. It is open from 07:00 to 18.30 Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:00 to 12:00. The premises includes eight care rooms, two sleep rooms and an outdoor area. Seven care rooms were in use on the day of the inspection.

Staffing

There are 20 staff members employed to work in the service including a chef, a cleaner, a service manager and a deputy service manager. Sixteen staff members are employed to work directly with the children. An area manager and a general manager are employed to oversee the management of the service along with several other Little Harvard services. They also provide relief/break cover in the service as required. Fourteen staff members were allocated to work directly with the children at any given time on the day of the inspection. The general manager and person in charge arrived during the inspection to facilitate the inspection and provide break cover.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(1)(k) - Record in relation to pre-school service, regulation 19(1)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child, regulation 23 – Safety and regulation 27 – Supervision. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms.

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

The inspection was undertaken due to information received on 9 May 2025 and 14 May 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the management team, 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*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The deputy person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived at the service. The person in charge arrived during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a person who could deputise to be present at all times of opening.

(2) The inspection focused on records for 23 adults which included the area manager, the general manager and the registered provider in relation to regulation (9)(2)(c). The inspection focused on records for 13 adults employed since the previous inspection in relation to regulations 9 (2)(a), (b) and (d).

(a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to references. A minimum of two references had been sourced from past employers or from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. All references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced for all adults who had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(4) The inspection focused on qualifications for 13 adults employed to work directly with children since the previous inspection. All the adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

(7) (a), (b) & (c) Staff and management reported that inductions are carried out with all new employees. This includes the requirement that staff read the service policies, procedures and statements and undertake required training. A sample of records showed that staff had signed to state they had read and understood the services policies, procedures and statements. Records of inductions were available detailing training and information provided. These were signed by staff members and the manager who provided the induction. Detailed records were available of one-to-one meetings undertaken during the staff members probationary period, identifying strengths and training needs. These were conducted in keeping with the service's induction policy.

Non-Compliance Information

(7)(a), (b) & (c) It is acknowledged that the service manager and staff reported regular supervision meetings are carried out when staff have completed the probationary period. However, there were no records available of the meetings contrary to the staff supervision policy which stated that supervision meetings are recorded by the supervisor and the record is kept in the staff member's file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Supervision forms are now in place and are available in digital form. Management have been instructed to ensure that supervision meetings are conducted once per quarter and that the relevant forms are completed and placed on file. The completed forms will be submitted digitally to our HR department who will monitor compliance with our policy in this regard. Senior Management, during their visits to the facility, will ensure compliance in respect of the completion of supervision forms and the recording and filing of same.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supervision record template.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The inspection focused on the content of the staff training, staff supervision, risk management and accident and incident policies. The policies were clear and comprehensive and detailed procedures covering the required aspects of the service's operation.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. At all times there were at least 14 adults working directly with a maximum of 80 children.

(2) & (4) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff members on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two staff to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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:

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

Compliance Information

(1)(k) Records were available detailing accidents and incidents which had occurred involving children while attending the service.

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 inspectors observed appropriate care practices. The adults demonstrated affection and warmth in their interactions with the children, responding to their cues and speaking kindly to them. They comforted the children when they became upset. A key person approach was used to support children in forming secure attachments. Minor conflicts were managed calmly and promptly using age-appropriate techniques. Transitions from activities to care routines were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next.

The adults supported the children to manage their personal care. They helped them to wash their hands and clean their faces and noses as needed. Children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between when required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Each child had a change of clothes available for use if necessary.

Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in small groups with adults when eating. The adults engaged them in conversation and promoted social skills. Drinks were always available within the rooms and were regularly offered to the children.

The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after lunch. The children slept on low beds or cots depending on their age and stage of development. The children were made comfortable for sleep with their outer clothing and shoes removed and soothers given to those who used them. Staff checked on the sleeping children at ten-minute intervals and remained in the rooms where children slept on low beds. Staff told the inspectors that the children are facilitated to sleep outside of this time if they show signs of tiredness.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. The building and outdoor area was secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire and staff members demonstrated an awareness of fire evacuation procedures. Play equipment was suitable for the ages and stages of children in attendance. Cleaning products and cables were kept out of children's reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

Appropriate measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well-maintained. Daily cleaning schedule records were completed. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff guided children to wash their hands after outdoor play, before meals, after toileting and nappy changing. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with the service's nappy changing procedure, minimising the risk of spreading infection. Waste was properly managed using pedal-operated bins, ensuring hands-free disposal.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Incident records reviewed for Wobbler 1 room showed recurring patterns of biting in April and May 2025. There were no records of risk assessments or measures taken to minimise the number of incidents. This was at variance with the services accident and incident policy which stated that "a risk assessment will be completed following any accident or incident". It was also at variance with the services behaviour management policy which stated "in

the event of a child continuing to repeatedly bite, the manager will speak to the parent/guardian to look at putting a behaviour support plan in place”.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Management have been reminded of the importance of completing risk assessments following incidents of biting. Training has taken place with all staff on the service’s biting policy and procedures. Regional and senior management will ensure that accurate records are being maintained during their regular visits to the facility.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of a completed risk assessment record and staff training records.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed to appropriate in addressing the non-compliance.

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 person with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for at least one trained person to be available to the children at all times of opening.

(2)

(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in conspicuous, easily accessible positions on the premises.

(b) The first aid boxes were available for use at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

Staff maintained continuous supervision of the children throughout the inspection. They monitored the children closely at all times including when eating, sleeping and engaging in play and activities.