

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

USLA 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:	11/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	93	PM	89
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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.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This service is 1 of 22 early years services operated by the registered provider. It is located in a two-storey purpose-built premises in Leixlip, Co. Kildare. The service is registered to accommodate children aged one to six years, on a full day, part-time and sessional basis. It opens 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.

Staffing

There are 22 staff members employed to work in the service including a chef, a cleaner, a service manager and two supervisors. Seventeen staff members are employed to work directly with the children. A team of senior managers are employed to oversee the management of the service along with the company's other services. Seventeen staff members were allocated to work directly with the children on the day of the inspection with the managers providing assistance and break cover. The operations manager and one regional manager arrived during the inspection and were present for the closing meeting.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1) (b) – Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler 1 and Toddler 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the managers, 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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.*
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises throughout 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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(c) The service had a clearly documented management structure. Staff and managers demonstrated an awareness of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) The inspection focused on records for 12 adults who had been employed since the previous inspection.

(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 12 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 nine adults who had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing in the service. All documents were dated prior to the adults start dates.

(4) All 12 adults employed since the previous inspection 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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. There were 17 adults working directly with a maximum of 93 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

The inspectors observed the children engaging in free play and activities within their rooms and the outdoor area. Water stations were available within the rooms, and drinks were offered regularly. Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals and the children sat together in groups when eating. Younger children wore bibs to protect their clothing from becoming soiled or wet. A record of the children's dietary requirements and preferences was available, and staff demonstrated a good knowledge of these. Staff assisted the children to clean their faces and hands after meals and when required.

The adults supported the children to use the toilet as needed. Children wearing nappies had these changed at routine times and promptly when required in between. The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep before dinner. Children were made comfortable for sleep with staff removing their outer clothing and giving soothers to those who used them. Staff reported the children are accommodated to sleep if they show signs of tiredness outside of this time. Transitions between activities were calm and well managed. All staff interactions with children were observed to be kind and gentle. Records were kept which included individual information relating to the children's nappy changes, diet and sleep for sharing with parents on collection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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:

Entrances/exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Emergency exits were kept clear. Materials and equipment were suitable to the age of the children attending. Hazardous items including cables and cleaning products were secured out of children's reach. Monthly fire drill records were available, and staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to evacuate the children safely in the event of a fire.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. Daily cleaning schedules were in place. Toys that children placed in their mouth were sterilised. The sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. The children washed their hands at appropriate times including before eating and after using the toilet. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with the service's infection control procedure. Pedal operated bins were used to manage waste appropriately.

Administration of Medication:

No child received medicine during the inspection. Detailed care plans with parent/guardian consent were available for children who may require medicine whilst attending the service. Staff and management were aware of the information in the care plan and the procedures to administer the medicine safely if required including record keeping. All medicines were stored appropriately and out of children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

All children were aged over one year on the day of the inspection. Children were placed to sleep in cots or low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. Adults remained in the room where children slept on low beds. The adults checked the children at 10 minute intervals and ensured the rooms were maintained within the required temperature range to prevent overheating.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 a recognised certificate in first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of one trained person to always be available to the children.

(2)

(a) The service had suitably equipped first aid boxes which were stored in conspicuous positions.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available to the children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had been carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill record was dated 14 April 2026.
 - (b) Records were available in relation to the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarm. The most recent dates of testing were 13 January 2026 and 9 March 2026 respectively.
- (4) Notices of procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in conspicuous positions.

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

The inspectors observed the children being appropriately supervised at all times.