

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE167
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Avenue, Westfield, Green Lane, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 VYP1
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and S. Quigley
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
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Description of service

This service is one of 22 private early years services operated by the registered provider for children aged 2-6 years. It operates from a two-story, purpose built premises in a housing development in Leixlip, County Kildare. The service opens from 07:00 - 18:30 Monday to Friday with the sessional service provided during term time between 09:00 - 12:00 and 09:15 - 12:15. A school-aged service is also provided. There are five rooms for children, two of which were accommodating pre-school children on the day of inspection due to the mid-term break. An outdoor area is located at the rear of the building.

Staffing

There are 27 staff employed to work in the service including the service manager, school-age staff, two bus drivers, and two cooks. Fifteen staff are employed to work directly with the pre-school children. Four adults were working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection. Two staff and the manager were available to assist and provide break cover. The company also employs an operational manager and two regional managers. One of the regional managers arrived during the inspection and was present for the feedback 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 regional 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) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge and deputy were on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.
- (2)
- (a) & (b) The inspection focused on references for 15 adults employed since the previous inspection dated 24 January 2023. Appropriate references were available for each adult with a record of verification checks carried out by the service.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) The inspection focused on records for 15 adults who were employed since the previous inspection. International police vetting was required and available for 11 of the adults.
- (4) The inspection focused on 12 staff members employed to work directly with pre-school children since the previous inspection. Each adult held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

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.

(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 4 adults working directly with 15 children who were attending on a full-day-care basis. Two staff members and the person in charge were available to assist and provide break cover.

(2) 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 adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for at least two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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 children appeared content during the inspection, engaging in free play and activities. They spent time outdoors and were dressed in coats appropriate to the weather. 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 accessible to the children indoors and outdoors and were provided with meals.

The adults supported the children to manage their personal care. They reminded and assisted them to wash their hands and clean their noses as needed. They provided frequent opportunities for a child who was undergoing toilet training to use the toilet and gently guided the child towards independence. Children wearing nappies had these changed at scheduled times and staff reported they are changed in between if needed. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. The older children used the toilet independently.

Areas with soft seating and mats were available in the rooms for children to rest or take a break from activities. Stackable beds, bed linen and sleep mats were available for children attending the Pre-school 1 room to rest or sleep after dinner.

The adults demonstrated affection and warmth in their interactions with the children, responding to their cues and speaking kindly to them. They were attentive to a child who had a minor accident in the outdoor area, providing comfort and care. Transitions from activities to care routines were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next. Staff made records in relation to the children including the accident that occurred in the outdoor area, nappy changing and meals eaten which they reported they use to inform the parents/guardians on collection.

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:

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children. The entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised entry or children leaving unsupervised. Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for the timely evacuation of children in the event of a fire. Staff reported regular fire drills are undertaken and demonstrated an awareness of fire evacuation procedures including the location of the fire assembly point. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Items that could pose a hazard were secured out of children's reach including cables and cleaning products.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well-maintained. Sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped to support handwashing. Staff guided children to wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing, outdoor play and before meals.

Administration of Medication:

No children received medication during the inspection. Medications were stored in the original packaging out of reach of children. Staff demonstrated an understanding of how to administer medication safely if required. This included obtaining written parent/guardian consent, having a second staff member witness the administration and making a record.

Outing:

The person in charge reported that the children are not taken on outings from the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The bin was not accessible to the staff when changing nappies in the Pre-school 1 sanitary facilities. The changing table, when folded down for use overlapped with the sink. This left no space for the staff to pass between to access the bin which was at the other end of the changing table. A staff member was observed hanging a bag with

a used nappy on the door handle until the changing table was folded back up to allow access to the bin. This practice posed a risk of cross contamination and infection to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

Following the inspection findings, staff were immediately informed of the correct procedure for nappy changing in the Pre-school 1 sanitary facilities. Staff have been instructed that, prior to commencing any nappy change in this room, the nappy disposal bin must be positioned in an accessible location beside the changing table, to ensure safe and hygienic disposal of soiled nappies during the procedure.

All staff have been retrained on the nappy changing policy to reinforce correct procedures and reduce the risk of cross-contamination. Staff have signed the training record to confirm their attendance and understanding of this policy. Management will continue to monitor compliance with this procedure through regular supervision and spot checks to ensure that safe practice is consistently followed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- Nappy changing procedure
- Photograph of sanitary area with bin adjacent to nappy change unit

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address 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) The service had suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in conspicuous positions.

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

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 fire drills that had been carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill record was dated 30 September 2025.

(b) Records were available detailing the firefighting equipment and fire detection system in the service. Records showed that these had been last serviced on 12 and 17 September 2025 consecutively.

(4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations.

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 children were appropriately supervised at all times. This included when playing indoors and outdoors, eating and using the sanitary facilities.