

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2017FL500
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Harvard Creche and Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Holywell, Swords, Fingal, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K67 V076
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	James Hargrave
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	86	PM	61
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. McDonnell and S. McKenna
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Harvard Creche and Montessori is one of several preschool and school aged services which are privately owned by the registered provider. This service is based in a residential area in Co Dublin and the service is registered to provide sessional, part-time time and full-day care to children aged 0-6 years old. The service is located in a two-storey building with the Wobbler, Toddler and four Pre-school rooms located on the ground floor and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) room which is based on the first floor. The service has a dedicated cot room and a kitchen on the ground floor. There are sanitary facilities located on both floors. There are three individual outdoor play areas on the premises and a car park to the front. There is a registered school-age service in operation on the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs 25 staff members. This includes 17 staff who work directly with the children. There was also a person in charge, deputy person in charge and an area managers and regional manager. A relief cover, bus driver and chef were also available.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 26 Fire safety measures and Regulation 28 Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 9, 19, 23, 26, and 28. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler, the Toddler, Preschool 3 and Preschool 4.

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) The deputy person in charge was on the premises at the start of the inspection and remained on site for the remainder of the inspection.
  - (b) A review of the roster for the week of the inspection demonstrated that the designated person in charge or deputy person in charge was in the service at all times during operational hours.
  - (c) Displays in the service and discussions with staff members demonstrated there was a clearly defined management structure to ensure lines of accountability in the event of an emergency.

(2) Following the last inspection on 2 May 2024 a review of the staff roster and staff attendance on the day of inspection demonstrated that there were 12 new staff members. The staff files for these new staff and a visiting member of the management staff were reviewed. The Garda vetting disclosures for the 13 staff members working at the last inspection and the outstanding police vetting for one staff member were also reviewed.

(a) The registered provider had 24 written and validated references available for each of the new 12 staff members. Of these references available, 21 were from a previous employer.

(b) The registered provider had three written and validated references available from a reputable source.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 12 new staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for 13 previous staff members.

(d) A review of the documentation concerning the new staff members' employment history demonstrated that police vetting was not required for one staff member. A translated copy of the police vetting required for the other 12 staff members was available for review. A discussion with management staff and the roster demonstrated that the staff member who had the outstanding police vetting had left the service.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 11 of the new staff members employed to work with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. One of the staff members working with children worked with school age children only as demonstrated by the roster, and therefore a qualification was not required.

### 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the inspectors' unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed when the service was operating to maximum capacity on the day of inspection;

- In the Wobbler room there were two staff members with nine children aged between 1 year 3 months to 1 years 10 months old.
- In the Toddler room there was two staff members with 11 children aged between 2 years and 10 months old to 3 years and 1 month old.
- In Preschool 1 two adults cared for 10 children aged 3 years 4 months to 3 years 10 months.
- In Preschool 2, two adults cared for 16 children aged 3 years 9 months to 4 years 4 months.
- In Preschool 3, two adults cared for 15 children aged 4 years 5 months to 5 years.
- In Preschool 4 two adults cared for 12 children aged 4 years 6 months to 5 years 4 months.
- In Preschool 5 two adults cared for 13 children aged 3 years 5 months to 4 years 11 months.

A staff member arrived to provide relief cover as per the roster. The person in charge and the deputy person in charge was available in a supernumerary capacity. An area manager is also rostered into the service.

(8) Following discussions with staff members and a review of sign in records the inspectors could confirm that two staff members were on the premises at all times.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service. A total sample of 20 child record forms were reviewed, to include children in attendance across all care rooms, and included the required information as detailed at (1) (a) to (j) above.

### 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

##### Basic Needs

The children’s water was accessible to the children within their rooms. On the inspector’s arrival children were eating a snack of pudding in the Wobbler room. The children had bibs on and were encouraged to feed

themselves and were given spoons. Later when the children had their dinner of chilli con carne children were again encouraged to self-fed, whilst staff gave support to the children who required it. Both inspectors observed children being provided with more food after they requested it at dinner time. A staff member was observed changing nappies as required in both the Toddler and Wobbler rooms. At these times the staff member engaged with the children and chatted with them through the process. Following the last inspection children in the Toddler room had outer clothing removed just prior to settling for sleep. The older children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff remaining close by for support if required.

### **Supporting relationships around children**

The family wall in the service was at a low level in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms, making it accessible to the children in the rooms. The staff members discussed daily handovers with parents and there was a written record of the child's routine being completed by staff members throughout the day in all the care rooms. The staff members were observed to interact kindly with the children within their care. In the Wobbler Room the planned theme was animals, a staff member read a relevant story to the children and engaged the children in being the animals in the story. The children in Preschool rooms 3 and 4 were observed to have choices within their play routine, with staff observed to set up areas of interest at the request of the children, for example colouring activities. A key worker system was in place throughout the service, and this was supported by various long- and short-term planning which were available for review.

### **Physical and material environment**

Appropriate relaxation areas were available in the rooms, with cosy areas available in all rooms. Activities and equipment was available on open shelving at a low level for children to access independently which included a range of books and sensory items. The home corners in each of the care rooms, including the Wobbler Room were equipped with a range of material which included food, cutlery and dining items. There were also babies, buggies and clothes available. The service had three outdoor play areas, one which was only used occasionally. The inspectors observed the children enjoying the outdoor play areas to the rear of the service. The larger area of the outdoor area had wooden and plastic climbing structures, wooden kitchens and a covered area, a swing and slide were part of one of the climbing frames. Tyres and large connecting toys were also provided. Another area had ground surface of artificial grass, a small storage area with additional resources to include mats, chairs, digging toys and small trucks. A variety of slides and ride on and push toys were in this area. The third area had concrete and artificial ground surfacing, play materials are taken into this area when it is in use for example chalk.

### 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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system and keypad locks in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- Following the last inspection there was current information regarding the children's allergies in the service. This information was accessible to staff members and there were detailed care plans and in date medication was in place where required. Staff spoken with were aware of the symptoms and actions required as outlined in the care plans.
- Following the last inspection there were no large play items in the rooms that required anchoring.
- Individually labelled sunscreen was applied before children went outdoors to play.
- Blind cords were secured and were not accessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- Stairways were fitted with handrails suitable to the children.

##### Infection Control:

- The inspector observed a sample of nappy changing which supported effective infection control. The inspector observed that staff members followed the service's procedure which included; a new apron and gloves for each change and staff members and children's hands were washed. These procedures were completed before the child was returned to the care room.
- Children's soothers were observed to be in individually labelled containers.
- Children had individually labelled cots/beds for sleep with their own sheets available.
- The inspectors observed that morning snacks taken in from home in Preschools 1,3 and 5 were stored in the fridge. These snacks contained a variety of sandwiches, yogurts, fruits, cheese and crackers.
- The service was visually clean, and staff members discussed cleaning schedules for the service, which included the common areas as well as the care rooms.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Children under 2 years of age were provided with a cot, cellular blanket or sleeping bag for sleep.
- Children over 2 were provided with a mattress for sleep.

- Staff members supervising the children for sleep conducted 10-minute sleep checks on the children and recorded information on a child's breathing, position and colour.
- The ambient temperature whilst children slept was maintained at 16 - 20°C for children under 2 and 18-22°C for those over 2. Staff members were aware of measures required should the temperature increase. There were documented checks in the sleep room of temperature monitoring prior to sleep.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. A risk of injury was observed in the small outdoor area located off Preschool 3, to the side of the premises. A part of the fencing, which was at a child's height was broken and contained sharp edges, and a nail was protruding from this section of the fence, which presented a risk of possible injury to the children. It is acknowledged that this area was not observed in use on the day of inspection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The registered provider replaced the fencing and submitted a photograph of the new fencing in place.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photograph of the new fencing

### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

## 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
  - (b) an employee, and
  - (c) an authorised person.
- (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 record of the fire drill on 17 April 2025 was available for review. The service had maintained a record of monthly fire drills since the last inspection in May 2024.
- (1)(b) The registered provider had evidence of the annual maintenance of the fire alarm system on 9 September 2024 and the fire extinguishers on 26 September 2024.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the rooms sampled on inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 140 children at any one time attending for full-day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026