

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018WW506
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare
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Address of Service:	Kirvin Hill, Saunders Lane, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A67 V9K5
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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 of Inspection:	19/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	70	PM	60
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M Condon & O Quill
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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service is located in a residential area in the village of Rathnew, County Wicklow. The service is registered to provide full day-care, part-time day care and a sessional service to pre-school children who are aged between one year and six years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.00am and 18.30pm. At present five rooms are in use to care for pre-school children namely, Wobbler 1, Toddler 1, Toddler 2, Pre-school 1, and Pre-school 2.

Staffing

A total of seventeen adults are employed which includes the manager, assistant manager and the cook. On the day of inspection twelve adults provided direct care to pre-school children. Another staff member arrived from another service at 10:40 to provide assistance in the Wobbler room and was present for the remainder of the inspection. The manager was also present and available to give assistance in the rooms as needed. Later in the day the Area Manager and Operations Manager arrived and were present in the service 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.

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.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the Registered Provider on 19/11/2025 in relation to a non-compliance identified in relation to Regulation 25 - First Aid. There were certain periods of the day where no adult present who had a current qualification in First Aid Response was present. In addition, there were no staff members who had a current qualification in Paediatric First Aid.

A response from the registered provider was received and accepted 20/11/2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the operations manager, 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

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2) Five new adults were employed since the last inspection. These five files were reviewed.

(a)(b) There were two written and validated references available for five staff members.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for five new adults employed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for five adults employed who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Four adults who were involved in the direct care of children had 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. The fifth adult did not require a qualification in childcare as he worked as a chef.

(7)(a)(b)(c)

It is acknowledged that information regarding the policies and procedures of the service was emailed to each employee prior to starting employment. A written record of induction training and on-going training of each employee was available. A record was available of staff meetings with agenda items set out.

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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children
- (2) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection. There were thirteen adults providing direct care to seventy pre-school children who were cared for in 5 care rooms. The person in charge and the deputy person-in-charge were present to provide assistance in rooms when needed.
- (8)(a) There were at least 2 adults on the premises during the inspection and the staff roster indicated that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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:
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
 - (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

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the information listed above (1)(h) - (k) in relation to 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.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

The inspector observed that staff were attentive to the personal care of the children. The children's nappies were changed routinely and if needed in between. Bibs were provided when eating to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet. Their noses, hands and faces were cleaned when needed. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm individual engagement with the children.

Staff sat with the children when eating. They provided them with help when needed whilst supporting their independence. Drinks of water were offered regularly and were always available.

The children attending the Wobbler room were placed to sleep and comforted while settling. Children attending the other rooms who required sleep slept on sleep mats in their rooms at a designated time. The atmosphere in the rooms while children were sleeping was calm. Children's outer clothing was removed, and blankets were provided. Staff provided the children with reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. The children who had soothers were offered these.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed them by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. The staff comforted the children when they became upset - holding them and talking to them in soft tones.

All children attending the creche spent time in the outdoor area during the day. Staff were observed playing games with them and supervised them while using the toys and equipment provided in the outdoor area. Minor incidences between children were handled well by staff using distraction and re-direction to resolve any issues.

(3) During the inspection no practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were observed in respect of any children attending the service on the day of inspection. During discussion with staff members, it was evident that they had training and knowledge regarding child protection. Written records viewed confirmed that staff training had been completed.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Documentary evidence was available that fire drills were being carried out on a monthly basis as per best practice guidelines.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelving and were inaccessible to the pre-school children.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, a sleep log was maintained every 10 minutes by staff detailing the physical checks carried out on sleeping children under 2 years of age.
- The temperature of the sleep room and the care rooms where children slept was in the acceptable range.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch and after using the toilet. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed and in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures. Pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas and in the care rooms.
- The premises play equipment, and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Each child's soother was stored in individual containers.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained in each care room and the environment was clean.
- Through conversation with staff and records were available it was evident that a procedure was in place to disinfect mouthing toys in the Wobbler room.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. Written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. Medication was stored safely. Staff were aware of the procedure to be undertaken should medication be required.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The toilet seat in the Toddler room was loose on its mounting which posed a risk of a fall to two children attending this room who used the toilet.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Maintenance was made aware of the issue on the day of the inspection, and the toilet seat has been tightened. Local Management will do spot checks and ensure that a similar situation does not occur in the future

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23.

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

(2)(a) The first aid boxes for children were safely stored in an accessible position.

(b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

1. One person in the service had a certificate in First Aid Response. On the day of inspection this person commenced work at 9.30 and finished at 6.30, therefore from opening at 07.00 to 09.30 there was no staff member qualified in FAR.

In addition, no member of staff had a current qualification in Paediatric First Aid.

2. On examination of records during the week commencing of November 3-7, no staff member with a current certificate in First Aid was present daily between 17.30 and 18.30.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. First Aid Response training was completed by four staff members on 22nd November 2025.

2. A minimum of two First Aid Response trained staff will be on duty at all times.

Local Management and our HR Department will monitor the situation and ensure compliance with all aspects of regulation 25.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of certificates of recently completed FAR courses for four staff.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 25.