

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020KE007		
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd		
Address of Service:	Carton Wood, Maynooth, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W23 X8KK		
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	22/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	85	PM 60
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & C. O'Connor Hughes		
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		

Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates on a Monday to Friday basis as part of a multiple. The Early Years' Service is located in a two-storey purpose-built premises. Seven pre-school rooms, a kitchen, a sleep room, a staff room an office and a sluice room are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. The service is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Maynooth, County Kildare.

Staffing

The deputy centre manager, fifteen childcare staff, a cook and a support staff were present on the 22 April 2024. The centre manager who was rostered off returned to the service after the inspection had commenced. The service was supported by the area manager who attended the service after the inspector's arrival and remained on site throughout the remainder of the inspection and the closing meeting. The general manager was present for the closing meeting. The registered provider does not work directly with children and was not present during the inspection.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The scope of the inspection included the wobbler room, playschool room 1 and pre-school room 1 located on the ground floor of the premises and a sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following Regulations.

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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 co-operation of the area manager, centre manager, deputy centre manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection and the general manager who attended the closing meeting.

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.*

(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)

A named person in charge was available in the service. The deputy manager was present upon the inspector's arrival to the service.

(b)

The deputy manager was present throughout the inspection. The area manager arrived at the service after the inspectors commenced the inspection at approximately 10:45 and the centre manager arrived at approximately 11:30. Both remained on site for the remainder of the inspection.

Twenty-eight staff files including the registered provider, second owner of the service, general manager, area manager and child protection and compliance officer were reviewed, and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

- (b)
The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members.
- (c)
A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members.
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 in respect of five staff members who lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
Staff members working directly with children as part of the adult to child ratio held qualifications at levels 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.

(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)
The ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.
- (2)
There were eighty-five children attending the service in the morning supervised directly by fifteen adults. There were sixty children attending the service in the afternoon supervised directly by ten adults.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster indicated that two adults are 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 service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Information for parents was available in a parent handbook in the reception area of the service and contained information in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The centre manager ensured a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Wobbler room, Playschool room 1 and Pre-school room 1

Children attending the ECCE sessions brought their own mid-morning snack from home. For all other children a four-week menu plan was in operation in the service. The snacks and meals were prepared fresh on site by a cook.

The morning snack consisted of a selection of cheese, ham or egg sandwiches with water to drink. The main meal consisted of chicken, mashed potato with a vegetable-based gravy and milk to drink. Bananas, apple and orange segments were prepared for the afternoon snack.

During snacks and meals, the staff sat with small groups of children, providing support and offering assistance as required. Younger children were encouraged to feed themselves.

Sleep for children was facilitated on an individual need's basis. Children under the age of two slept in a dedicated sleep room adjacent to the wobbler room. A staff member remained in the room with the children throughout their period of sleep.

Children were observed to enjoy free play both indoors and outdoors. Activities observed included story time, music and movement, singing and creative play with glitter playdough. Children were observed choosing their own activities supported by staff.

Staff interacted well with the children and were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Children were content with their carers and staff were familiar with each child and their personality.

Good teamwork between the staff was observed. The service worked in partnership with parents. A daily record sheet is used to record information relating to the children's activities and daily life in the service. The service used a "my journey" scrap book which documented the month-by-month journey for the individual children through pictures and narratives.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences were available for all children. Areas of interest were noted in the three pre-school rooms and included home areas, construction areas, arts and crafts, dress up, sensory play and small world items. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016 shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corners.

(b)

A separate cot room for children under the age of two and equipped with eleven standard cots was available in the service. Sleep mats were available in the service for any child over the age of two years who required rest or sleep.

(2)(a)

An outdoor area was available to the rear of the service consisting of an artificial grass surface. A sheltered area was in place to support all weather play opportunities for the children. The area was equipped with a plastic playhouse, climb/slide unit and rockers with additional outdoor toys and resources available. A high-level wooden fence secured the perimeter of the outdoor area.

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 main entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. A coded system was in place for access to the service. The Inspectors signed the visitor book in the entrance area of the service. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water and hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The temperature of the water recorded at the wash hand basins was approximately 39 degrees Celsius. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after toileting. Staff were observed to wash their hands during the inspection. Soothers were stored correctly in individually labelled containers. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. A fridge was available for the storage of non-perishable goods in the pre-school rooms.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. Records were in place in respect of any prescription or non-prescription medication administered to children.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in individual sleep logs maintained in the sleep room. The sleep room temperature noted was 19 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed throughout the service. A fire assembly point was noted to the rear of the premises.

Outing:

Risk assessment documentation and checklists were in place to support the outings conducted from the service.

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)
Five adults present were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available in the premises.
- (2)(a)
First aid bags were available in accessible and conspicuous locations in the service.
- (b)
A first aid bag was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 firefighting 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The most recent fire drill was recorded as taking place on 05 April 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 17 August 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced on the 20 February 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the entrance hall and in the pre-school rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2025.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The centre manager furnished all information as reasonably required by the Agency for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations.