

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021FL001		
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd		
Address of Service:	22 Muileann Drive, Kettles Lane, Kinsealy, Swords, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K67 X7Y5		
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	29/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM 46
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15		
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly & AM Coyle		
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

Little Harvard Childcare Ltd. is one of multiple services owned and operated by the registered provider, all of which are located in counties Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare. Pre-school children are accommodated in this service on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis from the age of 12 months up to 6 years. School aged children up to 12 years of age are also accommodated in the service. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm each weekday and facilitates eligible children to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00 midday daily. There are 5 early years care rooms provided in the purpose-built premises which is located in a housing estate in Kinsealy near Swords in north County Dublin. The Wobbler room, Toddler room, Pre-school room 1, Pre-school room 2, ECCE Room, School Age room and the sleep room are all located on the ground floor whilst a kitchen and office space are provided on the first floor of the premises. On the day of inspection the ECCE room facilitated school aged children.

Staffing

A service manager is employed who oversees the operational management of this service, working with a team of 16 staff who work directly with the children including the deputy manager. Two staff members are employed for catering and household duties. The service manager was present on the day of the inspection, as well as the general manager. There are 2 regional managers, one of whom was present on the day. In addition, there was 1 staff member from another service providing cover on the day of the inspection. There are 2 staff employed to work in the school age room. The registered provider was not present in the service during the inspection. In total, there were 18 adults present in the service on the day of inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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 the regulations 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 27 and 31. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(k). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Room, Toddler Room, Pre-school Room 1 and Pre-school Room 2.

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was carried out following receipt of information to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, management team, 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;

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 09:00am and was present for the majority of the inspection with a designated person to deputise as required.

(2) The files for 25 adults were reviewed including the person in charge and 16 staff members who work directly with the children. In addition the following files were reviewed; 2 regional managers, a general manger, 2 staff members employed in catering and household duties, 1 staff member from another service providing cover and 2 school aged childcare practitioners. The following was recorded:

(a) Thirty-eight validated and written references were available from past employers.

(b) Twelve validated and written references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the twenty-five adults whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 20 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 22 staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

(7)(a) The registered provider ensured that employees were supervised and provided with appropriate induction. In discussion with recently appointed staff members the staff members were able to describe the induction process and the system in place regarding the review of the service's policies and procedures. The Child Safeguarding policy outlined the services' responsibility to provide induction training to all staff and students to ensure that they understand their obligations as a mandated person under the Children First Act 2015. Through discussion with staff during the inspection, staff demonstrated their familiarity with this policy and relating procedures, describing incidents that would require reporting if witnessed or suspected and naming the services Designated Liaison Person.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies relevant to this inspection were requested and reviewed.

- Recruitment Policy
- Staff Training Policy
- Supervision of Staff Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Accident and Incident Policy

Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis and staff discussed that a policy is chosen for review with the team during the staff meetings.

The supervision of staff policy was observed to be followed as demonstrated by the following;

- There was evidence that employees are supervised and supported in the service in relation to their work practice. On review of staff supervision records for 13 staff members, there were records of one to one meetings with staff members. There are also records kept for newly appointed staff members in the probation pack.

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 the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Wobbler room there were 8 children aged 1 year 7 months to 2 years 2 months being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Toddler room there were 10 children aged 2 years to 1 month to 3 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Pre-school Room 1 there were 15 children aged 3 years to 4 years 3 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Pre-school room 2 there were 14 children aged 4 years to 5 years 6 months being cared for by 3 staff members.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times. This was confirmed by the staff roster and sign in records.

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:

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:

- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with regulation 10, these were provided in digital format and in written format in the service.
- (i) Details of staff rosters were kept on a daily basis and available for inspection.
- (k) The registered provider ensured that accident and incident records were kept in written records. There were records in relation to an incident that occurred in the service on 11 July 2025.

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

(1)(b) Appropriate and suitable care practice was observed, as evidenced by the following:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Children were responded to when they required attention. Appropriate communication using soft tones was observed and children were provided with comfort when needed. This supported the development of relationships and a sense of belonging.

- The service provides all meals and snacks to children attending the service on a full day care basis. The children were observed having morning snack consisting of crackers and fruit salad with pear, pineapple, orange and apple. Pasta Bolognese was served for dinner. The mealtime experience was observed to be a leisurely sociable occasion, where the staff sat together with the children and chatted and offered support and encouragement when needed. Children's water bottles were accessible in the care rooms throughout the day and were brought outside during outdoor play which children were observed accessing their water bottles independently.
- Nappy changing occurred at scheduled times and more frequently as required throughout the day. Staff members engaged positively with the children during this time using it as an opportunity for one to one interactions with the children.
- The children in the Wobbler room sleep in cots in the sleep room. The children in the Toddler room were placed to sleep on stackable beds in the care room after they had their dinner.
- Staff supported children to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after using the bathroom and after nappy changing, after outdoor play and before mealtimes which promoted self-care practices amongst the children.
- There were cosy areas in the care rooms where children could select a book for reading and relaxation.
- Staff discussed that they communicate with parents each day through discussions at arrival and departure times to share information about children's care needs.
- All children present in the service enjoyed time in the outdoor play area to the rear of the service on the day of the inspection.

(3) No practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally, physically harmful or neglectful were observed during the inspection. Staff members were observed engaging with the children using a partnership approach and showed positive regard for the children at all times throughout the inspection.

During the inspection the staff members throughout the care rooms were observed approaching children's behaviour in a supportive manner, promptly re-directing and distracting the children at the earliest signs of conflict whilst showing respect for the children involved. This prevented any escalation or upset on the children's part. The staff members, in conversation with the inspectors, were clear on what are and are not acceptable and appropriate ways of responding to and caring for children and described how they would comfort and reassure any child if they became upset, tired or distressed. Staff members were observed engaging with the children using a partnership approach and showed positive regard for the children at all times throughout the inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that all children attending the service were supervised at all times. Children were observed being appropriately supervised whilst in the care rooms and in the outdoor area of the service and when accessing the sanitary facilities.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the service;*
- (b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*
- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(d) There was evidence that the service manager completed a notification of incident form within 3 days informing the Early Years Inspectorate of an incident that occurred in the service on 11 July 2025. However, the incident is not included in the subsections listed within regulation 31.