

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DR001
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	1 The Lodge, The Crescent, Scholarstown Wood, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin
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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:	14/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	33
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	O Quill, L Magee
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

Little Harvard Limited is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years and is one of a multiple of 22 childcare services run by the registered provider. A morning session is provided from 9am to 12pm for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from a purpose-built building on the ground floor of an apartment building in Rathfarnham, south county Dublin. Four care rooms are available named; Toddlers catering for children aged 2 years, Pre-school 1 and Preschool 2 catering for children aged 3-4 years and ECCE sessional catering for children aged 3-5 years. An outdoor area is provided on the premises. The service opens from 7:00am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

In total nine staff are employed to work in the service including the person in charge. On the day of inspection three additional staff were rostered to provide cover including a cover staff member and two regional managers. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a pre-school 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 cooperation of the person in charge, regional managers, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present at all times on the day of inspection.
- (2) Since the last inspection on the 18 March 2025, six new staff members have been recruited. In total eight personnel files were reviewed during this inspection, including files for a staff member present to provide cover and an external contractor who was employed to deliver a structured physical activity programme. Garda vetting documentation was reviewed for all newly recruited staff and for two existing staff members whose vetting had been identified as due for renewal.
- (a) Fifteen written validated references were provided from a past employer.
- (b) A second written validated reference was provided from a reputable source for one staff member who did not have two previous past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for eight staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for all staff as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures was available for six staff members who lived outside Ireland for a period of longer than six months as adult.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to show that seven staff members employed to work directly with children attending 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 equivalent by the Department of Children.

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 directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 55 children attending the preschool being supervised by 7 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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) A sample of 10 records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) The records available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
- (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
- (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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

(1)(a)

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the pre-school service. Rooms were laid out with age-appropriate materials, including dress-up clothing, art materials, and library areas. Designated cosy areas were available for children to take a rest from activities and sleep mats were provided for children to sleep. Children moved freely throughout the environment and chose the activities they wished to engage in, enabling them to develop independence and confidence in their learning.

Staff supported children's emerging skills by engaging alongside them and offering praise and encouragement. Wellbeing was actively promoted through warm interactions and positive behaviour guidance. Staff reported monthly observations of children's progress are documented and this information is used to adapt teaching approaches, plan next steps and engage with families. Staff discussed maintaining communication with families to support children's learning. The service use an app to communicate with parents and share information including meals, sleep, nappy changes and activities. They reported further opportunities were available to speak to parents/ guardian's at drop off and collection.

The manager reported all meals and snacks are prepared by the chef and they were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in groups when eating. Staff sat with the children, engaging them in conversation and promoting social skills. Drinks were always available within the rooms and were offered with meals and snacks. Children were supported to use the toilet independently. Children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between as required. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. The daily timetable included a designated time for outdoor play for all children. During the morning a structured activity programme was offered and children were observed to enjoy playing a variety of games at this time. Children were appropriately dressed. The outdoor area had an artificial grass surface and secured with high wall and gate preventing unauthorised access and the children leaving the area unsupervised.

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 front door to the service was secured and an intercom system was in place to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Cleaning products, medication and cables were kept out of children's reach and low-level cupboards had child proof locks fitted. Cord blinds were secure. The kitchen was inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

The premises and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. A record of cleaning was available and completed. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff supported children to wash their hands after toileting, after outdoor play and before meals. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with infection control procedures. Suitable pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including obtaining written parent/guardian consent. Detailed records were available of medicines given. These had been signed by the person who gave the medicine, a witnessing staff member and the child's parent / guardian.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with the safe policy. Children were physically monitored every 10 minutes while sleeping and sleep checks were documented. The temperature of the sleep room was maintained at the required temperature for sleep.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were marked and kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety

- Garda vetting available for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

2. In the Toddler room staff were not cleaning and sterilising soothers as required and the infection policy did not detail all the steps required for effective cleaning of soothers.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Local and regional management will ensure that Garda Vetting renewals are applied for well in advance of expiry dates to prevent any lapse in valid Garda vetting.

Infection Control:

2. Following the inspection, a soother sterilisation unit was purchased and is now in use in the Toddler room. The soother sterilising steps have been laminated and displayed on the wall. A Soother Use, Storage and Sterilisation policy training card has been introduced. All staff received training on the updated procedures on the day of inspection. Management will carry out regular checks to ensure the soother sterilisation procedures are being followed consistently. The Soother Use, Storage and Sterilisation policy will be discussed with staff at team meetings and as part of ongoing refresher training. Compliance will be monitored through room audits to ensure standards are maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copy of Garda vetting.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions as stated by the registered provider and supporting evidence submitted were reviewed by the inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times.

Evidence provided demonstrated two staff members who were present had current First Aid Responder training certifications. Two of the certificates were valid until 28 September 2026 and the 13 December 2027.

(2)(a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous place on the premises and was available to the children attending the service 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 monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 02 January 2026.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire equipment were dated the 31 January 2025 and for the smoke alarm system were dated the 29 August 2025.

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(4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.