

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:	18/03/2025
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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, County Dublin, A96P3Y6.
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Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill and Jackie Mayock
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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 childcare services run by the registered provider. Children attending the service were aged 3-5 years of age. The service operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building on the ground floor of an apartment building in Rathfarnham, south county Dublin. An outdoor area is provided on the premises. The service opens from 7:00am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday. A morning session is provided from 9am to 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

In total fourteen adults are employed in the service. This includes a cook and area Manager. On the day of inspection nine adults worked directly with the children. The regional manager and area manager arrived after the inspection commenced and remained on the premises for the inspection feedback 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

The 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.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9(1)(a), (b), (2)(a) - (d) and (4) Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1), (2) and (8)(a) Staffing levels.

Regulation 16 (k) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service.

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

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16 (k) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service.

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, the regional and area 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)(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) Following a discussion with the manager and review of staff files it was confirmed that seven adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 26 January 2024. The inspection included a review of documentation in respect of these adults and documents for the regional and area manager who were present on inspection. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all adults employed in the service.

The regulatory requirements were met as follows:

(a) Of the eighteen references required. Thirteen written validated references were available from a past employer.

- (b) Five written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the nine adults. 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 required for five adults and was available for these adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (4) Records were available evidencing nine adults who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or 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.*
- (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 for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were fifty five children attending the service being supervised by nine adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times as evidenced by the staff roster provided.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (k) A sample of thirty four accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The inspectors observed appropriate and suitable care practices within the service. The service

had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that all meals are provided for children attending for full day care and parents provide lunch for their children who attend the sessional service only. Children are offered breakfast on arrival and a fruit snack during the morning and a hot lunch is provided. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day and all children were given water with their meal. At snack time staff were observed sitting and talking with children promoting a relaxed atmosphere. The service does not have a designated rest time; however, low level sleep beds were available and staff reported if a child is tired they will be offered a bed to rest.

Children were supported to use the toilet independently and to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development, for example, cleaning up after their snack and caring for their belongings. Staff were observed to

use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Play was child led and children were offered a choice of activities to choose from. Children were observed immersed in different tabletop activities including making puzzles, building towers, playing with play dough. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Outdoor play is included in the daily timetable for each care room. Staff described how they communicate daily with parents during drop off and collection times and share information about the children with their parents which promoted consistency and continuity of care.

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 entrance door to the service and the gates in the outdoor area were adequately secure to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Medicines and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- The kitchen and storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules were available and Staff were observed cleaning tables before and after meals were served.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children were supervised washing their hands prior to eating and after outdoor play. Staff were observed washing their hands at appropriate times.
- A system was in place for the effective sterilisation of mouthed toys.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

Administration of Medication:

- Care plans were available for children with specific medical conditions and when speaking to staff they demonstrated they were familiar with these plans.

- Emergency medication was labelled and stored safely while being accessible to staff.
- A sample of medication record forms were reviewed. These forms were completed correctly as per the administration of medication policy for the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly marked and unobstructed.
- A written record of monthly fire drills completed was available.