

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DY005
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	Blackwood Avenue, Santry, Dublin 9
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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:	20/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	36
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte and T. Nelson
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 Childcare Ltd. is a privately operated service located in a residential and retail complex in Santry, North Dublin. The service is one of 21 services operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 88 children on a full day care basis Monday to Friday from 7am-6:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme 38 weeks per year in line with the programme rules. The service has six care rooms, and an enclosed outdoor play area is available to the side of the premises. A registered school age childcare service also operates on the premises. Preschool rooms 3 and 4 are designated as school aged care rooms in the afternoon.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs twenty-one staff to work in the service including the designated person in charge, chef, a cleaner and two bus drivers. The service also has a senior management team who are not based in the service but who provide support to the service as required including a general manager, regional manager and a child protection and compliance officer. On the day of the inspection the regional manager was present in the service available to support the team, and the general manager attended the service later in the day. The registered provider does not work directly 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1), (2) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1) Record in Relation to a Pre-school Service.
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) First Aid

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Toddler 1 room, Toddler 2 room, Preschool 1 and Preschool 4.

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 general manager, regional 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 registered provider ensured there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with management showed there are currently 21 staff employed by the service. The files of 14 new staff who commenced employment since the last inspection on 8th May 2024

and two students who were present on the day of inspection were reviewed. A review of records maintained by Tusla demonstrated that Garda vetting disclosures were dated within three years for all existing staff. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Twenty-two written and validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Ten written and validated reference was available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for sixteen 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 available for nine adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that eleven adults who worked 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 eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (d) Police vetting was not available for two adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The two missing police vetting checks have been obtained. The adults did not return to the centre until their vetting was complete. Senior Management and HR will monitor the Police vetting more closely. Going forward no adult will commence work until Police vetting is provided. Local and senior management will regularly inspect staff files to ensure compliance with regulation 9 going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Police vetting.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working with the children in the service. There were 12 staff caring for 54 children on the morning of the inspection. The regional manager and person in charge were available in a supernumerary capacity to offer support as required.

(2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

- Toddler 1 room - 1 adult was caring for 4 children aged between 1.5-2.5 years
- Toddler 2 room - 2 adults were caring for 8 children aged between 2-3 years.
- Preschool 1 - 2 adults were caring for 12 children aged 2 years 8 months - 3.5 years.
- Preschool 2 - 2 adults were caring for 11 children aged 3-4 years.
- Preschool 3 - 1 adult was caring for 7 children aged 2 years 8 months - 3.5 years.
- Preschool 4 - 3 adults were caring for 3 children 2 years 8 months - 3.5 years.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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 following information in relation to the service:
- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of all staff were maintained within the staff files.
 - (b) The service Tusa registration certificate displayed in the hallway detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
 - (c) Details of the adult child ratios were displayed in the hallway.
 - (d) (e) The service statement of purpose and function detailed the type of care or programme provided and the facilities available within the service.
 - (f) The opening hours and fees of the service were displayed on a noticeboard in the hallway.
 - (g) The registered provider maintained the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.

- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained in each care room.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) Following a review of a sample of fifteen records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.
- (k) Following a review of a sample of eleven records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

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 following practices were observed to be in place to support the children attending:

- Staff advised of daily discussion with parents sharing experiences of the child's day. Staff discussed a partnership approach with parents to support children with toilet training.
- Staff in Preschool 1 were observed to sit beside children at the tables during activities sharing interest in the children's pictures and engaging in conversation about the day.
- In Preschool 4 staff discussed with the inspector individual children's interest and how they use they use this knowledge to support children's transitions during the day.
- Staff in Preschool 4 encouraged self-care skills such as hand washing and regularly reminded the children about toileting giving assistance when necessary.
- Children were observed to access the outdoor area allowing essential gross motor movement. Staff were observed assisting children to use the large slide while playing outdoors.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

1. Staff did not respond adequately to a child's cues demonstrating a need for sleep resulting in a child's sleep needs not being met in a timely and comfortable manner.
 - A child was observed to demonstrate signs of tiredness for example at 10.20am; they lay their head on a table. Staff commented on the child's tiredness without addressing the need and informed the inspector they were due for sleep in an hour.
 - When observed by management the child was placed into a cot at 10.37am. The child was briefly in a cot, in a space not conducive for rest and removed again by staff without sufficient time to settle. The inspector observed the child out of the cot in the care room at 10.49am.
 - The child was observed to be visibly upset and requiring rest after being removed from the cot. The child was observed asleep on a soft play block at 12.08pm in the care room and was moved to a cot for sleep at 12.25pm.

Service policy advises child-led sleep will be facilitated and that a child's comfort will be provided for with appropriate opportunities to meet a child's need for sleep with appropriate facilities. This practice was not observed on the day of inspection.
2. A child who was observed seeking a place to rest in the Preschool 1 room was not supplied with a suitable sleep mat or area to rest. A child who staff advised liked to sleep daily was observed seeking rest on the floor mat in the cosy corner. Children continued to play in the area alongside the child as they tried to settle for sleep. Sleep mats were observed present in the room stored in the press, but none was provided. This is not in line with service policy that advises children will be provided with appropriate and comfortable sleep facilities.
3. The toileting practice of the Preschool 1 room did not provide for children's privacy during toileting. As a child was using the toilet children gathered from the care room to wash their hands. The children used a low-level sink directly located beside the toilet as a child remained seated on the toilet. This was a narrow space and resulted in the children being in touching distance and having full view of the toileting child. The door to the toilet remained open after the children completed hand washing placing the child in full view from the care room. It is noted an additional sink is available at the second toilet in the care room.
4. Staff did not adequately support the care needs of one child aged 1 year 11 months between 10.56-11.16am. The top being worn by the child was observed to be wet from dribbling. Staff were observed to

engage with the child however they remained unchanged until 11.16am. Wet clothes should be changed promptly to ensure the child's comfort.

5. A child over 2 years old in the Toddler 1 room was observed to have their soother on a continuous basis without encouragement from staff to place it away when not required for comfort or sleep. The use of soothers can limit a child's ability to engage in oral communication and pose a barrier to speech development.
6. A child over two years old in the Toddler 1 room was observed using a bottle with a teat for their drink. This is not in line with service policy that advises a cup or beaker will be used. The use of age-appropriate equipment supports children's development and promotes self-care skills.
7. Children in the Toddler 1 room were not supported to engage in mealtime in a structured and timely manner. Dinner was brought to the room at 1.24pm however children were not given their meals to eat until 1.59pm.

Physical and material environment:

8. The layout of resources in the Preschool 4 room reduced children's opportunity for choice and engagement with toys and equipment. For example:
 - A foosball table that children showed a keen interest in and attempted to use was placed on a high-level table not at a comfortable level for children to engage and did not include a ball.
 - A shelf containing puzzles, small construction blocks and board games was completely covered with a tablecloth.
 - Colouring and mark making resources were placed on a high-level table not suitable for the age range of children present in the room.
 - Many of books available in library area were for an older age range and not inviting for the group of children present.
9. Resources in the Toddler rooms were not displayed in an inviting manner to encourage children's play. The resources were observed to be poorly organised reducing opportunity for extended and meaningful play experiences.
 - Boxes did not contain the toys displayed on the labels and were disorganised with random items inside.
 - Mark making resources were not directly accessible.
 - A themed baby bath area did not include supporting resources.

- Shelving was observed to be cluttered with boxes stacked reducing potential engagement.
10. The height of furniture was not suitable for the age ranges present in the Toddler rooms. Children were observed with their feet not reaching the floor and the table at chest height. This reduced the comfort and ease for children to engage with tabletop activities.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Our safe sleep and child led sleep policies have been clearly explained to the staff. Formal Training has also taken place with the staff and strict adherence to the policy will be implemented at all times.
2. A discussion was held with staff about the importance of offering children a place where they can rest when needs be and provide appropriate and comfortable sleep facilities.
3. Formal training has taken place and staff have been spoken to and reminded about the importance of children's privacy during toileting and to facilitate that when required.
4. Staff have been reminded, and training has taken place relating to the changing of wet clothes in a timely manner to ensure children's comfort.
5. Staff have been spoken to about the importance of encouraging children to use the soother only for comfort or during sleep time. Parents have also been consulted regarding the weaning process for soothers. We will work collaboratively with families to ensure that soother use is gradually limited to sleep times and is not relied upon as the primary comfort aid.
6. The bottle with the teat was since removed and replaced with beakers to support children's development age-appropriately.
7. Daily classroom routines have been revised and adjusted to meet the specific needs of each classroom, ensuring that mealtimes are smoothly integrated, minimising wait times for food service.
8. Physical and material environments have been reorganized to better suit the developmental needs of each age group.
9. Physical and material environments have been reorganized to better suit the developmental needs of each age group.
10. The height of the tables and chairs in the Toddler room has been adjusted to better suit the children attending this classroom.

Preventive action: The Regional and Senior management will visit the premises on a regular basis to ensure strict compliance will all aspects of Regulation 19. The Regional Manager has been instructed to visit the facility on a regular basis to ensure that our policies in regard to Regulation 19 are being comprehensively followed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of care room resources and layout.
- Staff training logs.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions, and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have been addressed.

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 service entrance was secure on arrival this prevented unauthorised persons entering the building and prevented children leaving the building unsupervised.
- The kitchen was observed to be inaccessible to children during the inspection.
- Furniture was observed to be well maintained, easy to clean and suitable for use.

Infection Control:

- Children's lunches provided from home containing perishable items were observed to be stored in the refrigerator.
- Children were supported to wash their hands.
- Warm water, dispensed handtowels, foot pedal operated bins and soap were available to support effective hand hygiene practices.
- Children's bed linen was stored in individually labelled bags.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed clear of obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A cleaning spray was stored on the edge of the sink in the care room and accessible to children in the Preschool 4 room.

Infection Control:

2. Nappy creams in Preschool 1 were not individually labelled which posed a risk of cross contamination.

Safe Sleep:

3. Sleep checks were not completed every ten minutes in line with service policy. In addition, a child's awake time was observed to be prepopulated on the record form. The practice and recording of comprehensive physical sleep checks helps provide for children's safety.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The cleaning spray has been removed and stored appropriately.

Infection Control:

2. Corrective action: Nappy creams in Preschool 1 have been labelled to avoid cross contamination in the future.

Safe Sleep:

3. Corrective action: Training has also taken place in relation to the completion of sleep records in a timely and accurate manner to ensure children's safety and staff have been directed to ensure compliance with our Safe Sleep Policy at all times.

Preventive action: Regional and Senior management will visit the facility on a regular basis to ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 23.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- No supporting documents submitted.

Infection Control:

- Staff training log.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff training log.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions, and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) A review of available documents and conversation with management showed that a staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was rostered to be on the premises and available to the children at all times during the opening hours of the service.

(2) (a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible to staff if required at any time.