

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

reTUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE001
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Green, Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 W2NR
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date 1 of Inspection:	28/07/2025
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Date 2 of Inspection:	29/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	79	PM	80
Day 2	AM	86	PM	n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
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

N/A

Description of service

Little Harvard, Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip is one of 21 early years services operated privately by the registered provider. The service opened in 2023 and is registered to provide full day care to a maximum of 122 children aged 0-6 years. All children were aged 1-6 years on the day of the inspection. The service operates from a purpose-built, two-story facility within a housing development on the outskirts of Leixlip, Co. Kildare. Children are allocated to one of eight care rooms according to their age and stage of development. A cot room is located between the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms. An outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises. Set down and parking facilities are available outside the premises. The service operates from 07:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 25 staff employed to work directly in the service including the service manager, assistant manager, supervisor, chef and cleaner. Twenty staff are employed to work directly with the children. The service manager, assistant manager and supervisor work directly with the children when required and provide cover for staff breaks. A senior management team of five staff are employed to oversee the management of all the registered providers services. 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 areas 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 19(1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child and regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child (General Safety, Infection Control and Safe Sleep). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 rooms.

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 management team, staff and children who were present on the days 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The service had a person in charge and named persons to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a person who could deputise to be present at all times of opening.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure within the service. Staff roles were documented. Staff and managers demonstrated an awareness of their roles and the lines of authority.

(2) Regulation 9(2) (a), (b) and (d) was inspected in relation to 23 adults who had started working in the service since regulation 9(2) was last inspected on 28 August 2023. Regulation 9 (2)(c) was inspected for all adults including members of the senior management team and the registered provider.

(a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to references. Each adult had a minimum of two references. References had been provided from other sources where the staff member had only one or no previous employers. Each reference had a record of verification.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced for all adults who had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(4) Regulation 9(4) was inspected for all adults employed to work directly with children since the regulation was last inspected on 28 August 2023. The adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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. There were 17 adults working directly with a maximum of 80 children on Day 1 of the inspection and 86 children on Day 2. Four adults were available on both days to provide help and cover for breaks as needed.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

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

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) The service kept records of accidents, injuries and incidents involving children which occurred while attending the service. A sample of 10 records were reviewed. The records were comprehensive and included a parent/guardian signature indicating the information had been shared.

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

The registered provider ensured that suitable care practices were in place. The staff were familiar with the children, discussing their routines, their likes and their dislikes. They engaged kindly with the children, addressing them by name and providing them with comfort when they became upset.

Meals and snacks were offered at regular intervals. Drinks were always available within the rooms. The children sat together with the staff during snacks and meals with staff providing support as needed. The youngest children wore bibs to protect their clothing from becoming soiled or wet.

Staff supported the children to manage their personal care including regular nappy changes and opportunities to use the toilet. They assisted the children to wash their hands at appropriate times. The children had a spare set of clothes available for use if needed.

The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after lunch. Staff reported that children are accommodated to sleep outside of this time if they show signs of tiredness. They slept in cots or low beds according to their age and stage of development. Staff made the children comfortable for sleep, removing their outer clothing, providing blankets and offering soothers to those who used them. The transition from lunch to sleep was calm and well managed by staff who stayed with the children soothing them gently to sleep.

The staff kept records of the children's day including information on diet, sleep, nappy changes and activities which they reported was for sharing information with parents/guardians on collection.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children from harm. This included securing the premises to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. The kitchen was secured to prevent children accessing items that could pose a hazard. Cleaning products were stored securely out of children's reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Staff reported they carry out monthly fire drills with the children and records were available detailing these.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. Systems were in place to ensure regular laundering of soft furnishings and bed linen. Cleaning schedules were available and completed. Staff assisted children to wash their hands at required times including after nappy changing and before meals. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with infection control procedures.

Administration of Medication:

No children received medicine during the inspection. Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including having a second adult to cross check and making a record. Comprehensive care plans were available for children who may require medicine due to allergies. All medicines were stored easily accessible to adults and out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

All children were aged over one year. The children slept in cots or low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. The room temperatures were maintained below 22°C when children were sleeping. Staff undertook physical checks of the children at 10-minute intervals.

Outings:

The person in charge reported the service does not undertake outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Fire exits were not kept clear during children's sleep period on Day 1 of the inspection. The cot room exit was obstructed with a cot; the Wobbler 2 room exit was obstructed with a table; the Toddler 1 room exit was obstructed with stackable beds. This posed a risk of delaying the evacuation of children in the event of a fire. It is acknowledged the obstructions were removed when this was brought to the attention of staff.

Infection Control:

2. The pedal function on the bins used to dispose of nappies in the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms was not working. This resulted in staff lifting the lid and pushing nappies into the bin with their hands, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Additional signage has been put in place identifying all fire doors in every room. All staff have been retrained on fire safety procedures with specific emphasis on the importance of keeping all fire exits clear at all times. Local management will carry out regular inspections in each room to ensure that fire exits are kept clear at all times.

Infection Control:

The bins in the service have been replaced with pedal-operated bins that open wider, ensuring easier, more hygienic, and safer use for both staff and children. Local management will ensure that all pedal bins are in good working order at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographs of signs on emergency exits reading 'Fire Exit - Keep Clear at All Times'.
Copy of a sample 'fire training card' signed by a staff member and dated 28 August 2025.

Infection Control:

Photograph of pedal operated bin.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance.

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

(2)

(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in conspicuous, easily accessible positions on the premises.

(b) The first aid boxes were available for use at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) It is acknowledged that two adults with current First Aid Responder (FAR) training were on the premises throughout the inspection. However, there was no person with current FAR training rostered to be present on the week of the inspection (week beginning 28 July 2025) when both staff were rostered off. This included from 07:30 to 08:00 on three days, 07:30 to 8:45 on two days, 18:00 to 18:30 on four days, 17:00 to 18:30 on one day and 12:30 to 13:00 each day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager and assistant manager who are both FAR trained will be rostered opposite each other to ensure that there is always at least one FAR trained member of staff present in the premises. Arrangements are in place to train additional members of staff in early September 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster dated week beginning 8 September 2025. Four adults with FAR training rostered to cover all times of opening. Documents evidencing FAR training completed.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to adequately address the non-compliance.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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) Written records were available detailing fire drills that had been carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill record was dated 9 June 2025.
 - (b) Records were available detailing the firefighting equipment and fire detection system in the service. Records showed that these had been last serviced on 7 January 2025 and 2 July 2025 respectively.
 - (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations throughout the premises.

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 inspectors observed staff closely supervising the children throughout the inspection. This included when sleeping, eating, using the sanitary facilities and engaging in play and activities.