

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE001		
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd		
Address of Service:	The Green, Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W23 W2NR		
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	28/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	66	PM 57
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Eustace Road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan and F. Maher		
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
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Description of service

Little Harvard, Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip opened in 2023 as a privately run childcare service for children aged 0 to 6 years. It is part of a multiple chain of services operated by the current registered provider. The early years' service is registered to provide a full day care service.

The service operates from 7:00am – 18:30pm on a Monday to Friday basis.

The early years' service is located in a purpose-built two-story building within a housing development on the outskirts of Leixlip, Co. Kildare. The accommodation consists of eight care rooms with adjoining sanitary facilities, two cot rooms, sanitary facilities for adults, a kitchen, staff rest area and two offices.

A secure play area is located to the side of the premises. Set down and parking facilities are available outside the premises.

Staffing

Twenty adults are employed in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with children.

There were twenty-one adults present in the service on the day of the inspection. Sixteen adults were working directly with the preschool children. The person in charge and operations manager provided support to the care rooms in addition to managerial responsibilities and oversight of the service. A cook was employed to prepare food daily. The area manager and the operations manager were present during the inspection. The general manager was present for the feedback meeting at the end of the inspection.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of child. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Baby room, Wobbler 1 room, Wobbler 2 room and Toddler 1 room.

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, area manager, operations manager, general manager, 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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) There was evidence that there was a clear management structure in the service.
- The records of 21 staff members were reviewed.
- (2)
- (a) Two written and verified past employer references were available in respect of fifteen adults and one written and verified past employer reference were available in respect of five adults employed in the service whose records were reviewed.
 - (b) Two written and verified references from a reputable source other than a past employer were available in respect of one adult and one written and verified reference from a reputable source other than a past employer was available in respect of five adults whose records was reviewed.
 - (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for fourteen adults who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Seventeen adults working directly with the children held qualifications in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent and two adults were in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice issued by The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

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) There were sixty-six children attending the service being supervised directly by sixteen adults.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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

Basic needs of children:

The service promoted a healthy eating policy. Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. Young children had the opportunity to feed themselves and their drinks were within their reach throughout the day should they feel thirsty.

Nappy changing was completed regularly and promptly when required. It was handled in a sensitive and positive manner.

The individual sleep needs of the children were met. Most children requiring sleep during the day, slept at a designated time and were provided with as much time as they needed to sleep.

The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours. Children were spoken to in a kind and respectful manner. Their first names were used, appropriate eye contact and gentle vocal tones were observed being used during all interactions.

Supporting relationships around children:

Staff members were observed being respectful, gentle and kind towards the children in their care and each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings.

Staff members were observed sitting with the children at mealtimes and engaging them in conversation which ensured that the experience was relaxed and sociable.

In the baby room, care routines were matched to each baby's individual needs; this included nappy changing, feeding and sleep. A comfortable chair was available for staff to use while bottle feeding a baby or to comfort an upset child.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. A daily written record was maintained for the children attending the baby, wobbler and toddler rooms. It outlined food eaten, time nappies were changed, toileting, sleep times, activities and other comments.

Face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary and email and telephone contact are used as an alternative method of contact.

Physical and material environment:

The physical and material environments in the care rooms were comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children. Defined areas of interest were observed in the care rooms. These included a library area, a home corner, area with bricks, connecting toys, puzzles and jigsaws, a construction area, small world toys and materials, sensorial materials including a tray with pasta and playdough on the day of the inspection. There were enclosed water play mats with floating objects in the baby room where the babies could sit on or crawl over while focusing on the floating objects. Staff members were observed encouraging babies to contribute to an art activity. Materials and resources were available on low level shelving which were accessible to the children. Low level chairs and tables were available to the children for meals and tabletop activities. There were five low feeding chairs available in the baby room.

The secured outdoor area was located at the side of the premises. It was equipped with a wooden climbing frame with a slide and climbing rope wall, a wooden balance beam structure, child sized picnic benches, smaller plastic activity frames for younger children, water play activity units and ride on play equipment. There was a partially covered area in the outdoor area which enabled it to be used throughout the year particularly during inclement weather.

Programme of activities:

On the day of the inspection, the children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. The staff members supported the children with their activities and did not interfere in the play. The routine was child led and responsive to the children's interests.