

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE002			
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd			
Address of Service:	The Park, Ledwill Park, Kilcock, Naas, Co. Kildare			
Eircode:	W23 X2IV			
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date 1 of Inspection:	23/01/2026			
Date 2 of Inspection:	26/01/2026			
No of pre-school children:	AM	96	PM	65
Day 2	AM	34	PM	103

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare.
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
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Description of service

Little Harvard, Ledwill Park, Kilcock opened in 2023. It is 1 of 22 private early years services operated by the registered provider. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 132 children aged between one and six years. The service operates from 07:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday and offers full day, part-time and sessional education and care. The service is provided from a purpose-built two-story building in a housing development on the outskirts of Kilcock, Co Kildare. The premises includes nine care rooms with sanitary facilities, a cot room and two outdoor areas. Eight care rooms were in use on the days of inspection.

Staffing

There are 28 staff employed to work in the service including the manager, assistant manager, a chef and a cleaner. Twenty-four staff are employed to work directly with the children. Twenty-three staff were working directly with children on the days of the inspection with the service manager and assistant manager available to assist and provide cover for breaks. The company's regional and operations managers arrived during the inspection and worked directly with the children on both days. A staff member from one of the company's other services worked in the service on the second day of inspection. The company's general manager was present for the closing 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

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.

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

Regulation 9 (1), (2), (3), (4) & (7)(a) – Management and recruitment

Regulation 10 – Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

Regulation 11 (1), (2) & (8)(a) – Staffing levels

Regulation 16 (1)(h) & (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

Regulation 27 - Supervision

However, on inspection, additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 16 (4) - Record in relation to pre-school service. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(b) - 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 the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler 1 and Toddler 3 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.

Additional Information

The inspection was undertaken due to information received by the inspectorate on 20 January 2026.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 23 January 2026 due to significant risk identified in relation to a child who may require anaphylactic treatment. This is detailed under regulation 23 of this report. The registered provider submitted a response on 26 January 2026 which was deemed to appropriately address the risk.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the managers, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person 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 the named deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(c) The management structure was clearly documented. The management team consisted of an assistant manager, service manager, regional manager, operations manager and general manager. Staff demonstrated an awareness of their individual roles and the lines of authority.

(2) The inspection focused on records for nine adults who had been employed since the previous inspection dated 18 August 2025 and one adult who transferred from one of the company's other services on the second day of inspection.

(a) Records were available to evidence a minimum of two past employer references had been considered for each adult.

(b) Not applicable as all adults had at least two previous employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed for all adults in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was required and available for eight adults.

(3) All records outlined under regulation (2) above were dated prior to the adult's start dates.

(4) The inspection focused on the 10 adults outlined under regulation 9(2) above. All 10 adults held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7)(a) The inspectors spoke with a sample of staff who had been employed since the last inspection. They reported that they received induction when they started which included reading the service's policies and procedures and training on areas including child protection, safe sleep and infection control. A sample of records were reviewed which detailed inductions and training. The inspectors spoke with staff who had been employed prior to the last inspection in relation to staff supervision. They reported they had regular supervision meetings with their line manager. A sample of records were reviewed which included the dates and details of these meetings.

Non-Compliance Information

(7)(a) The registered provider did not ensure that staff had appropriate information and training in the procedure for managing emergency medications outlined in the service's medication administration policy. Further information is outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff have now completed additional training in the administration of emergency medication, including auto-injector use and the management of anaphylaxis. A detailed, updated care plan has been developed and signed by the parents. A letter from the hospital and relevant medical documentation have been obtained from the parents and are securely stored on file. Local and Regional Management will monitor the situation closely going forward and ensure compliance with all aspects of regulation 9.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

Summary Comment

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The inspection focused on the service's policies relating to staff training and staff supervision. The policies were available and included the dates they were effective from and the scheduled review date. These had been approved by the general manager.

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 23 staff members working with 96 children when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the first day of inspection. The service manager and assistant manager were available to provide assistance and break cover.

(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 always more than two adults present during the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be present 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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

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

(4) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by a parent or guardian of a child but only in respect of information concerning that child.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) The service kept a record of the daily attendance of children. This included the times the children arrived and departed.

(k) Records were available of accidents and incidents that had occurred in the service. A sample of records dated since the previous inspection were reviewed. These included the required information and had been signed by the children's parents/guardians.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Through review of records and discussions with management it was evident that a record was not made or shared with parents regarding a significant incident that occurred on 15 January 2026 in relation to a child until the following day. Failure to provide information to a parent/guardian in a timely manner could compromise the safety and wellbeing of children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) Local management have been reminded of the importance of informing parents/guardians of significant incidents in a timely manner. The parents were informed the following day and have been kept up to date with all relevant information. A meeting was offered to the parents to discuss the incident and any concerns. Local and Regional Management will ensure ongoing compliance will be monitored through supervision, regular internal audits and management oversight of all significant incident reports to ensure timely communication and adherence to regulatory requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

Summary Comment

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

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 children moved freely within their allocated rooms, engaging in free play and activities. The staff engaged kindly with them, comforting them when they became upset. The children spent time outdoors and wore coats appropriate to the weather. Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals. Bibs were available to prevent the children's clothes from getting soiled or wet. The adults sat with the children when eating, promoting

independence and social skills. Drinks were always available within the rooms and were offered with meals and snacks.

Staff supported the children to manage their personal care. They assisted the children to clean their hands and faces at appropriate times. Children's nappies were changed at regular intervals and in between when required. Each child had a change of clothes available for use if necessary. The children slept in cots or beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. They were made comfortable for sleep with their outer clothing and shoes removed and soothers given to those who used them.

Non-Compliance Information

19 (1)(b) The registered provider did not demonstrate an appropriate balance between service and child needs in relation to sleep. Sleep practices for children attending the Wobbler 3 room were observed on the first day of inspection. The inspector observed a staff member wake a child who was asleep in the cot room at 13:30. The staff member told the inspector that it is common practice to wake the children at 13:30 for dinner. After being woken, the child was brought back to the Wobbler 3 room. The child refused to eat and showed signs of tiredness including crying intermittently, rubbing their eyes and staring into space. Failure to facilitate children to sleep according to their needs can lead to increased irritability and can impact negatively on their emotional and physical development.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff have been retrained in the service's Safe Sleep policy, with specific emphasis on ensuring children are not woken from sleep unnecessarily and that sleep is facilitated in line with each child's individual needs. Staff have also been reminded of the potential negative impact that disrupted sleep can have on children's emotional and physical wellbeing. Ongoing monitoring will be carried out by local and regional management to ensure consistent adherence to appropriate sleep practices.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

Summary Comment

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

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. The entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised entry or children leaving unsupervised. Play equipment was suitable for the ages and stages of children in attendance. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Items that could pose a hazard were secured out of children's reach including cables and cleaning products.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well-maintained and cleaning schedules were in place. Sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped to support handwashing. Staff assisted children to wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing, outdoor play and before meals. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with infection control guidelines. Soothers were stored in individually labelled containers. Waste was appropriately disposed of in pedal operated, lidded bins.

Administration of Medication:

No medicines were administered during the inspection. A sample of records were reviewed of previous medications that had been given. The records detailed all required information including parent/guardian consent and a parent signature post administration indicating the record had been shared.

Safe Sleep:

All children slept in cots or low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. Appropriate bed linen was used including fitted sheets and cellular blankets. Staff demonstrated an awareness of safe sleep guidelines, checked the children at regular intervals and made a record of the checks.

Outing:

The person in charge reported that the children were not taken on outings from the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The emergency exit in the cot room was blocked with beds, a cot and a chair when children were sleeping at 11:17 on the first day of inspection. This posed a risk to the safe evacuation of the children in the event of a fire. It was acknowledged that the items were removed when the inspector brought this to the attention of the service manager.

Administration of Medication:

2. The registered provider did not ensure that appropriate procedures were in place for a child who staff reported may require treatment including adrenaline auto-injectors for anaphylaxis as outlined below.

a) Staff and management did not demonstrate that they had adequate knowledge or training in how to manage anaphylaxis. There was no record of training in relation to anaphylaxis. The service manager stated a 'video' had been sent to staff as training; however, she was unaware of its content as she had not viewed it. Although it was acknowledged that no allergen was provided, when questioned by the inspector, one adult caring for the child at dinner time did not know the child had an allergy or may require anaphylactic treatment. A second adult was not aware of the requirement for a second auto-injector.

b) A second auto-injector was not available on site as required. A staff member caring for the child advised the inspector that this was stored in the office. The service manager stated it was stored in the child's bag. When the inspector looked for the auto-injector with staff it was discovered it was not present.

c) The anaphylaxis action plan provided for the child was significantly deficient. It did not specify the signs of anaphylaxis, the availability of a second auto-injector, criteria for administering a second dose, or clear staff responsibilities. The service manager reported that neither the child's parents nor medical professionals were consulted when developing the plan contrary to the service's medication administration policy.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 23 January 2026 due to the significant risk posed. A response was received on 26 January 2026 which was deemed to appropriately address the risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The items identified were removed immediately on the day once this was brought to the attention of the Service Manager. All staff have since been retrained in fire safety procedures, with particular emphasis on maintaining clear and unobstructed emergency exits at all times to ensure safe evacuation in the event of an emergency. Local Management will continue to monitor room layouts and evacuation routes to ensure ongoing compliance with fire safety requirements.

Administration of Medication:

As outlined under regulation 9 (7)(a), all staff have been retrained on 26 of January 2026. Medical reports and letters from doctors have been provided and a comprehensive care plan has been put in place and signed by parents and all relevant staff have been made fully aware of the contents of the new care plan. Local Management will monitor the situation closely going forward and ensure compliance with all aspects of regulation 23.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

Administration of Medication:

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

Summary Comment

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

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 children were appropriately supervised throughout the inspection. This included when playing indoors and outdoors and transitioning between different areas of the premises.