

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE002
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Park, Ledwill Park, Kilcock, Naas, Co. Kildare.
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Eircode:	W23 X2IV
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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(s) of Inspection:	18/08/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	59	PM	55
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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 L. Magee
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 21 private early years services operated by the registered provider. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 132 children aged 1 - 6 years. It operates from 07:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday offering full day, part-time and sessional education and care. The service is in a purpose-built two-story building in a housing development on the outskirts of Kilcock, Co. Kildare. The premises include nine care rooms with sanitary facilities, a cot room and two outdoor areas. Children were accommodated in one of seven rooms on the day of inspection according to their age and stage of development.

Staffing

There are 22 staff employed to work in the service including the person in charge, a chef and a cleaner. Nineteen staff are employed to work directly with the children. Thirteen staff were allocated to work directly with children on the day of the inspection. Two staff members, the service manager and two company managers were rostered to provide break cover. A third company manager arrived during the inspection and worked directly with the children. The company's general manager attended the service 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9(7)(a) – Management and recruitment, 19(3) – Health, welfare and development of child, regulation 23 – General safety and regulation 27 – Supervision. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1, Toddler 1, Toddler 3 and Pre-school 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 to verify that corrective and preventive actions submitted following the previous inspection dated 19 June 2025 in relation to regulations 9(7)(a), 11(1) & (2), 19(3), 23 and 27 had been effective in addressing non-compliance.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 18 August 2025 as a mandatory Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one staff member contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. The registered provider submitted a response on 19 August 2025 which was deemed to mitigate the risk.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the management team, 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

(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.

(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

The inspection focused on records for 11 adults who had been employed since the previous inspection dated 19 June 2025 in relation to regulations 9(2)(a), (b), (d) and (4). Regulation 9(2)(c) was inspected for these 11 adults and one adult whose Garda vetting disclosure was due to be renewed since the last inspection.

(2)

(a) & (b) A minimum of two references had been sourced for all new staff members with records of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 10 of the 11 adults employed since the previous inspection. A Garda vetting disclosure had been renewed for one adult for whom it was required 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 nine new staff members.

(4) All new staff members 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) Staff reported that they had received training in relation to the risk and behaviour management policies in keeping with the corrective and preventive actions submitted to the inspectorate following the previous inspection. Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures when discussed with the inspectors. Their understanding was evidenced in practice as outlined under regulations 19(3) and 23.

Non-Compliance Information

9(2)(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was not available for one adult who had commenced working in the service on the day of the inspection contrary to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 18 August 2025 due to the risk posed. The registered provider submitted a response on 19 August 2025 which was deemed to mitigate the risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

This occurred due to an administrative error on our behalf. As soon as it was identified, the member of staff concerned was removed from their duties and will not be reinstated until Garda vetting is in place. Management together with our HR department will ensure that no staff member commences work until all relevant documentation is in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of outstanding Garda vetting dated 28 August 2025.

Summary Comment

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

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service. There were 13 staff members working directly with 59 children. Two staff members, the service manager and two company managers were allocated to provide break cover. A third company manager arrived during the inspection and worked directly with the children.

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

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated compliance with the regulatory requirement. The children were allocated to one of seven rooms with designated adults who cared for them throughout the day. The adults spoke kindly to the children using low, calm tones and provided comfort to children who became upset. They discussed positive behaviour management techniques including steps for managing challenging behaviour. They were aware of prohibited practices outlined in the service's policy. No inappropriate practices were observed throughout the inspection.

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 inspection focused on the safe handling of children to prevent injuries. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the appropriate ways to lift children, and the risks associated with lifting children incorrectly. The inspectors observed staff lifting children appropriately when required by supporting them under both arms.

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 using the outdoor areas. The children were always visible to the adults with the adults providing close supervision to children using climbing equipment.