

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

F10TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE002
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Way, 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:	10/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	102	PM	63
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	Emer Mulhern, Roisín Phillips and Shane Faherty
Title:	Early Years Inspectors and Inspection and Registration Manager

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, Ledwill Park, Kilcock opened in 2023. It is one of twenty private early years services operated by the registered provider and is registered to accommodate up to 132 children aged between one and six years. It operates from 07:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday offering full day, part-time and sessional education and care.

The service operates from a purpose-built two-story building within a housing development on the outskirts of Kilcock, Co. Kildare. The accommodation includes nine care rooms with adjoining sanitary facilities, one cot room, a lift from the ground to first floor and a kitchen. Two outdoor play areas are available in front of the premises. Eight of the care rooms were operating on the day of inspection. Children were allocated to the rooms according to their age and stage of development.

Staffing

There are 23 staff members employed to work in the service including the service manager, two cleaners and a chef. Eighteen staff members are employed to work directly with the children. Sixteen staff were working with the children on the morning of the inspection with the service manager available to help as needed. An additional staff member, the general manager and a regional manager arrived during the inspection and provided cover for staff breaks.

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/ safety/ notifications and complaints. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child and regulation 27 - Supervision. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the two Wobbler and the two Toddler 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 managers, 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.

(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) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) Either the person in charge or named deputy were on the premises at all times.
- (2) The inspection focused on the recruitment records for 14 staff who had been employed since the previous inspection and 2 contractors who were present during the inspection.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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

(4) All staff employed to work directly with children 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) Four adults did not have two references from a previous employer, despite having been previously employed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

These two references have since been obtained for all staff and added to their file. Management together with the HR department will ensure that references are obtained from the most recent employers before staff commence work with Little Harvard.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of outstanding references.

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.

(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 with the children. There were 16 adults working directly with 102 children.

(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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

(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)(k) Records had been kept of accidents, injuries and incidents involving children while attending the service.

(3) The accident, injury and incident records were made readily available to the inspectors.

(4) Staff told the inspectors that accident, injury and incident records are always made available for parents/guardians to read and sign in relation to their child on collection or on request thereafter. A sample of six records were reviewed dated from November 2024. The records included the parent/guardian signature.

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) Appropriate and suitable care practices were in place within the service. The adults demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They spoke kindly to them, listened to them and responded appropriately to their cues. Children were comforted when they became upset and minor conflicts were managed promptly and calmly by staff, using age-appropriate techniques.

Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. The children sat in groups with an adult when eating. The adults engaged the children in conversation and promoted 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. The adults helped the children to wash their hands at appropriate times and to clean their faces and noses as needed. Bibs were provided to protect the children's clothes from becoming wet or soiled when eating. Each child had a spare set of clothes and their clothes were changed when necessary. The children were dressed in coats when playing outdoors appropriate to the weather.

Children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between when needed. Staff used these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Transitions between activities and care routines were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next.

Areas were provided with matting and soft seating where the children could rest or take a break from activities. The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep before dinner. They slept in cots or beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. The children were made comfortable for sleep with their shoes and outer clothing removed. Soothers were given to those who used them. Staff checked on the sleeping children at ten-minute intervals and remained in the rooms where children slept on low beds. Staff told the inspectors that the children are facilitated to sleep outside of routine times if they show signs of tiredness.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) All children were signed in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)

(a) (i), (ii), (iii) & (iv) No persons other than staff, parents, children and two contractors accessed the service during the inspection. The inspector's entry was approved by an employee after verification of identification.

(b) A visitors' book was available at the entrance and included names of previous visitors, the date they entered and the reason for entry. The inspectors were requested to sign in upon arrival.

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 always appropriately supervised during the inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The service had a complaints policy which outlined the following:
- (a) The procedure to be followed by a person to make a complaint in relation to the service.
 - (b) The way the complaint will be dealt with.
 - (c) The procedures for keeping the person who makes the complaint informed of the way it is being dealt with.

(2) The inspection focused on the records relating to a complaint that had been made to the service since the previous inspection dated 6 August 2024.

(a) A record of the complaint in writing was available.

(b) Records evidenced the complaint was dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy.

(3)

(a) Records included the nature of the complaint and the way it was managed.

(b) The complaint records were made available to the inspectors.