

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024KE002
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Park, Belin Woods, Newbridge, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W12 FR63
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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 of Inspection:	23/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	96	PM	69
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Suite 7, Floor 2, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and R Flynn
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).

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Description of service

Little Harvard Limited is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 1 to 6 years and is one of 22 services run by the registered provider. The service operates from eight care rooms in a purpose-built building in a housing development in Newbridge, Co Kildare. A kitchen, sanitary accommodation and office is provided together with an outdoor area which is located at the rear of the building. The service opens from 7:00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. A morning Early Childhood Care and Education session is provided from 9.00am to 12.00pm for 38 weeks of the year. The service also provides a school age service.

Staffing

The service employs 27 adults including a manager, deputy, a cook, a bus driver and one staff member who work with school age children in attendance. On the day of inspection there were 18 adults working directly with the children. The manager and deputy were available to assist in the care rooms when required. The registered provider does not work in the service. The operations manager arrived to the service subsequent to the inspectors arrival to assist with 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

- 9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,
- 11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- 19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
- 25 – First aid,
- 26 – Fire Safety,
- 27 – Supervision.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(a)(b). As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler, Toddler 1, Toddler 2 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 informed by information received by the Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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

(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)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

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The inspection focused on the recruitment records for eight adults employed since the last inspection on 17th April 2025. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults who were present and the met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the 16 validated, written references that were required, 10 were available from a past employer and six were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the eight 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)

Police vetting was available for six adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(3)

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the three staff members commencing employment in the service.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that all of the staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

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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 at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 96 children attending the service being supervised by 20 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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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
- (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)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and meals were prepared and cooked onsite. Children attending on a sessional basis bring in a morning snack from home. Meals were provided at regular intervals. Dinner was served from 1:30pm. Younger children were given bibs for dinnertime. Drinking water was available to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meal. The inspectors observed children feeding themselves independently, with staff remaining close by to provide support if required. During the meal, the staff engaged in conversation with the children, supporting the development of their communication and social skills. Drinks of water were available to children throughout the inspection, and children were offered water with their meals. Bibs were provided for young children to protect their clothing. Older children were provided with the opportunity to be helpers at mealtimes by handing out water to their peers.

Nappy changing was carried out on a schedule, and staff acted promptly when children required changing outside of the scheduled times. Staff were observed to use this time for warm one to one interaction with the children, supporting their sense of security. Children were provided with opportunities to develop their self-care skills, for example, tidying up following play, using the toilet independently, and washing their hands routinely. Transitions to and from sleep were calm, with staff using soft tones to provide comfort and reassurance to children. Babies slept according to their individual routines, and children attending the Toddler room slept at a designated time. Staff reported that children could sleep outside of these times if required. Rest areas with soft matting and cushions were available in all care rooms, allowing children to take a break from activities if required.

Staff were affectionate and respectful in their interactions with the children. They used the children's names, provided praise and encouragement, and dropped to their level when engaging in conversations. Toys and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving, which facilitated choice and free play. These included home areas, libraries, construction materials, small world, puzzles, mark-making materials and Montessori equipment, which was available to older children. Child size tables and chairs were available to allow

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children to comfortably sit during mealtimes and while engaging in tabletop activities. The outdoor area provided an alternative environment for children to interact and play. The area was split into a number of different areas including one specifically designated for younger children.

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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children and was stored separately when not in use. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.
- Handwashing was observed before meals, after using the toilet and after outdoor play.
- Soothers were stored in individual containers.
- A system to mouthed toys removed from circulation was in place.

Administration of Medication:

- There were documented care plans available for children in the Toddler 2 room who required emergency medication. Staff working in the rooms with the children were aware of the treatment plans and demonstrated knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.
- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

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- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.
- An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping in cots and on low beds.
- The sleep room temperatures were maintained within the required temperature ranges.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.
- Regular fire drills took place in the service, staff stated that they occur monthly.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing practices observed on the inspection were at variance with the service policy and poses a risk of cross contamination as follows:
 - A staff member had not washed their hands prior to the nappy change.
 - A staff member re-dressed the child with soiled gloves.
 - A staff member did not wash their hands or the child's following the nappy change.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. All staff received refresher training on the toileting, hand washing, and nappy changing policies, which include infection control procedures, correct nappy changing steps, and hand-washing procedures. Staff members have signed to confirm their understanding of these procedures. Managers also carried out direct observations of nappy changing practices and confirmed that procedures were being followed correctly. Ongoing management supervision and monitoring of nappy changing practices will continue to ensure that procedures are carried out consistently and correctly at all times to minimise the risk of cross contamination.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Nappy change and infection control policies submitted.

Summary Comment

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The corrective and preventive actions together with supporting documentation were reviewed by the inspector and meet the regulatory requirements.

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

(1)
Two staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR). Review of the roster confirmed that a staff member qualified in FAR was available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

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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.*
- (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)

A written record for the completed fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 25 March 2026.

(b)

The number, type and maintenance record of the smoke alarms and fire-fighting equipment on the premises was available. The fire alarms were serviced on 18 August 2025. The fire-fighting equipment was last serviced on the 13 January 2026.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire were positioned at doorways throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

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Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

Children in Toddler 2 room were not adequately supervised, and their dignity was not respected while using the sanitary accommodation. The door to the sanitary accommodation was left open while children were inside. The inspector, staff and other children had full visibility of one child using the toilet. Staff did not adequately support a child when they had finished using the toilet and walked into the care room in a state of undress.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All staff have completed refresher training on the Little Harvard's Toileting and Hand-Washing Policy, with particular emphasis on dignity in care, respectful caregiving practices, active supervision, and supporting children appropriately during toileting routines. Staff also completed refresher training on the Supervision Policy, focusing on best practice supervision procedures within the rooms. All training has been reviewed and signed by staff members.

Management will conduct regular monitoring of practice within the rooms to ensure that children's dignity and privacy are respected at all times and that appropriate supervision is consistently maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supervision policy was attached.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with supporting documentation were reviewed by the inspector and meet the requirements of Regulation 27.