

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024KE002			
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd			
Address of Service:	The Park, Belin Woods, Newbridge, Co. Kildare			
Eircode:	W12 FR63			
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	14/05/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	19
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:	F. Maher, T. Duignan			
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 Childcare Ltd., opened in 2024 as a privately run childcare service for children aged 1 to 6 years and 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, part time and sessional services. The service opens 7:00am – 18:30pm from Monday to Friday. The service is also registered to provide school age childcare.

The premises occupied by the service is purpose built and is located at the entrance to a residential housing development on the outskirts of Newbridge town. There are nine pre-school rooms, one cot room, a kitchen, office, sanitary facilities and storage space provided. A staff room is located in a standalone modular unit to the rear of the premises. Currently, 5 pre-school rooms are operational. An enclosed outdoor play area wraps around the premises to the rear and both sides.

Staffing

There are currently fourteen adults employed in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with the children and was not present. There were twelve adults present in the service on the day of the inspection nine of whom were working directly with the preschool children. The person in charge and deputy person in charge provided support to the care rooms in addition to managerial responsibilities and oversight of the service. A cook was employed to prepare food daily and was also present in the service.

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, health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 persons in charge, 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

(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),(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

The records of fourteen staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Twenty eight written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of twelve records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for fourteen employed staff members.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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

(4)

Eight members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework. The qualifications of two staff members were recognised on the qualifications list issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and one staff member was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice issued by the DECDIY.

Non-Compliance Information

(4)

Documentary evidence was not available of a full award in Early Childhood Care and Education for two staff members working directly with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Both Staff have received the Statement of results from the college.

Preventive Action

Senior management will ensure that the full award for all staff is on file prior to the staff member starting in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents x 2.

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9(4) has been met.

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 33 children attending the service being supervised directly by 9 staff members during the inspection. The persons in charge were available to provide relief as required to the pre-school rooms throughout the day.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

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 had a healthy eating policy in place and provided the hot meals and snacks to the children attending on a full day care basis. A four-week menu was in place and all food was freshly prepared by the onsite cook. The hot meals provided, as displayed on the current menu were observed to be varied and nutritious and included a variety of meat, potatoes and vegetables and various pasta and curry dishes with meat and vegetables added. The morning snack observed being served consisted of strawberry and kiwi pieces, homemade brown bread and butter and individual pots of yoghurt. Drinking water was freely available throughout the day in each pre-school room and milk was available and stored in the refrigerators in each room. Parents provided the morning snack for their child attending the sessional service. Children were afforded plenty of time to eat their snack and were not rushed and the staff members sat with the children making snack time a sociable and enjoyable experience. The younger children were provided with bibs to protect their clothing and the staff were observed feeding/assisting children as needed. The younger children were also observed having their hands and faces cleaned following snack. Regular hand washing practices were observed throughout the inspection and self-toileting was supported for the older children and was supervised as necessary. Children enjoyed freedom of movement within their pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area and sunscreen was applied as needed during the sunny weather.

The children availing of the part time or full day care service slept at a designated time before dinner and low level beds with individual linen were available. Cots were available for the younger children who were put down to sleep when tired.

Supporting relationships around children

The atmosphere in the service was friendly, happy and child centred. The staff members were observed responding to the children in a positive manner and provided positive praise and encouragement to each child on a regular basis. Any child that became upset or tired were responded to with reassuring words of comfort and younger children were held and cuddled. Children were spoken to in a respectful manner and first names were used.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times and via an electronic communication system that parents could remotely access with updates on their child's day, routines and activities. Newsletters were distributed to parents and individual meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary. Email and telephone contact are also used as an alternative method of contact.

Physical and material environment

The physical and material environments in the pre-school rooms were comfortable, inviting and arranged to accommodate the needs of all children. Low level open shelving units ensured the play and learning materials were easily accessed by the children and areas of interest included mark making, home/kitchen corners, construction, sensory tables, dress up and small world. Learning and educational materials included a variety of puzzles, interconnecting toys and materials for cutting, sticking and gluing. Age appropriate toys and materials were provided for the younger children who were observed enjoying an activity using shredded paper in the Wobbler room. Comfortable rest areas in each room provided a space for children to rest and take a break from activities if they wished during the day. The secure outdoor area located to the rear and the sides of the premises had an artificial grass surface and was equipped with wooden and plastic climbing frames, ride on and push/pull equipment and a large, sheltered area provided and area for play 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.