

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024WW002		
Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd		
Address of Service:	Charlesland, Greystones, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	A63 A6N6		
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	14/04/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	88	PM 69
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow		
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and S. Early O'Brien		
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

This privately owned service was opened in 2024 and is registered to provide care and education for children aged between one year and six years of age. The service is registered to provide sessional, part-time and full day care to 139 children and operates from 7:00 – 18.30 Monday to Friday, (including a sessional Early Childhood and Education Scheme (ECCE) service for 38 weeks of the year). The service is in a residential area in Greystones Co Wicklow.

The purpose-built premises consists of a two-storey standalone building with eight care rooms, one designated sleep room, sanitary accommodation for both children and adults, a kitchen, staff room, storage rooms, an office and an entrance hallway. The outdoor play area for the service is sited at the back of the premises and car parking is provided at the front of the building

Staffing

There are 25 adults currently employed in the service. Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that there are 17 new adults working in the service since the last inspection 24 June 2025, this includes the deputy person in charge and the full-time chef. The registered provider does not work directly with the children.

There were 19 adults present on the day of inspection, this included the person in charge, deputy person in charge and the full-time chef, 17 adults were working directly with the children.

On the day of inspection an outside play contractor was also present. The regional manager and the operations manager arrived at the service to help 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:

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- 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under
Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels.

Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service. (a) & (h-k)

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under
regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child
regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler (1) and (2) and Toddler (1) and (2)

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 person in charge, regional manager, operations manager, 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*
- (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.*

(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

Following a discussion with the person in charge and reviewing the staff roster it was confirmed that 17 adults were working directly with the children. Including the outside play contractor, regional manger and operations manager a total of 28 files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

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(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service. All adults had their identified roles.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of 28 adults.

(c)

Completed three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for 28 adults.

(d)

International police vetting was available for 14 adults who had lived outside the State for more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Twenty-five adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or had a qualification deemed equivalent.

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)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

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(2)

The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were 17 adults working directly with 88 children in the morning time and 14 adults working with 69 children in the afternoon on the day of inspection.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a), (h)-(k),

The person in charge made sure that a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The person in charge ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

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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-

(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)

There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the pre-school throughout the morning. Adults were observed to be warm and kind towards the children in their care evidenced by soft language tones and use of the children's individual names during activities

The adults supported children at play in both individual and small group activities showing them how to share and take turns and praising them for their efforts.

It was clear from the interactions between the adults and the children in their care, that they knew the children very well.

Some examples of how well the staff members knew the children in their rooms was as follows, staff knew all the children's birthdays, the names of the children's parents and extended family members, including grandparents and even family pets.

The pre-school rooms were well laid out with age-appropriate materials and equipment which was easily accessible on the low-level shelving provided.

All snacks and a healthy lunch were provided by the pre-school. Drinking water was freely available and children also had their own individual drinking containers.

Lunch was observed to be an enjoyable and relaxed event. All children were observed to have freedom of movement within their rooms. Adults sat with the children at mealtime and conversation was encouraged, and younger children were given assistance with eating should they require it.

Transitions from one activity to another were seamless and unrushed and children were happy to go from one activity to the next.

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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 main door to the service was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- All toys examined were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in the service.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules for all pre-school rooms and for the remainder of the premises were available and maintained.
- Each pre-school room had access to a sanitary area, with toilets, changing tables, warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children's soothers were stored in individual containers and named accordingly, cleaning and storing of soothers was included in the daily cleaning policy of the service.
- A foot pedal bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all pre-school rooms and the nappy changing areas.
- Table cleaning in Wobbler (2) and Toddler (2) was observed before and after snack time as was hand washing by adults and children before snacks and after using the toilet.
- Nappy changing was observed on the day of inspection; the practices were fully in line with the nappy changing practices of the service.

Administration of Medication:

While the administration of medication was not observed on the day of inspection, a review of 20 service medication administration records demonstrated that the service was fully compliant in their administration practice and record keeping.

Safe Sleep:

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There was a designated sleep room in the service with six cots. At 11.25 there were six babies in the cots with two adults present in the room. The children's sleep was recorded electronically at ten-minute intervals and was in accordance with safe sleep practices and the sleep policy of the service.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit route from each care room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.
- There were in date annual records available for the testing of fire equipment and smoke alarms for the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. On the day of inspection in Wobbler (1) no hand washing of the children's hands was observed before the children were sat at the table for their lunch. Hand washing is an essential part of infection control.
2. On repeated occasions in Wobbler (1) the lid of foot operated pedal bin was lifted by hand by staff members to dispose of used tissues and other items. The pedal was in full working order.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Staff have been reminded of the importance of hand washing before meal and training has been carried out with all staff in relation to ensuring all children wash their hands before every meal. Ongoing supervision checks by local management will be carried out to ensure the correct practice is now being carried out consistently.
2. All staff have been reminded of the importance of using the foot-operated pedal bin correctly at all times to minimise the risk of cross contamination and maintain effective infection control practices. Refresher training through training cards were carried out with staff to reinforce correct hygiene procedures and ensure compliance going forward. Local management will carry out spot checks to ensure that all staff are following the correct practice and ensure compliance with all aspects of regulation 23.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of staff signed retraining in hand hygiene and safe handling bins was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

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The above actions should address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 Infection Control and will be reviewed on next inspection.