

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DY005
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Limited
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Address of Service:	Blackwood Avenue, Santry.
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Eircode:	D09 THT4
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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:	24/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	JA. McKimm and C. Harte
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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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).

Description of service

Little Harvard Ltd is a privately operated service located in a residential and retail complex in Santry North Dublin. The service is one of 20 services operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 90 children on a full day care basis Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 6:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service has six care rooms named Preschool rooms 1-6, a kitchen and an office. There is sanitary accommodation for children in all care rooms and sanitary accommodation for staff is located adjacent to the office. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and employs twenty people to work in the service; this includes a chef and relief chef who work in the kitchen and one ancillary staff member who works as a cleaner. On the day of inspection the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, the chef and eleven early years practitioners were present in the service.

The service also has a senior management team who are not based in the service, but who provide support to the service as required. The regional manager arrived during the inspection and remained for the duration of the inspection. The training manager was also present throughout 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 and safety. 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 person in charge, deputy 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

(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.*

(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)** The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
 - (b)** A designated person in charge was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service on the day of inspection. The person in charge and deputy person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c)** There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.

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- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with management showed that there are currently twenty adults employed by the registered provider to work within the service and that thirteen new staff members have been employed since the last inspection. These staff files were reviewed. This included the deputy person in charge, the training manager, the chef, relief chef and seven early years practitioners including three staff members providing support under the access and inclusion model (AIM).
- (a) There were twenty-four written and validated references available from a past employer.
 - (b) There were two written and validated reference from a person other than a previous employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for thirteen adults. This showed that the service had 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 ten adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to thirteen adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Eleven adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability, and Equality.

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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

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Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that staffing levels were adequate to respond to the individual needs of the children throughout the inspection. There were twelve adults caring for sixty-five children on the morning of inspection and seven adults caring for thirty children on the afternoon.
- (4) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children.

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

- (1) (a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs

- Children were provided with regular meals and snacks, the food served was reflected in the service menu. At morning snack time children were observed to be offered bread sticks with a selection of fruit including watermelon, apples and bananas sliced up into small pieces. The service also provided a hot meal option for children which was prepared on site, for example, at dinnertime fish fingers, mash potatoes and beans were served at 1.00pm. There was an alternative food option available.
- Children's labelled water bottles were available within their reach throughout each of the care rooms, should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- Snack time and mealtimes were observed to be a social experience as children sat with both staff and their peers.

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- The children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection. This supported their social, cognitive, and gross and fine motor development. In addition, one section of the outdoor play area was sheltered. This provided children with shelter and protected them from direct sunlight.
- Blind were pulled down in the sleep area to help create a calm and restful environment.

Supporting Relationships

- Children were observed to have the freedom to move freely in their care room and independently choose their activities and play experiences.
- Staff were observed to interact continuously with the children and were sensitive to the needs of all children. For example, they helped children with dress up play and encouraged them to participate in tabletop activities.
- Children's artwork, photographs, family walls and birthday charts were displayed throughout the playrooms and service, supporting the children's sense of identity and links between home and the service. In addition, children had their own individually labelled coat hooks.
- Parents were welcomed into the service. The inspector observed staff to chat with parents at drop off and collection time.

Physical and Material Environment

- The furniture provided in each care room was low level and appropriate for children attending, with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low-level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice. Children played companionably together in the care rooms.
- The rooms were well laid out with designated areas of interest to provide for distinct types of play and learning, for example cosy corner, kitchen area, construction area, imaginative play areas.
- Children accessed the outdoor play area which had a soft ground surface on the day of inspection. It was equipped with a climbing frame and slide, a water table and funnels, a large sandpit, a planting area, wall mirrors a range of outdoor play props and had covered it an area with child sized picnic tables.

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Non-Compliance Information

1. In one care room a staff member did not respond to the child's needs during snack time which led to frustration for the child. The child was observed to repeat their request for assistance. Action was taken by the staff member when prompted by the inspector. It is important for staff to respond quickly and appropriately to children to ensure they feel safe, valued and develop secure attachments.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Expectations around responding promptly to children's requests and emotional needs were reinforced and training was provided to staff. The responsive supervision during mealtimes training card will be reviewed with all staff. Room Leaders will continue to monitor practice through regular observations to ensure responsive interactions are consistently maintained during mealtimes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

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 door into the premises was appropriately secured with a keypad to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The inspectors were asked to sign in the visitor book.
- The enclosed outdoor play area was secure reducing the risk of unauthorised access. Children who were brought out to the outdoor play areas from indoors were observed to be supervised.
- Blind cords were secured in the care rooms.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.

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- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.

Infection Control:

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There were cleaning schedules on the wall of the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to allow hygienic disposal of waste.
- Children lunches brought from home containing perishable items were appropriately refrigerated.

Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep practices were in line with current safe sleep guidance. Children over two years of age slept on appropriate floor mats
- A log was maintained where the temperature of the room and the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every 10 minutes.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency evacuation routes were clear of obstructions and fire evacuation procedures were displayed on the walls of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A child had uncut grapes in their lunch box posing a potential safety risk. It is acknowledged that once this was highlighted by the inspector, they were promptly removed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Staff were reminded of the service's procedures for identifying and managing choking hazards during mealtimes. The Mealtimes and Healthy Eating training card will be reviewed with all staff at refresher training. Daily lunchbox checks will continue, and parents will be reminded of the service's safe food preparation requirements, including the preparation of foods that present a choking risk.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Mealtimes and healthy eating training card

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) There was documentary evidence to show that four adults held certification in First Aid Response training and that at least one adult was rostered to on the premises at all times.

(2) (a)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available to the adults caring for the children and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the care room.