

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE001
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Green, Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip, Co Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 W2NR
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date 1 of Inspection:	02/03/2026
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Date 2 of Inspection:	03/03/2026
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No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	103	PM	86
No of pre-school children: Day 2	AM	98	PM	n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare, W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
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, Barnhall Meadows, Leixlip is one of 22 early years services privately operated by the registered provider. The service opened in 2023 and is registered to provide full day care to a maximum of 122 children aged 0-6 years. All children were aged 1 - 6 years on the days of the inspection. The service operates from a purpose-built, two-story facility within a housing development on the outskirts of Leixlip, Co Kildare. Children are allocated to one of eight care rooms according to their age and stage of development. A cot room is located between the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms. An outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises. The service opens from 07:00 to 18:30 Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are 24 staff employed to work in the service including the service manager, chef and cleaner. Twenty-one staff are employed to work directly with the children. The service manager also works directly with the children when required and provides cover for staff breaks. A senior management team of five staff are employed to oversee the management of all the registered providers services. Two of these worked directly with the children during the inspection. A student was also present on Day 1 of the inspection. The registered provider does not work 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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

Regulation 9 (1), (2), (3) & (4) – Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 (1), (2) & (8) (a) – Staffing Levels

Regulation 16 (1) (i) & (k), (2) (b) & (3) – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service

Regulation 19 (1) (b) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 25 – First Aid

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 20 (1) (b) – Facilities for Rest and Play. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1) (b) and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler 1 and Pre-school 4 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 days 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.*

(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 person in charge and named persons to deputise in their absence.
 - (b)** The person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a named person to deputise to be present at all times of opening.
 - (c)** There was a clear management structure within the service. Staff and managers demonstrated an awareness of their roles and the lines of authority. Staff roles were documented.

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(2) This regulation was inspected in relation to eight adults and a student who had started working in the service since the last inspection dated 29 July 2025. Regulation 9 (2) (c) also included one adult who was employed prior to the last inspection, whose Garda vetting was due for renewal.

(a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to references. Each adult had a minimum of two references. References had been provided from other sources where the staff member had only one or no previous employers. Each reference had a record of verification.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the nine 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) International police vetting had been sourced for seven adults who had lived in another state for more than six months as an adult.

(4) This regulation was inspected for seven adults who had been employed to work directly with children since the previous inspection dated 29 July 2025. The adults 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.

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)-

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(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 worked directly with the children. There were 21 adults allocated on each of the inspection days to work directly with a maximum of 103 children. The service manager provided assistance within the rooms including break cover. The area manager and operations manager also worked directly with the children during the inspection.

(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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends 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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) Detailed daily staff rosters were available.
- (k) Detailed records of accidents, injuries and incidents were available.
- (2)(b) Records of accidents and incidents were available from the previous two years. The managers demonstrated an awareness of the requirements for record retention.
- (3) The records required under regulation 16 (1) (i) and (k) were made available to the inspectors on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(k) Whilst records demonstrated that the registered provider was compliant in regulation (1) – (3) it was not evident that parents/guardians were always informed when accidents and incidents occurred in relation to their child. Fifteen accident and incident records were sampled for inspection dated between January and March 2026. Three of the records did not include a parent/guardian signature contrary to the service's accident and incident policy which stated that parents/guardians will be asked to sign off on the accident/incident report and will receive a copy. Failure to communicate accidents/incidents with parents may impact the continuation of safe and appropriate care for the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In-person training on the accident and incident reporting policy has been completed with all staff. Staff have been reminded of the importance of completing all sections of the accident/incident form thoroughly, ensuring all relevant information is recorded in a timely manner. Accident/incident and parent handover training cards have been completed, signed, and are retained in staff files. Ongoing supervision will be maintained through regular checks by local management to ensure all accident/incident forms are completed and signed appropriately. The policy will be reinforced with staff through periodic trainings and through staff meetings.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff signatures confirming attendance at training in relation to the service's accident and incident reporting policy and procedures dated 18 March 2026.

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Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

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

The children moved freely within their rooms. They were dressed in coats when playing outside. Meals, snacks and drinks were offered at regular intervals. The younger children wore bibs to protect their clothing from getting soiled or wet when eating. The adults sat with the children during meals and snacks and supported them to row w independent when feeding.

Children wearing nappies had these changed at routine times and promptly in between when required. Children using the toilet were supported towards independence with staff guiding them on appropriate care including handwashing. An area was available in each room where children could rest or take a break from activities. Children were made comfortable when being placed to sleep with staff removing their outer clothes and giving soothers to those who used them.

All staff interactions with children were observed to be kind and gentle. Children were comforted when they became upset. Information in relation to individual children including nappy changes, sleep and meals was recorded. Staff reported this was for sharing with parents on collection.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were not enough suitable facilities for the number of children in the Wobbler 1 room who required sleep at the same time on Day 1 of the inspection. The inspector observed one child showing signs of tiredness including crying and rubbing her eyes at 11:24. The adult caring for her reported that she was probably tired, but she could not put her to sleep until another child woke up as all 12 cots were occupied. The inspector was informed that this occurs occasionally when the children's sleep times overlap.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new sleep plan has been implemented across Wobbler 1 and Wobbler 2 rooms to ensure all children's needs are met. A designated spare cot is maintained during sleep times to accommodate any child who may require rest as needed. Local and regional management will conduct periodic spot checks to ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 20. Sleep arrangements will also be kept under regular review to ensure they continue to meet the needs of all children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Floor plan of sleep room with named allocation of cots including a free cot.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted should address the non-compliance. This will be assessed in practice on the next inspection.

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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:

Inspectors observations demonstrated that measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Entrances were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Equipment and materials were well maintained and suitable to the ages and stages of the children. The kitchen was inaccessible to children and hazardous items including cleaning products, medicines and cables were secured out of children's reach. Emergency exits were kept clear, and staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to evacuate safely in the event of a fire.

Infection Control:

Inspectors observations demonstrated that measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well-maintained. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff guided children to wash their hands at appropriate times including after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play. Pedal operated bins were in place to manage waste appropriately. Cleaning schedules were in place for laundering fabric materials.

Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an awareness of how to administer medicine safely if required including having a second staff member present to witness. Medications were stored in their original packaging out of reach of children. Detailed records were available for medicines given and included parent/guardian consent.

Safe Sleep:

Children slept in low beds or cots appropriate to their age and stage of development. The room temperatures were maintained between 18-20° C. Staff demonstrated an understanding of safe sleep guidelines. They checked sleeping children at 10 minute intervals and made a record of the checks. An adult always remained in the room with children when they slept on low beds.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

It was not evident that repeated incidents of children biting each other in the Toddler 1 room were appropriately managed to reduce/prevent recurrence. Six of the 15 accident/incident records sampled for inspection detailed bites in the Toddler room from January to March 2026. One child had received two of the bites. Although the immediate actions were detailed in response to the bites including first aid treatment, there was no evidence that staff/management had sought to establish the reasons for biting and therefore reduce/prevent recurrence. This was at variance with the service's behaviour management policy which stated, 'if a child is bitten more than once or repeatedly staff will look to see if there are any triggers/patterns to the child being bitten and put any appropriate supports or measures in place to reduce/eliminate this risk'.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff have been retrained in relation to the management of biting incidents. Staff have been informed that where a child bites twice within a four-week period, a biting risk assessment must be completed. Where a child bites three times within a four-week period, a further risk assessment and an ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence) record must be completed, and management will arrange a meeting with the child's parent/guardian to develop a behaviour support plan in line with the service's policy. Local and regional management will carry out regular spot checks to ensure all biting procedures are followed. Ongoing monitoring of incidents will be maintained, and staff will receive refresher guidance as needed to ensure consistent implementation of the policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Staff signatures confirming attendance at training in relation to the service's biting policy and procedures dated 18 March 2026.
- Challenging behaviour risk assessment template.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

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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) A person with a recognised certificate in first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a trained person to always be available to the children.

(2)

(a) The service had suitably equipped first aid boxes which were stored in conspicuous positions.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available for use by staff.