

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE002
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Name of Service:	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Park, Ledwill Park, Kilcock, Naas, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 X2IV
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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(s) of Inspection:	14/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	80	PM	74
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern, R. Phillips and K. O' Neill
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, Ledwill Park, Kilcock opened in 2023. It is 1 of 22 private early years services operated by the registered provider. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 132 children aged between one and six years. The service operates from 07:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday and offers full day, part-time and sessional education and care. The service is provided from a purpose-built two-story building in a housing development on the outskirts of Kilcock, Co. Kildare. The premises includes nine care rooms with sanitary facilities, a cot room and two outdoor areas. Eight care rooms were in use on the day of inspection.

Staffing

There are 24 staff employed to work in the service including the manager, assistant manager, a chef and a cleaner. Twenty staff are employed to work directly with the children. Fourteen staff were rostered to work directly with children on the day of the inspection with the assistant manager available to cover staff breaks. The company's regional and operations managers and two staff from the company's other services arrived during the inspection and also provided cover for staff breaks.

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 areas of governance and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 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*

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(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 a named person to deputise.

(b) The deputy person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(c) The service had a clearly documented management structure. Staff members and managers were aware of their roles and the lines of authority.

(2)(a) & (b) The inspection focused on the recruitment records of five adults who were new to the service since these regulations were last inspected. There were two suitable references available for each adult with a record of verification.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for all five adults.

(4) All five adults held 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.

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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 with the children. There were 14 adults rostered to work directly with a maximum of 80 children. The deputy person in charge, the company's operations manager, the company's regional manager and two staff from another of the company's services provided break cover.

(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 adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be present at all times of opening.

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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:

Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Emergency exits were kept clear. Equipment was well maintained and suitable to the ages and stages of the children. Hazardous items including cleaning products, medicines and cables were secured out of children's reach. Records of monthly fire drills were available, and staff were able to state the measures they should take to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

The children were appropriately supervised throughout the inspection. This included playing indoors and outdoors, whilst eating and when using the sanitary facilities.