

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025FL001
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Harvard Child Care Ltd
-------------------------	-------------------------------

Address of Service:	20 The Court, Balmoston, Donabate, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	K36 E3Y5
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrave, Regina McGovern
-------------------------------------	---------------------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	20/07/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM	64
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building, Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford and Á Dunne
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Little Harvard Child Care Ltd is a private service located in an urban area on the north side of Dublin city one of 22 operated by the registered providers. The service provides full day, part time and sessional care to children aged from 1 to 6 years of age and operates from 7.00am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and offers a service for school age children.

This service operates from two floors of a purpose-built premises and consists of ten care rooms, two outdoor areas, a separate cot room, a service kitchen for the preparation of meals, a staff office, and sanitary facilities. On the day of inspection there were nine care rooms in operation to include, Wobbler 1, 2 and 3, Toddler 1,2 and 3, the Preschool rooms 1 and 2 and the Afterschool room.

Staffing

The service employs a total of 27 staff to include the 2 registered providers, an operations manager, an area manager, designated person in charge, deputy designated person, a cook and driver along with 19 childcare staff. The registered providers do not work within the service and the designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge are not assigned to a care room but are available to assist if required. A student on work experience was due to commence working in the service the day following 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:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 regulations 9,11,19,23,26 and 28, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16 and 27. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16,19,23,26 and 27. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Wobbler 2 and Toddler 1, 2 and 3 rooms and did not include Wobbler 1, 3 and the Preschool rooms 1 and 2 and the Afterschool room.

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 operations manager, area manager, designated person in charge, deputy designated person, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) The files of 11 new staff members employed in the service since the last inspection were reviewed along with one student on work experience. Garda vetting disclosures for all staff were also reviewed.

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a) Twenty-one validated written references were available from a past employer.

(b) Three validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 27 staff members employed in the service and 1 student. 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 for all staff employed.

(d) Police vetting was available from 13 countries in respect of 11 staff members and 1 student who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Nine new staff members who work directly with the early years children had documentary evidence of 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 (DCDE).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

(2) During the inspection the following adult child ratios were observed.

- Wobbler 1 room- 2 adults working with 5 children aged from 1-2 years of age in the morning and 4 children in the afternoon.
- Wobbler 2 room- 1 adult working with 1 child aged from 1-2 years of age in the morning.
- Wobbler 3 room- 1 adult working with 3 children aged from 1-2 years of age in the morning and in the afternoon.
- Toddler 1 room-3 adults working with 16 children aged from 2-3 years of age in the morning and 15 children in the afternoon.
- Toddler 2 room-2 adults working with 9 children aged from 1-3 years of age in the morning and in the afternoon.
- Preschool 1 room- 2 adults working with 16 children aged from 3-4 years of age in the morning and 13 in the afternoon.
- Preschool 2 room- 2 adults working with 11 children aged from 3-4 years of age in the morning and 12 children in the afternoon
- Afterschool room- 2 adults working with 2 children aged from 3-5 years of age in the morning and the afternoon. Twelve children who were availing of the after-school service were also present.

(8)(a) On review of the service roster and on discussion with staff two adults were on the premises during the operation of the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

(2) During the inspection the adult child ratio in the Toddler 3 room was not maintained as there was one adult caring for six children aged 1-2 years of age from 10:38am to 11:30am and 2.00pm to 3:30pm. Two adults were required for this number and age of children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) In response to the non-compliance the registered providers have stated that the daily rota was reviewed to ensure that appropriate cover is available. Room leaders are responsible for ensuring ratios are maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) Staff meeting held 21 July 2026 and updated staff rota.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers regarding Regulation 11 were reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) The arrival and departure time of each child in the care rooms inspected were recorded in the service electronic application and reflective of the children present in the care rooms.

(i) A staff roster was available for inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(k)

1. Staff did not record two incidents that occurred in the Toddler 1 room at the time they occurred, which is at variance with the service policy and procedures for accidents and incidents. Staff completed the forms on the instigation of the early year's inspector at the feedback meeting later in the afternoon of the inspection, however, the children had gone home. It is acknowledged that the operations manager advised the inspectors that the parents of both children would be informed of the incidents that occurred.

2. The information recorded for two incidents that occurred in the service were incomplete and did not include the signature of the parents with a date to confirm they were made aware of the incidents occurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(k)

1 and 2. In response to the non-compliances the service has stated that at a meeting on the 21 July and 19 August 2026 staff were reminded to complete accident and incident reports when they occur and all staff were retrained in the service policy. Room leaders will review all accident and incident records daily to ensure they are completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(k)

1 and 2. Completed accident and incident records, minutes of staff meetings and training completed.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers regarding Regulation 16 were reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)

Basic Needs

- The children were provided with regular opportunities to have meals and snacks during the day. Food eaten consisted of a breakfast on arrival, a morning snack at 10:30am of crackers and fruit, a hot meal at 1:30pm of chicken curry and rice and an alternative meal was available if required. An afternoon tea of crackers, hummus, sliced carrot and apple was provided at 3:30pm. Food was available between set mealtimes if a child was hungry, and water was available throughout the day and stored in an accessible position for the children to access. Additional food was available and offered to children at mealtimes.
- The transitions between activities in the Toddler 2 and 3 rooms were observed to be calm and organised with staff giving the children clear and concise instructions that were suitable for the developmental age of the children.
- Snack and mealtimes in the Wobbler 2, Toddler 2 and 3 rooms were observed to be calm, relaxed and sociable occasions for the children with staff sitting with the children at their level and engaging in conversation.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Throughout the Toddler 2 and 3 rooms natural, open ended play materials were available to the children such as play kitchens, dolls, dress up, activity areas with cars, trucks, blocks and bricks. These materials promoted the use of all the children's senses and can provoke exploration, curiosity and creativity. Areas with mats, cushions and child size furniture were available for children to rest or take a break from activities if required.
- Two enclosed outdoor areas to the front of the service enabled the children to explore and develop their skills of climbing, running and jumping. Both areas had overhead canopies which provided shelter to enable staff and children to enjoy the areas in all weather conditions. The materials and equipment

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

available to the children included climbing frames, bikes, building blocks, water and sand trays, see saw, slides, blackboard and chalk.

Supporting Relationships:

- The staff in the Toddler 2 and 3 care rooms updated parents on their child's meals, snacks, sleeping, nappy changes and activities undertaken through verbal conversation at drop off and collection and by a communication page given to parents on collection.
- Staff the Wobbler 2, Toddler 2 and 3 care rooms worked well together in providing care to the children which enabled smooth transitions between activities such as mealtimes, sleep and getting ready for outdoor play.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

1. The following observations were made in the Toddler 1 care room during the inspection which did not promote the social and emotional wellbeing of the children in attendance.

- Staff were not familiar with the children or their names which created confusion and inconsistency in their care. They were unable to name children when the inspector asked their names to ascertain who had outdoor play. As a result, only seven children out of 15 in attendance on the day of inspection were afforded the opportunity of outdoor play with four of the children having two sessions of outdoor play and three have one session.
- Staff were not familiar with the sleep routine of the children, for example six children were observed not to settle to sleep on low beds in a darkened room from 11.38am to 12.22pm and on the arrival and with the assistance of the operations manager to the service these children were moved and facilitated to play in another care room and slept later in the afternoon from 14.37pm to 15.33pm.

Physical and Material Environment:

2. In the Toddler 1 room, the following was observed:

- Staff did not adequately prepare for the number and age profile of the children that were in attendance in the care room. There was an inadequate number of chairs and tables for the 16 children aged 2-3 years who required a seat at morning snack. As a result, three children had no chair or table at morning snack time and one child who did not have a chair to sit on was observed becoming very upset and cried until the inspectors intervened.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Cause and effect toys were not working and wooden puzzles with missing pieces were present on the shelves, removing the play and developmental purpose of the toy from the children.
- At sleep time, the music player used to play music to create a calm environment, was not working effectively, leading to intermittent disturbance to the sleep environment, while children endeavoured to fall and stay asleep.

Supporting Relationships:

3. In the Wobbler 3, Toddler 1 and the Preschool 1 rooms on the initial arrival of the inspectors to each care room children were observed to be crying and visually upset. The emotional support needs of these children were not met by staff and inspectors had to prompt staff to support and provide reassurance to the children who were crying, while in their care. Children require support and assistance during transitions to new care rooms and environments to enable them to settle and enjoy the experiences available

Programme of Activities:

4. In the Toddler 1 room, the inspector observed that no planned or structured play activities were scheduled or took place for the children to participate in. This practice does not demonstrate planning to meet the development needs and interests of the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

1. In response to the non-compliances the service has stated that the key worker arrangements and children's individual routines were reviewed. A staff meeting was held on the 21 July 2026 and the issues discussed with staff. Outdoor play is incorporated into the children's daily routine.

Physical and Material Environment:

2. In response the service stated that furniture and equipment in the care room was reviewed and updated. Staff were reminded to review room equipment at the staff meeting on the 21 July 2026.

Supporting Relationships:

3. In response to the non-compliances staff were reminded to be aware of the children's needs at transitions and to offer additional support. A dedicated child experience and development officer has been appointed and will work with staff.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Programme of Activities:

4. In response the programme of activities was reviewed, and staff were reminded to be aware of children's interests and development when planning activities and room layouts.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

1. Staff meeting held 21 July 2026 and key worker information.

Physical and Material Environment:

2. Photographic evidence and minutes of staff meeting.

Supporting Relationships

3. Staff meeting held 21 July 2026

Programme of Activities:

4. Staff meeting held 21 July 2026, examples of planned learning and activities

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers regarding Regulation 19(1)(a) were reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

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:

- Entry to the service was secured when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. There was a door and gate lock system in place which was managed and monitored by staff. This restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor gates were fitted with locks inaccessible to the children.
- All cleaning agents and sharp equipment were stored out of reach of the children in locked presses or on high shelves.
- Low level windows and all blind cords in the care rooms were secured.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap, single use hand towels and electric hand dryers were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- All children were supported to hand wash before mealtimes.
- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules in operation within the care room and sanitary facility. The care rooms and sanitary facilities had active mechanical ventilation to extract any stale air.

Safe Sleep:

- All children under the age of two years were facilitated to sleep in standard cots that were observed to be suitable with washable/ wipeable covers with each child being provided with their own sheet and cellular blanket.
- Ten-minute sleep checks for colour, position and breathing of sleeping children were completed and the temperature of the room was recorded.
- Staff maintained ten-minute sleep checks on sleeping children to include each child's colour, breathing and position. The temperature of the downstairs cot room was recorded as 18.8-19.3°C at 11:29m and the Toddler 1 room was 21.9°C at 12.12pm. This is within the recommended temperature of 18°C to 22°C for children aged from 1- 3 years while they slept.

Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service and all fire equipment to include fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were serviced yearly.
- The designated fire exits in the care rooms inspected were illuminated and clear of any obstructions throughout the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Staff in the Toddler 1 room were not familiar with the individual dietary needs of a child in their care. As a result, confusion among staff arose when food that arrived from the kitchen for a named child was made available. Written information of a potential allergy or food preference was not visually available to staff. This increased the potential risk of an emergency occurring.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection Control:

2. In the Toddler 1 and 3 rooms there was evidence to demonstrate that staff were unaware of the service policies and procedures on infection control, handwashing and nappy changing procedure. This increased the potential risk of cross infection. For example.

- Staff did not complete nappy changing according to the service policy and best practice guidelines. Staff did not remove their apron and gloves after removing a soiled nappy and handwashing was not completed consistently by both staff and children after the process was completed.
- Children having their nappies changed did not have the toys they were carrying removed from them prior to entering the area.
- Staff stored additional equipment for children such as clothes, nappies and creams directly beside the toilet.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In response to the non-compliance the service has stated that all dietary information was reviewed and relayed to staff at a staff meeting on the 21 July 2026.

Infection Control:

2. In response the service has stated that infection control practices were reviewed at a staff meeting and staff have completed refresher training.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Staff meeting 21 July 2026.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic and documentary evidence.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers regarding Regulation 23 were reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 4 June 2026.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. Fire extinguishers were serviced on the 31 August 2025, and smoke alarms were serviced on the 18 March 2026.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Non-Compliance Information

Staff caring for children in the Toddler 1 room did not ensure that the children were supervised at all times while they played in the care room. As a result, five children covered their arms, legs and bodies in coloured markers. Staff should be aware of the level of supervision required during the use of such equipment that they introduce children in their care to.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In response the registered providers have stated that the room environment and staff positioning in the care room were reviewed to support effective supervision.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff meeting and room supervision review.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider regarding Regulation 27 were reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered providers had insurance cover in place for 186 pre-school children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27 March 2027.