

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscoil an Chreagain,
Newry

Report of an Inspection
in June 2011

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Naíscóil an Chreagain
Address:	Silverbridge Resource Centre Ford's Cross Silverbridge NEWRY Co Down BT35 9PQ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	1 June 2011
Date of previous inspection:	1 March 2007

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	16	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	16	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	16	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	2	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
• attendance* of funded children for the previous school year	88%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	2
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	2
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: **	
Students	1
Trainees	0

** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
3½ hours	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	16
Percentage returned:	56.25%
Number of written comments:	6

NAÍScoil AN CHREAGAIN, NEWRY, CO DOWN, BT35 9PQ (5AB-0395)

1. Naíscoil an Chreagain is located in Silverbridge Resource Centre, Newry. The naíscoil has access to a large sports hall within the centre and a small outdoor area. The staff follow a HighScope approach to planning their work.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the naíscoil is good. The naíscoil has important strengths in most of its educational provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the naíscoil has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the naíscoil's progress on the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The majority of the children display a positive attitude to learning; they are familiar with the necessary routines and often engage in lengthy periods of concentrated and productive play. A small number of the children display challenging behaviour and this was particularly evident during the physical play sessions at the start and end of the session. The staff needs to ensure that the ground rules for physical play are set for the children from the outset and implement their behaviour management policy more effectively.

4. There are good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. The development of the children's creative development is a particular strength. The children's art work is celebrated in colourful displays around the room and samples of their work and photographs are kept throughout the year in individual folders. Themed story and reference books are easily accessible to the children who make good use of, and refer to them, throughout the session. During the inspection, members of the staff joined the children in the book area to read stories on request and to further promote the development of the children's Irish language and learning. The staff interact well in Irish with the children; almost all the children understand the instructions given and can follow conversations well. The children respond appropriately when given time, and on occasions speak using basic Irish without prompting. The staff needs to encourage longer responses in Irish from the children and have a greater emphasis on the development of the children's Irish language in the written planning. More use could be made of some of the physical play activities to enrich the children's language experience. Nearly all of the children talk about their experiences and engage with each other and the staff confidently.

THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is generally very good; the staff engage purposefully with the children, listen to them and build effectively on their ideas and interests. They encourage the children to recall, predict and problem solve and use mathematical language in a very natural and incidental way. The organisation of the daily timetable provides the children with lengthy periods of time to develop their play; the staff plans to review the start of the session to ensure all the time is used more effectively to promote learning.

6. Themes and topics guide the written planning and ensure variety in the programme. More emphasis needs to be given to the key language to be promoted in the planned learning. The children's responses are monitored and recorded by the staff and shared with the parents throughout the year. The staff needs to make better use of the information gained from their observations to inform the planning and ensure that the needs and interests of all the children are met.

7. The naíscoil provides good support for the children who require additional help with aspects of their learning; their individual needs are identified early, appropriate targets are set and progress is monitored.

8. The staff has developed very good links with the parents; this includes providing them with valuable information about the work of the naíscoil and ways in which they can support their child's language and learning at home, for example, the monthly newsletter highlights key words in Irish. Links have been established with the local bunscoil to help ensure smooth transitions for the children.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the naíscoil is good. There is a welcoming atmosphere based on friendly relationships at all levels. The children appear happy and are at ease with the staff.

10. The naíscoil has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department. The staff needs, however, to ensure that the highest standards of hygiene and safety are provided in the naíscoil and that all points of access for the children are appropriately secured.

11. The naíscoil gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. For example, the children have access to healthy daily snacks and they have regular opportunities to engage in energetic physical activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader of the naíscoil is enthusiastic about her work and promotes a sense of team spirit among the committed staff. She has a clear vision for the future development of the naíscoil and the ongoing professional development of the team.

13. The process of self-evaluation is at an early stage. A three-year development plan ensures that priorities and targets for future development are identified. The staff report that they have good working relationships with their early years specialists from both the Early Years Organisation and Altram and appreciate their advice and support.

14. The key strengths of the naíscoil include:

- the welcoming atmosphere and the friendly relationships between the staff and the children;
- the interesting and varied learning experiences provided for the children in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- the very good quality of the interaction between the adults and the children;
- the good support for the children who require additional help with aspects of their learning; and
- the enthusiasm of the leader and the commitment of the staff to the future development of the naíscoil.

15. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- implement more effectively the behaviour management strategies for the small number of children who display challenging behaviour; and
- ensure that the information gained from the observations is used more effectively to inform the planning and to meet the needs and interests of all the children.

16. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the naíscoil is good. The naíscoil has important strengths in most of its educational provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the naíscoil has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the naíscoil's progress on the areas for improvement.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. Nine of the parents responded to the questionnaire and 6 made additional written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires were very positive and indicated a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the naíscóil's work; in particular, the parents praised the hard-working staff and indicated how their children enjoyed the naíscóil. There were no responses from the management group and one response from staff which was wholly positive. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the naíscóil.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The safety gates positioned at the stairs outside the main cloakroom area are not secure.
- The cleaning cloths used at snack time were not hygienic.
- The mops used to clean the floor were not hygienic and are inappropriately stored in the cloakroom area.
- There are several exposed drains in the outdoor play area which could present a hazard to the children.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2011

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

