

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Naíscoil Uachtar Tíre,  
Castlewellan

Report of an Inspection  
in March 2012

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>   | Naíscoil Uachtar Tíre   |
| <b>Address:</b>                     | The Community Centre<br>32 Circular Road<br>CASTLEWELLAN<br>Co Down<br>BT31 9ED |
| <b>Management Type:</b>             | Voluntary   |
| <b>Date of inspection:</b>          | 6 March 2012  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection:</b> | 3 March 2005  |

### 1. Details of Children

| <b>Total number of children:</b>  | <b>am session</b> | <b>pm session</b> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| • attending the pre-school centre   | 18                | 18                |
| • in their immediate pre-school year  | 13                | 12                |
| • funded by Department of Education (DE)  | 13                | 12                |
| • qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2  | 4                 | 2                 |
| • with a statement of special educational needs   | 0                 | -                 |
| • without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs | 1                 | -                 |
| • with English as an additional language  | 0                 | -                 |
| • who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school                      | 0                 | -                 |
| <b>Attendance:</b>  |                   |                   |
| • attendance* of funded children for the previous school year   | 88%               | -                 |

\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

| <b>Number of:</b>                                 | <b>Full-time</b> | <b>Part-time</b> |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Staff, including leader                           | 2                | 1                |
| Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications | 2                | 1                |
| New appointments within previous 12 months        | 0                | 0                |

| <b>Number of: **</b> |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Students             | 0 |
| Trainees             | 0 |

\*\* Total placements since September of current year

## 3. Details of Sessions

| <b>Duration of morning session</b> | <b>Duration of afternoon session</b> | <b>Number of days open in previous year</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2½ hours                           | N/A                                  | 188   |

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Number issued to parents:   | 36    |
| Percentage returned:        | 36.1% |
| Number of written comments: | 8     |

## **NAÍScoil UACHTAR TÍRE, CASTLEWELLAN, CO DOWN, BT31 9ED (4AB-0163)**

1. Naíscoil Uachtar Tíre is situated in the grounds of the Community Centre in Castlewellan. The children attending the naíscoil come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection in 2007, an additional permanent member of staff has been appointed and the naíscoil has acquired a new mobile classroom.

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 and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified an area 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 area for improvement.

### **CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS**

3. The children are very well settled and their behaviour is excellent; they are at ease with the staff and co-operate readily with them. Most of the children are developing good levels of concentration and independence. They are able to respond appropriately to the staff's instructional comments and demonstrate a good understanding of the Irish language. Most of the children show an interest in songs and rhymes and listen attentively during the enjoyable story sessions; many also demonstrate an understanding of early mathematical ideas and concepts.

### **PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

4. The quality of the new accommodation is good. The room is organised into appropriate areas for learning. The naíscoil has an appropriate range of good quality resources to support the children's learning.

5. The naíscoil's programme promotes effectively the children's personal, social and emotional development and the range of activities provided offers appropriate opportunities for learning in all the other areas of the pre-school curriculum. During the inspection, the staff often engaged the children in valuable discussion about their play and experiences and participated sensitively in their activities. The staff should review the early part of the session to provide a better balance between free-play activities chosen and developed by the children themselves and those organised and directed by the staff. The snack routine provides good opportunities to develop the children's independence and social skills.

6. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is of a high quality. The staff use their Irish consistently to promote the Irish language naturally through the play activities and various routines.

7. The staff meet regularly to plan the programme and have developed useful long- and medium-term plans. As the staff continue to develop their planning, they need to focus further on the development of their short-term plans to ensure progression in the children's learning across all areas of the programme. The observations of the children's responses to learning and the staff's evaluations of the programme should be used more effectively to inform the future planning. The staff also need to develop a policy and procedures to support the learning needs of those children identified with special educational needs (SEN).

8. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the naíscoil is very good. There are very good working relationships between the staff and the children; the children are well cared for and supported by all of the staff. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect between the staff and the children; the staff encourage the children to respect the needs and wishes of others.

9. The naíscoil has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

10. The naíscoil gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity; the children are encouraged to try a range of healthy foods and they have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The leader has effectively managed the relocation of the naíscoil to new premises; she is both enthusiastic and highly motivated. All of the staff are hard-working and dedicated; they work effectively as a team in the best interests of the children. There is a sound foundation of skill and dedication among the staff to enable the work of the naíscoil to develop further.

12. The staff have developed good communication and links with the parents. The year 1 teacher from the local Irish-medium primary school visits the children in order to try to ensure that they make a smooth transition into year 1.

13. The early years specialist (EYS) from Altram is providing appropriate support and guidance for the staff to develop relevant aspects of their work. Good working relationships have been established between the staff and the EYS; the staff value the EYS's advice. The staff are at an early stage in developing the process of self-evaluation; they will benefit from the support and guidance from their EYS to develop further this important aspect of their work.

14. **The key strengths in this naíscoil include the:**

- welcoming atmosphere and the care and respect shown to the children by the staff;
- the children's good behaviour;
- good working relationships at all levels;
- good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- effective promotion of the Irish language through high quality interaction between the staff and the children; and
- enthusiastic leader who has developed an effective team approach among the hard-working and dedicated staff.

15. **The area for improvement includes the need to:**

- develop a policy and procedures to support the children with special educational needs (SEN).

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the naíscóil is good. The naíscóil has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the naíscóil has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the naíscóil's progress on the area 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 committee to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. All of the responses were very positive about the quality of the provision in the naíscoil.

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