

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscóil an Lonnáin, Belfast

Irish-medium voluntary pre-school

Report of an Inspection in
March 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

Naíscoil an Lonnáin is an Irish-medium pre-school playgroup located in Gaelscoil an Lonnáin in West Belfast. None of the current staff were in post at the time of the last inspection in 2014.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	13
Under 3 years of age *	5
Funded by Department of Education	8
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 3 or 4 *	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2 *	#
Number of children who transferred from a Sure Start 2 year old programme	#
Number of children who participated in other Sure Start services	#

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	92
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting

* on the 1 July

** The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

fewer than 5

2. Views of parents and staff

All of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. Their responses were wholly positive about the life and work of the naíscoil. None of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for the children;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children are well-settled and are forming good friendships with one another; their behaviour is very good. The children are happy in the naíscoil and approach the adults with confidence to talk to them about their play or when they require assistance.
- The children respond positively to the established routines of the naíscoil and are developing well their independence, in particular at tidy-up time, during which all of children participate fully. All of the children join enthusiastically in the songs and rhymes in Irish as they make smooth transitions between indoor and outdoor play.
- Most of the children are making good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They engage in purposeful, collaborative play for sustained periods, most notably, at the role-play, dough and construction areas.
- The children understand the Irish spoken to them by the adults and a small number of them are beginning to respond using single words in Irish. They enjoy the group story; they listen attentively, and talk enthusiastically about the story with the leader. The children avail of purposeful early-marking opportunities during role play and in the outdoor environment.
- The children have good fine and gross motor skills. They use a range of tools and utensils with developing confidence at the role-play, creative art and construction areas indoors and in the outdoor mud kitchen. In the outdoor area, the children also engage in energetic play as they pedal, run, throw and balance.

6. Quality of provision

- The cycle of planning, observations and assessment is underdeveloped and does not guide the staff sufficiently in meeting the needs of both the pre-school and the underage children. Although there is planning in place across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, evaluations of the planning and the use of observations of the children to inform future planning are inconsistent.
- The staff have created an attractive and well-organised playroom. There is a good range of recyclable, natural and commercial resources available, allowing the children to develop further their independence and creativity.
- During the break routine, the children: select their own food using tongs; butter their own bread; and clear away their own dishes. There are missed opportunities however to promote further the development of the children's independence, social skills, language and mathematical learning during break. The children move seamlessly between areas of play and the transitions between indoor and outdoor play are smooth and efficient. Songs and rhymes are used effectively by all staff to promote smooth transitions and to broaden the children's vocabulary in Irish.
- The interactions between the staff and the children are mostly good. The staff role model both the Irish language and play effectively for the children; they respond well to the children's needs and interests. At times, the quality of the staff's questioning and interactions does not develop sufficiently the children's language and thinking skills.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscoil's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. The nurturing ethos within the naíscoil, the good relationships at all levels and the staff's consistent pastoral approach to all of the children are strengths in the setting.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff do not have a shared understanding of the use of self-evaluation to inform development planning and bring about improvements in the provision and outcomes for the children. All of the staff, the early years specialist from Altram and the management committee work well collegially in the best interests of the children.
- There are good links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the naíscoil through a fortnightly note and via social media. Almost all of the children transfer to Rang 1 in the Gaelscoil with which the naíscoil shares a site; there are very effective links with all of the staff in the Gaelscoil which support the children and their parents well with transition to Rang 1.

8. Safeguarding

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. However, the naíscoil needs to ensure that all relevant safeguarding and child protection policies are up-to-date and specific to this setting.

9. Overall effectiveness

Naíscoil an Lonnáin needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are:

- to improve the cycle of planning, observations and assessment in order to improve the overall quality of provision and meet more effectively the needs of all the children; and
- to develop a shared understanding of development planning and continuous effective self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The ETI will monitor and report on the naíscoil's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>.

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements, progression and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management, including the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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