

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscoil na Banna, Portadown,
County Armagh

Voluntary, Irish-medium Playgroup

Report of an Inspection in
December 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 na Banna is located in the grounds of St John the Baptist Primary School on the Garvaghy Road, Portadown. A new leader was appointed just after the last inspection in 2014. The naíscoil has experienced a period of instability in relation to staffing for a number of years, with the appointment of a new assistant and deputy leader on an annual basis. There has been a significant increase in enrolment numbers over recent years.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending full-time	23
Funded by Department of Education	23
Without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	#
At CoP stages 1 or 2*	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	N/A
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting.

- * The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.
fewer than 5
N/A not available

2. Views of parents and staff

A minority of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire. The responses were wholly positive. In their written comments, the parents expressed the supportive relationships the staff have developed with the children and parents. The questionnaire responses were shared with the leader and a representative from the management committee.

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 engage in purposeful, collaborative play; in particular at the construction, water and role-play areas. They have good levels of independence as they: self-register on arrival and for break; choose where they wish to play; self-label their work; independently put on aprons for wet play; and, serve their own break. The children do not yet have an understanding of the need to respect the learning environment and resources and the importance of leaving them in an acceptable condition for other children.
- Most of the children have a good understanding of the Irish spoken to them and a small number are beginning to respond in Irish using single words and short phrases. Almost all of the children participate enthusiastically in rehearsing their songs and actions for their upcoming Christmas show. They also enjoy and contribute confidently to the group story; a small number of children access books independently. The children's mark making and representational artwork is of a good standard.
- Most of the children have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and terminology associated with number, shape and measures.
- Almost all of the children have well-developed fine motor skills as they use with ease a range of small tools and utensils at the creative and investigative play areas and during role play.

6. Quality of provision

- The cycle of planning, observation and assessment is underdeveloped and does not guide sufficiently the learning and teaching. Although planning is in place for all areas of the pre-school curriculum, the intended learning and the associated planning for the role of the adult are not sufficiently developed to guide the staff in providing learning experiences which meet the needs of all of the children. On most occasions, the staff record relevant observations of the children across all areas of learning and the information gathered from the observations is used, at times, to inform planning for individual children. The staff have identified appropriately the need to ensure greater consistency across all staff in this practice.
- The staff have created a stimulating, well-organised learning environment in which there is an appropriate range of natural and commercial resources; the children however do not independently access resources to extend and develop further their own learning.
- The organisation of the session at the time of inspection did not provide sufficient opportunities for the children to engage in sustained, free play. During the first part of the morning, the quality of the play was good and on occasions, very good; however, this was not sustained and much of the remainder of the session was dominated by adult-led activities.
- The staff have created a good immersion environment in which the children are exposed to the Irish language through appropriate environmental print, stories, songs and drama. The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is mostly good; almost all of the staff are effective linguistic and play role models.

- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscoil's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the children's outcomes; the positive working relationships create a supportive, immersion learning environment which is developing well the children's understanding of Irish.

7. Leadership and management

- The process of development planning and continuous self-evaluation leading to improvement is underdeveloped. A start has been made to planning for improvement, with the support of the early years' specialist from Altram, and appropriate action plans to guide the staff in this work are now in place.
- The current staff work well as a team. They are supported in their work by the management committee who articulate their appreciation of the hardworking staff and also their concern that the staff cannot always avail of capacity building opportunities owing to the difficulty in finding suitably qualified substitute staff.
- There are effective links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the naíscoil through, for example, an informative monthly newsletter and using a social media platform. There are also good links with the Irish-medium unit in the adjoining primary school which benefit the children as they progress to the next stage of their education.

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:

- continue to update all relevant policies in line with most recent guidance and ensure all staff have a shared understanding of all agreed procedures.

9. Overall effectiveness

Naíscoil na Banna needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are to:

- review the organisation of the day to ensure there is an appropriate balance between free-play and adult-led activities;
- develop further the cycle of planning, observation and assessment to guide more effectively the learning and teaching and raise the outcomes for all children; and
- continue to develop a systematic approach to self-evaluation and planning for 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 management¹:

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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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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