

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscóil na Speiríní,
Draperstown, Co Derry

Report of an Inspection in
December 2014

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

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

The arrangements for this inspection included:

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

All of the parents and staff who responded to the questionnaire were wholly positive about the life and work of the naíscoil.

2. Context

Naíscoil na Speiríní is situated in the grounds of Gaelscoil na Speiríní in the village of Straw, Draperstown, County Derry. The naíscoil relocated in September 2014 to a recently renovated community building, owned by Glór na Speiríní. One new member of staff has been appointed since the time of the last inspection.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Inadequate
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Inadequate
Leadership and Management	Inadequate

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

Almost all of the children are well settled for the time of year and are developing positive attitudes to their learning. When given the opportunity, most of the children: engage in purposeful, concentrated play; collaborate well with each other and with the adults; and have good levels of independence. A small number of children are not yet ready to join in whole-group situations. It is important that the staff address this by offering a more appropriate range of learning activities for the children, matched more effectively to their individual needs.

The children's use of language and communication skills is variable. Most of the children show an understanding of the Irish spoken to them and are responding in Irish using single-word responses. Most of the children show a keen interest in early mark making and access and enjoy books independently. The children are developing a satisfactory understanding of early mathematical language and concepts including shape, colour and number.

6. Provision

- The staff have worked hard to create an attractive learning environment in the recently acquired premises. The playroom is well organised and the children's artwork is valued and displayed around the room.
- The organisation of the day needs reviewed urgently to ensure a greater choice for the children and to extend the time available for free play. There are satisfactory opportunities for learning across most areas of the pre-school curriculum. In particular, the children have good opportunities for mark making and using books throughout the playroom.
- The staff are caring in their approach to the children and there is some evidence of effective interactions between the staff and the children. It will be important for the staff to develop further their competence and confidence in spoken Irish to continue to improve the quality of the interactions with the children and to create a more language-rich immersion environment.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is good. There is a positive, warm ethos and the staff treat the children with care and respect.
- There is insufficient planning to guide the work of the staff and to ensure progression in the children's learning, particularly the children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. In the best practice, the children's learning is observed, assessed and recorded. This needs to be carried out for all children and used to inform better the planning and practice.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader is committed to the life and work of the naíscoil and is supported well by her effective assistant. While a three-year development plan is in place which identifies appropriate priorities, it is not supported well enough by relevant and well-focused action plans. The management committee need to become more involved in all aspects of the life and work of the naíscoil and to ensure that adequate time is available for staff to carry out observations and assessments of the children's learning in order to inform planning at all levels.

- There are good links with the parents, with other pre-school settings and with the local gaelscoil which shares the site with the naíscoil. The parents are kept informed about the life and work of the naíscoil through regular informative newsletters and open days.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from Altram provides effective and regular support to develop the provision in the naíscoil and has identified appropriate areas for development, such as planning and the provision for children who require additional support with aspects of their learning. The management committee are very appreciative of the support of the EYS and have made improvements in the provision based on her advice.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscoil has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant departments.

8. Conclusion

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this naíscoil is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and in leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the naíscoil is to meet effectively the needs of all of the children.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- review urgently the organisation of the day to meet more effectively the needs of all the children and to provide more opportunities for the children to make independent choices and to engage in sustained and purposeful free play; and
- develop the planning, observation and assessment processes in order to best meet the needs of individual children and to ensure progression in learning for all of the children.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the naíscoil's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-18 month period.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION NAÍScoil NA SPEIRÍNÍ, DRAPERSTOWN

1. Details of Children

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

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	84%
Number of days open in previous school year	187

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session
2½ hours	-

3. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	0

*** Total placements since September of current year

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