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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**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Naíscoil Éanna
Newtownabbey**

May 2012

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF NAISCOIL ÉANNA, NEWTOWNABBEY, CO ANTRIM, BT36 7AU (3BB-0535)

The inspection in Naíscóil Éanna in February 2008 highlighted strengths in the positive ethos and the strong commitment of the staff, management and parents to the continued development of the Naíscóil. It also identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- the organisation and management of the transition periods and group sessions;
- the development of the staff's understanding of how to promote concentrated play, build on the children's own ideas and exploit the learning within activities more consistently; and
- the planning to guide the staff in their day-to-day work with the children and match it more closely to the children's varying stages of development.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the playgroup have taken place:

- the number of funded places has doubled from 16 to 32;
- the Naíscóil now offers two sessions with funded places; and
- there have been several staff changes.

The afternoon session has seven pre-school children; this number falls below the minimum requirements as set out by the Expansion Programme criteria.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out one monitoring visit in December 2011 and a follow up inspection on the 11 May 2012.

The action plan received by the Department of Education following the inspection was of a good quality.

The following are the most important improvements observed since the original inspection:

- in the best practice the transition periods are managed more effectively;
- the children listen well and respond enthusiastically during group story sessions;
- the majority of the children are well settled and remain chosen activities for sustained periods;
- the staff demonstrate a greater understanding of how to promote the six areas of learning as outlined in the pre-school curricular guidance document;
- the addition of more resources by the staff into the play areas has increased the opportunities for the children to explore and investigate materials and engage in mark making;
- the staff introduce early mathematical ideas and language more frequently; and

- the staff have benefited from the close liaison with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) from the adjoining Gaelscoil to support the early identification and planning for children with additional needs.

The areas which require further improvement are the need :

- for the leadership and management at all levels, supported by the early years specialist from Altram, to develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems, in order to develop consistency of practice among the full staff team; and
- to continue to embed and build further on the improvements to date.

The Naíscoil has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The follow up inspection has identified some aspects of the areas for improvement which still need to be addressed but equally the playgroup has demonstrated the capacity to address these.

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