

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscóil na Banna, Portadown

Report of an Inspection
in June 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Naíscóil na Banna
Address:	250A Garvaghy Road PORTADOWN Co Armagh BT62 1EB
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	15 June 2012
Date of previous inspection:	7 October 2010

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	21	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	11	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	11	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	*	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	*	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	*	-
• with English as an additional language	*	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	*	-
Attendance:		
• attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	90%	-

* = fewer than 5

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	2	-
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	2	-
New appointments within previous 12 months	-	-

Number of: ***	
Students	-
Trainees	-

*** Total placements since September of current year

3. Details of Sessions

Duration of morning session	Duration of afternoon session	Number of days open in previous year
2½ hours	1½ hours	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	2
Percentage returned:	*
Number of written comments:	*

NAÍScoil NA BANNA, PORTADOWN, CO TYRONE, BT62 1EB (5BB-0392)

1. Naíscoil Na Banna is located at the rear of the St John the Baptist Primary School in Portadown. Since the last inspection, there have been changes in staffing including the appointment of a new leader and assistants. Almost all of the children come from the surrounding area.

2. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this naíscoil is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the naíscoil's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children settle quickly to their chosen activities, make independent choices and have a positive attitude to their play and learning. Nearly all of them demonstrate good progress in their development for the time of year. Their behaviour is very good; they are familiar with routines and show respect for their environment and their peers. They often engage with good levels of interest in extended periods of concentrated and purposeful play.

4. There is good promotion of the children's language skills through, for example, a range of appropriate resources including books and topical interest areas. A majority of the children can talk about their work and demonstrate good levels of attention during story sessions. The staff are skilful in promoting mathematical language through the various activities and routines and as a result, many of the children show an interest in and understanding of basic number and shape.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING

5. The learning environment for the children is attractively presented with distinct areas for play and examples of the children's art work on display around the room. The quality of the interaction between the staff and the children is generally of a good standard; however, on occasions opportunities are missed to extend the play further or to develop the children's responses. Appropriate emphasis is placed by the adult on the promotion of the children's self-esteem and independence. The staff speak consistently in Irish to the children and to each other. The children demonstrate a good understanding of the Irish spoken by the staff and join in confidently in the songs and rhymes.

6. The organisation of the daily timetable ensures a balance between free play and activities organised by the staff. During the latter part of the session the transition between some activities and routines was not smooth and, as a result, there was a degree of time-wasting, over-formality and missed opportunities for learning.

7. The programme provided for the children is varied and is based largely on themes and topics. The current staff timetable provides insufficient time for them to work together on the written planning and record keeping and, as a result, the necessary paperwork is not always complete or up to date. This situation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

8. The communication and links with the parents is good. The children's learning and progress is monitored by the staff and shared with the parents regularly throughout the year. Good links have been established with the local bunscoil.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the naíscóil is good. The strengths include, for example, the friendly, caring ethos and the good working relationships between the staff and the children.

10. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the naíscóil has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following minor areas need to be addressed. The procedures for toileting the children need to be fully implemented in accordance with the naíscóil's own policy and a deputy- designated staff member for safeguarding appointed.

11. The naíscóil gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, the children have access to a healthy snack and have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity in the attractive outdoor area. This provision encourages the children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader promotes a team spirit among the staff; they are all very committed to the future development of the naíscóil. A useful start has been made in developing the process of self-evaluation. The development plan identifies a range of priorities and actions for future development. Almost all policy documents are out of date and need to be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

13. The staff receive support from an early years specialist (EYS) employed by Altram; they report good working relationships with, and helpful support from their EYS.

14. The key strengths of the naíscóil include:

- the friendly, caring ethos and attractively presented learning environment;
- the well behaved children who display a positive attitude to their learning;
- the good quality of Irish language spoken by the staff and the children's good level of understanding;
- the good opportunities for learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- the hard-working team who demonstrate a commitment to the future development of the naíscóil.

15. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- ensure that the staff have the opportunity and sufficient time to work together to plan the programme and to enable them to record accurately the children's progress and development; and
- review and update all policy documents to ensure they are sufficiently detailed to guide the staff in their work, that they meet all statutory requirements, and that parents are regularly informed about key aspects of the provision.

16. In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this naiscoil is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the naiscoil's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents and the staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection. A small number of the parents responded to the questionnaire and indicated a high level of satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the naíscóil's work. The responses from the management group and the staff were also positive but a few concerns were raised by the staff about the lack of time to carry out work commitments. All of the responses have been shared with the staff and management of the naíscóil.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The entrance door to the playroom has no buzzer to alert the staff if children leave the room.
- There is loose wiring in the staffroom that presents a trip hazard.
- Large unused items of electrical equipment are stored precariously in the staffroom.

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