

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscoil na Faiseoige, Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in March 2012

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Naíscóil na Fúiseoige
Address:	6 Summerhill Road Twinbrook Dunmurry BELFAST BT17 0RL
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	4 March 2012
Date of previous inspection:	14 March 2005

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	24	-
• funded by Department of Education (DE)	24	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	1	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
Attendance:		
• attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	76%	-

* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	0	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: **	
Students	0
Trainees	0

** 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	N/A	188

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	37.5%
Number of written comments:	1

NAÍScoil NA FUISEOIGE, BELFAST, BT17 0RL (4AB-0154)

1. Naíscoil na Fúiseoige is accommodated in Ionad na Fúiseoige which is situated on the Summerhill Road in Twinbrook. Most of the children come from the local Colin area; the naiscoil provides a bus and escort service for the remaining children who come from a wide catchment area. Since the last inspection, a new assistant has been appointed.

2. In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the naíscoil is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) will monitor the Naíscoil's progress on the areas for improvement.

CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

3. The children are generally well-settled; during the inspection, there were many instances when they engaged in purposeful and productive play. They are at ease with the staff and turn to them readily for their support and to join in their play. The children are developing good levels of independence and many can sustain interest in their chosen activities. Many of the children are gaining a good understanding of the early mathematical ideas and concepts; they cooperate readily with their peers. The children are able to respond appropriately to the staff's instructional comments, all of which are through the medium of the Irish language.

PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4. There is a friendly, happy atmosphere in the naíscoil good use is made of the children's artwork, posters, and photographs to create colourful displays around the playroom.

5. The interaction of the staff with the children is of a high quality; the staff use their Irish consistently to promote the Irish language naturally through the play activities and various routines. The consistent use of the Irish language and the staff's interaction with the children are key strengths of the naíscoil's provision.

6. The timetable is organised to provide an appropriate balance between free play and activities organised by the staff. The lengthy period of free play ensures that the children benefit from sustained periods of uninterrupted activities. The snack routine is organised informally and allows the children to develop their social and conversational skills.

7. Overall, the naíscoil's programme promotes effectively the children's personal, social and emotional development and the range of activities provided offers appropriate opportunities for learning in all the other areas of the pre-school curriculum. During the inspection, the books that were provided in the areas for play encouraged the children to browse and to use them as sources of reference to extend their play. There are good opportunities provided for the children to experiment with mark making and early writing; as a result many of the children are beginning to write recognisable letters. The children were observed making good use of the range of resources available in the imaginative role play, sand and junk art areas. The provision of imaginative play experiences and the development of the children's early mathematical ideas and literacy skills are particular strengths of the programme.

8. The staff meet regularly to plan the programme and have developed useful long and medium-term plans. As the staff continue to develop their short-term planning, they need to focus further on identifying the learning expected from each activity and to record accurately in their planning the appropriate terminology and structures in Irish they intend to use to support the children in their learning. They also need to refine their observations of the children's learning and development and use the information to inform their future planning.

9. The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the naíscoil is very good. There are very good working relationships between the staff and the children. The staff treat the children with care and respect and provide a supportive environment which is helping them to grow in confidence and independence. The staff encourage the children to respect the needs and wishes of others.

10. The naíscoil has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department.

11. The naíscoil gives good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, for example, as part of the snack routine, the children are encouraged to try a range of healthy foods and they have regular opportunities to engage in physical activity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

12. The leader and the staff are hard-working and dedicated; the regular meetings ensure that all the staff participate in planning the programme. There is a sound foundation of skill and dedication among the staff to enable the work of the naíscoil to develop further.

13. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory. The room is arranged to provide a good range of appropriate activities; the staff need to ensure that all areas of play are clearly defined to ensure that the children's play in one area does not encroach on another area of play. The naíscoil has a good range of resources many of which are freely available to the children; this arrangement is helping to promote the children's independence. More needs to be done by the staff to ensure that the learning environment and resources are clean, well-organised and presented attractively to the children.

14. Most of the children will transfer to the adjoining Irish-medium primary school. Valuable links have been established with the primary school and the staff of the naíscoil liaise with the year 1 teacher in order to ensure that the children make a smooth transition.

15. The staff are at an early stage in developing the process of self-evaluation. They will need support and guidance from their early years specialist (EYS) to develop their understanding of the process.

16. The naíscoil receives support from an EYS from Altram; she has been providing support for the staff for just over one year. Good working relationships have been established between the staff and the EYS and appropriate areas for further development of the work of the naíscoil have been identified.

17. The key strengths in this naíscoil include the:

- well-settled children who display good levels of independence and concentration in their play;
- many instances of good quality interaction between the staff and the children;

- good opportunities for learning in most areas of the pre-school curriculum;
- consistent use made of the Irish language by all of the staff;
- the well-resourced and interesting play activities provided for the children; and
- the good working relationships at all levels developed by the hard working and dedicated staff.

18. The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the methods for planning; and
- refine the observations made of the children and use the information gathered more effectively to inform the planning to meet the differing needs of all of the children.

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the naíscoil is good. The naíscoil has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor the naíscoil's progress on the areas for improvement.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, the staff and the management committee to complete confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. All of the responses were very positive about the quality of the provision made for the children by the naíscóil.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The playroom needs to be made secure throughout the session when the children are in attendance.

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