

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION

Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig, Downpatrick,
County Down

Irish-medium Voluntary Playgroup, DE Ref No 4AB-0409

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in November 2022



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Department of Education
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Follow-up to the inspection of Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig, Downpatrick, BT30 6NH (4AB-0409)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig in March 2019¹, which concluded that the naíscoil needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners, namely to:

- embed the recently introduced approach to planning and improve further the cycle of observation, assessment and planning in order to continue to effect improvements in the outcomes and provision; and
- continue to develop the staff understanding and use of self-evaluation to promote improvement in the outcomes for learners, the quality of provision and leadership and management.

The naíscoil's action plans were adjusted in response to the feedback given by the ETI. The naíscoil's development plan was adjusted in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out a monitoring visit in October 2021 and a second follow-up inspection in November 2022.

In the interval since the last follow-up inspection, the naíscoil has received external support from an early years specialist (EYS) from Altram in relation to planning, observations and self-evaluation.

Over the same period, the key actions or changes which have affected the work of the naíscoil include the:

- appointment of three new members of the management committee;
- appointment of a new leader and deputy leader;
- attainment of accredited qualifications by all staff;
- decrease in the number of children attending the pre-school from eighteen to twelve;
- update of all appropriate pre-school policies;
- relocation of the naíscoil to new premises;
- development and resourcing of a new indoor learning environment; and
- reversion to a previous approach to the cycle of observation, assessment and planning.

¹ [Follow-up Inspection - Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig, Downpatrick, County Down](#)

Key findings

The outcomes for learners remain good.

The children are well settled and engage in sustained periods of productive play across all areas of learning. They enjoy positive relationships with adults and with other children, and work well both independently or as part of a group, at the role play, construction and playdough learning spaces. The children follow well instructions, know the pre-school routines, and transition easily from one activity to the next. Almost all of the children are developing well their early mark making skills and have a good interest in books. The children's early mathematical concepts are developing well, especially those in relation to size and quantity, time and sequencing. They use a range of small tools and equipment appropriately and safely indoors, such as cello-tape dispensers, food tongs, and clipboards. Most of the children move confidently with control and coordination outdoors, for example, when using a variety of wheeled vehicles.

The quality of provision has improved and is now good.

The indoor learning environment has well defined and organised play areas which promote the children's independence. The range of authentic and commercial resources offers good opportunities for the development of the children's exploration and investigative skills. While the small outdoor area limits the opportunities to provide for all of the areas of learning, the staff use it appropriately to promote energetic play. The large indoor hall is not used well enough to develop the children's gross motor skills. Through the use of quality improvement processes, the staff now have in place a more effective system of observation and assessment which tracks well the progression in the children's learning and informs planning at all levels. The staff create an effective immersion environment through appropriate modelling of the Irish language and use of songs and stories in Irish to develop the children's understanding and vocabulary.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement have improved and are now good.

The leadership team, which has been established from the time of the last inspection, has developed a shared understanding of their roles as leaders; they work effectively collegially and have been supported very well by their EYS and the management committee to effect improvement in the quality of the provision and the processes of self-evaluation. Consequently, an action planning process has been established which identifies appropriate strengths and areas for improvement. The action planning process needs to be streamlined in order to prioritise areas for improvement, avoid duplication and make the quality improvement processes more manageable.

Overall effectiveness

Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig 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 in:

- developing further the action planning processes to continue to effect improvement in the quality of education.

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