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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**Naíonra Ghleann Darach  
Crumlin**

**Inspected: November 2006**

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of pre-school centre:</b>	Náíonra Ghleann Darach
<b>Address:</b>	15 Glenavy Road CRUMLIN Co Antrim BT29 4LA
<b>Management Type:</b>	Voluntary

<b>Date of inspection:</b>	22 November 2006
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	N/A

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
• attending the pre-school centre	16	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	8	-
• funded by Department of Education	8	-
• qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	-
• with a statement of SEN*	0	-
• without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for SEN	0	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-
<b>Attendance:</b>		
• percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	79.5%	-

\* Special Educational Needs

\*\* Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

## 2. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	2	3
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	1	3
New appointments within previous 12 months	2	1

<b>Number of: ***</b>	
Students	0
Trainees	0

\*\*\* Total placements since September of current year

## 3. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>	<b>Number of days open in previous year</b>
3 hours	-	185

## 4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	8
Percentage returned:	62.5%
Number of written comments:	2

## **REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF NAÍONRA GHLEANN DARACH, CRUMLIN, CO ANTRIM, BT29 4LA (3AB-0523)**

1. Naíonra Ghleann Darach was established to provide a pre-school curriculum experienced through early immersion in the Irish language with Irish as the medium for communication and interaction. Since opening in 2002, it has experienced a high turnover of staff and has moved to different premises. It is currently accommodated in a temporary mobile classroom which is situated in the grounds of St James' Gaelic Athletic Association. The room is also used by an after-schools club in the afternoons. The children attending the pre-school come from English-speaking homes.
2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the provision.
3. The pre-school centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.
4. The pre-school centre has identified for itself a clear remit in relation to promoting an Irish-medium ethos and preparing the children for Irish-medium primary education. This aspect of the centre's provision is detailed in its language policy. The leader, however, does not speak Irish and apart from a few phrases and individual words in Irish, her interactions with the children are conducted in English. During the inspection, most of the session was conducted through the medium of English.
5. The pre-school centre demonstrates a commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. There are some opportunities for the children to participate in a range of physical activities.
6. There is a warm, welcoming atmosphere within the playroom. Relationships between the staff and the children are very good. The children respond well to the staff's approach to promoting good behaviour and are well settled and purposeful in their play. The staff work hard to create an attractive learning environment with distinct areas for play and attractive displays of the children's own art work.
7. The daily timetable is organised to provide a good balance between extended periods of free play and more adult-directed activities. The buffet-style break promotes the children's independence and social skills. The organisation of the circle time should be reviewed to ensure that it is more appropriate to the children's stages of development and that it does not interrupt concentrated activity.
8. Both of the staff are caring and help to promote settled and purposeful play. During the inspection, there were many good examples of skilful interaction in English when staff used appropriate questioning and extended the children's ideas and thinking. Much of the adult's use of Irish was to direct the children or in the form of closed questions. The interaction to promote learning through play needs to be more consistently of a high standard among all of the staff.

9. The curriculum is broad and balanced providing some opportunities for learning across all six areas of the pre-school curriculum. Particular strengths of the centre include the promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development and the development of their own creative art work. The points which follow illustrate specific aspects of the programme.

- During the inspection, many children demonstrated high levels of motivation, concentration and autonomy and displayed very positive attitudes to learning.
- There are many good opportunities for the children to develop their fine motor skills. They also take part in regular daily sessions of physical play. This aspect of the programme is currently restricted due to lack of space and an inadequate range of resources.
- There are good opportunities for the children to express their own creative ideas through the use of a range of appropriate materials. There are regular opportunities for music and singing which the children clearly enjoy. The children participate in simple songs in Irish. They engage in sustained imaginative play in the role-play area.
- Many children are developing an interest in marking and early writing. They show some interest in books and listened attentively to the group story. During this session, the story was read and discussed in English with the use of a few single words in Irish. There are limited opportunities for the children to develop an understanding of, and to begin to use, Irish.
- There is some promotion of early mathematical ideas through the play activities. This aspect of the curriculum should be promoted more fully in all areas of play. The seasonal topics, visitors from the community, and hospital role-play provide opportunities for developing the children's awareness of the world around them. During the inspection, groups of children spent concentrated time exploring the properties of the sand and water.

10. The centre has a comprehensive policy for special educational needs (SEN). The staff should access additional training to improve their awareness of how to support fully children with special educational needs attending the pre-school setting.

11. The staff team plan together and have made a good start in developing the written planning to provide a broad and balanced pre-school curriculum. The short-term planning needs to be developed further in order to identify more clearly how learning in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and the Irish language is to be promoted.

12. The staff know the children well and are recording some thoughtful observations of the children's responses to play. Further development is needed to ensure that there are effective and consistent arrangements for monitoring, recording and reporting the children's progress, and to inform the planning.

13. The centre is developing effective links with the parents. Parents are given regular news-sheets outlining the themes and topics being covered and suggesting items of vocabulary for parents to try to use with the children. The staff plan appropriately to meet with the parents twice during the current school year to share information on the children's progress verbally and in written reports.

14. The centre has developed good links with the Irish-medium primary school which is located on the same site. The centre should also establish links with the other primary schools to which the children will transfer.

15. The leader and assistant have both been in post for a very short period of time. They are in the early stages of developing their practice together. The leader demonstrates a high level of early years expertise in her own work with the children and manages the centre very effectively. There is a developing sense of team-work and enjoyment among the hard-working staff.

16. The staff have worked closely with their early years specialist to bring about a number of improvements in the pre-school education provision over recent months. The staff indicate their appreciation of the useful support given by their early years specialist.

17. The mobile classroom is in a poor state of repair. The approach to the centre is badly pot-holed and in a dangerous condition. The staff make imaginative use of all of the space available within the centre. The small secure outdoor area is unsuitable for use after wet weather. There are no staff toilets within the mobile. The staff and the management committee have plans to replace the current mobile with upgraded facilities and to enhance the outdoor area.

18. There are adequate basic resources which are presented attractively for the children. More natural and authentic items should be introduced and further resources provided to develop a more challenging physical play programme.

19. **The main strengths within the centre's educational and pastoral provision include:**

- the warm, caring atmosphere based on the good relationships between the staff and the children;
- the attractive learning environment within the playroom;
- the extended period of free play when the children maintain high levels of concentrated and productive play;
- the opportunities for the children to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum and in particular, the promotion of the children's confidence, independence and own creative ideas;
- the good links being developed with the parents;

- the leader's skill in promoting the children's learning through the medium of English; and
- the commitment of the staff to develop the provision further.

**20. The inspection has also identified areas which require improvement. In addressing the most important areas, the centre needs to:**

- develop the skill of the staff in their use of the Irish language and their ability to promote learning effectively through this medium;
- continue to develop the planning and assessment methods to ensure that it guides the staff more effectively in developing fully all areas of the pre-school curriculum, and the Irish language and that the children's individual needs are met; and
- improve the planning and resources for energetic physical and outdoor play.

21. The pre-school centre has strengths in many aspects of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified a few important areas for improvement which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all the children. The centre is not providing a programme of immersion in the Irish language in line with its stated aims.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the pre-school centre's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

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