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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

**Naíscoil Chois Locha
Lurgan**

Inspected: May 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Naíscoil Chois Locha
Address:	St Francis' Primary School Francis' Street LURGAN Co Armagh BT66 6DL
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	15 May 2007
Date of previous inspection:	23 May 2001

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
• attending the pre-school centre	24	-
• in their immediate pre-school year	19	-
• funded by Department of Education	19	-
• 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	1	-
• with English as an additional language	0	-
• who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	1	-
Attendance:		
• percentage attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	96%	-

* Special Educational Needs

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	3	0
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	3	0
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
hours	-	190

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	58.3%
Number of written comments:	5

NAÍScoil CHOIS LOCHA, LURGAN, CO ARMAGH, BT66 6DL (5BB-0393)

1. The centre is situated in the grounds of St Francis' Primary School. Since the last inspection there have been several staffing changes. The children come from a wide catchment area.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The responses have been taken into account as part of the inspection and any issues raised have been shared with the staff and the management group.

3. The pre-school centre has a written policy for child protection which is shared with the parents, and is in line with the guidance given by the Department of Education. The staff have given consideration to their own practices in the centre; however, a clearer understanding is required of the appropriate procedures to be followed in relation to some child protection matters.

4. The pre-school centre gives some consideration to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. There are some opportunities for the children to participate in some physical activities.

5. The main strengths within the centre's educational and pastoral provision are as follows.

- There is a positive ethos in the centre; relationships between the staff and the children are excellent. The centre's positive ethos promotes effectively the children's confidence and self-esteem. The staff work together effectively in the best interests of the children; they are caring and supportive to the children.
- The children relate well to one another; the staff encourage good behaviour and the atmosphere in the centre is one of mutual respect and enjoyment. Good use is made of the children's own work, photographs, posters and interest areas to create an attractive, colourful and stimulating learning environment for the children.
- Communication and links with the parents is good; a variety of appropriate methods is used to encourage the parents to play a full role in the education of their children.
- During the inspection, there were many occasions when the skilful involvement of the staff in the children's play promoted the children's language and learning effectively. The staff often provided the children with new ideas, praise and encouragement, which assisted the children to persevere with their chosen task, develop their concentration and extend their play.
- The atmosphere in the centre is rich in language; the children learn Irish in a relaxed and natural way; they are making good progress in their acquisition of the language. Most of the children can follow instructions well and some are beginning to respond using Irish words and phrases.

- The staff are committed to speaking Irish and make extensive use of the language for instructional purposes and as a means of communication with the children. The children are introduced to text incidentally through captions displayed around the room; many show an interest in experimental writing and early marking as an integral part of the play. Books are incorporated appropriately into areas of play.
- The centre's educational programme offers satisfactory or good opportunities for learning in all the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The promotion of language, creative skills and early mathematical experiences are particular strengths.
- The leader is enthusiastic and committed to the welfare of the children and the work of the centre. Relationships among the staff are good; there is a developing sense of team-spirit and the leader values the contribution made by all staff members. The staff are hard-working, clearly enjoy their work with the children, and promote a sense of fun. They are all undertaking further study of the Irish language. The staff value the advice and support provided by the centre's early years specialist and the management committee.

6. The inspection identified areas for improvement. The following are the most important areas that need attention.

- Aspects of the routine, in the latter part of the day, should be improved in order to ensure that all time and space is used more effectively to promote the children's learning and to provide opportunities for energetic physical activity.
- There is a need for the staff to be more consistent in their approach to observing and recording evidence of the children's progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum.
- The staff should access appropriate training in, and develop further the centre's policy for, special educational needs provision.

7. The staff have started to develop some useful methods of self-evaluation. Although this work is at an early stage, some progress has been made in reviewing the provision. The staff, with the support of the centre's early years specialist, should continue to develop this reflective approach to their work. They should now work with the management group and their early years specialist to create a development plan for the centre based on the findings of the inspection.

8. The pre-school centre has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified minor areas for improvement which the pre-school centre has the capacity to address.

The pre-school centre's progress on the areas for improvement will be monitored by the District Inspector.

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