

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig,  
Downpatrick, County Down

Voluntary, Irish-medium

Report of an Inspection in  
June 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
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CUSTOMER  
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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Context

Naíscóil Dhún Pádraig is an Irish-medium, voluntary pre-school playgroup accommodated in St Michael's Parish Centre, Downpatrick. At the time of the inspection, the management committee had been recently reconstituted.

<b>Number of children:</b>	Class 1
Attending part-time	24
Funded by Department of Education	24
At CoP stages 1 or 2*	#
With English as an additional language	#

Percentage qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 or 2.	100
Average attendance for the previous year.	82
Number of days open in previous school year	185

**Source:** data provided by the setting.

\* The stages refer to those set out in the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

# fewer than 5

### 2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of parents responded to the confidential questionnaire and their responses indicated satisfaction with the life and work of the naíscóil. No staff responded to the questionnaire.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all children, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for the children;
- quality of provision for learning; and
- leadership and management.

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Important areas for improvement
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Requires significant improvement

## KEY FINDINGS

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- A majority of the children are still over reliant on the adults in order to sustain purposeful play and, as a result, their levels of independence and creativity are under-developed. However, during the inspection, the most productive play took place when the activities were led appropriately by the adults. The children enjoy these activities; they engage confidently with each other and with the adults; they develop appropriately, fine and gross motor skills and an understanding of early number and measures. Most of the children are well-settled and well-behaved and a small number engage in sustained, child-initiated play with each other.
- The majority of the children have a good understanding of the Irish spoken to them. They engage in rhymes and singing and most are attentive during story time. Most of the children produce a good standard of artwork.

### 6. Quality of provision

- The cycle of observation, assessment and planning is underdeveloped and does not guide sufficiently the learning nor ensure progression across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. Evaluations of planning and observations of the children during play are not completed consistently by all staff.
- At the time of the inspection, the newly-resourced outdoor play area was accessible to the children for the first time and this caused much excitement. At this stage, the staff have not planned purposeful and appropriately challenging outdoor play experiences, across all areas of learning, which take sufficient advantage of the new resource.
- Overall, the quality of the staff's spoken Irish is not strong enough and, as a result, their interactions are not successful in engaging the children and extending their independence, thinking and creativity. Only occasionally do they ask open-ended questions and encourage the children to observe and investigate. The leader uses Irish well throughout the session. Songs and rhymes are used effectively by all staff to promote smooth transitions and to broaden the children's vocabulary in Irish.
- The staff are caring and sensitive towards the children and respond to their interests and needs. The children who have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning are included fully in all aspects of the naíscóil. While appropriate strategies are in place to support the children, the quality of the individual educational plans requires improvement.
- The staff have worked hard to create an attractive playroom in which the children's artwork is valued and displayed. There is a good choice of authentic resources that are of interest to the children and an appropriate range of opportunities for the children to develop their fine and gross motor skills.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscóil's approach to the care and welfare of the children does not, through the planning for learning and teaching and the system of record keeping, meet effectively enough the individual needs of children.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership of self-evaluation and development planning is not sufficiently developed to bring about improvement. While there is good quality support from the early years' specialist from Altram, the leader, staff and management committee need to work together to improve planning, assessment and provision, in order to ensure consistently higher standards of pre-school education for all of the children, across all aspects of the work of the naíscoil.
- Owing to the daily afternoon session for underage children, the leader and staff do not have sufficient time to maintain the necessary documentation and to plan to bring about the necessary improvements required for the naíscoil. The management committee need to address this issue as a matter of urgency.
- The staff maintain meaningful links with parents and with the primary schools to which the children transfer, in particular the local bunscoil.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect broadly the guidance from the relevant Departments. The organisation and maintenance of documentation requires more care. The naíscoil needs to ensure that all out-of-date versions of policies are discarded and that the most recently reviewed and ratified policies are available in the naíscoil and to the parents and carers.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **8. Overall effectiveness**

Naíscoil Dhún Pádraig needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so.

The areas for improvement are to improve:

- the cycle of observation, assessment and planning in order to guide sufficiently the learning, ensure progression and improve the provision across all areas of the pre-school curriculum; and
- the leadership of self-evaluation and development planning in order to bring about the necessary improvements in the outcomes for children, the quality of the provision and leadership and management.

The ETI will monitor and report on the naíscoil's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 18 to 24 months.

**Information on sessions and staff****Duration of sessions**

<b>Part-time: am</b>
9.15am-11.45am

**Details of staff**

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff including, Teachers/Leaders	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	3
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0
New appointments within the previous 12 months	0

**Source:** data provided by the setting.

\*

### Inspection method and evidence base

The effective practice and self-evaluation questions which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school settings, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *The Pre-school Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework* at: <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/inspection-and-self-evaluation-framework-isef-effective-practice-and-self-evaluation>

Inspectors observed learning and teaching through play, the children's achievements, progression and standards, scrutinised relevant documentation, and held formal and informal discussions with staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with those involved with leadership and management, including the management group; and
- the opportunity for the parents and staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

### Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

### Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes, on provision and on leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

### Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The nursery school / playgroup has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school / playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school /playgroup demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the nursery school/ playgroup sustains improvement.
The nursery school/ playgroup needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's/ playgroup's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The nursery school / playgroup needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the nursery school's / playgroup's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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