

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Naíscoil Mhic Reachtain,
Belfast

Irish-medium voluntary pre-school

Report of an Inspection in
April 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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1. Context

Naíscoil Mhic Reachtain is an Irish-medium pre-school playgroup located in mobile accommodation in the premises of Duncairn Culture and Arts Complex in North Belfast. None of the current staff were in post at the time of the last inspection in 2014.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	14
Funded by Department of Education	14

Average percentage attendance for the previous year.	85.2%
Number of days open in previous school year	185

Source: data provided by the setting

2. Views of parents and staff

All of staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; their responses were wholly positive. None of the parents responded to the confidential questionnaire.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, 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

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

- Almost all of the children are well-settled and follow the established routines of the day. They are at ease with the staff in the naíscoil and approach them confidently to talk about their play or to ask for assistance. The children are forming good friendships with each other and most of them engage in collaborative, sustained play both indoors and outdoors. Their behaviour is good.
- The children are developing appropriately their independence and are making good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They play purposefully and creatively; most notably at the role play, small-world, large construction, sand and dough areas.

- Through the established routines and play, the children have a good understanding of key mathematical concepts and language, particularly in measures, shape and early number.
- The children's early mark making is of a good standard. They understand the Irish spoken to them by the adults and a small number of them are beginning to respond using single words in Irish. They concentrate well during story time and respond enthusiastically. All of the children join in singing the songs and rhymes in Irish.

6. Quality of provision

- The cycle of planning, observations and assessment does not guide the staff sufficiently in meeting the needs of all of the children. Although there is planning in place to guide the learning across all areas of the pre-school curriculum, the intended learning and associated evaluations are often vague. The planning for role of the adult in supporting and extending the children's learning and thinking also requires improvement.
- The staff have created an attractive and stimulating learning environment. Although the children's artwork is displayed with pride around the room, there is evidence that this is often over-directed by the adults. There is a good range of natural and stimulating resources which the children enjoy and access independently during the free-play periods. Rhymes and songs are used effectively to aid smooth transitions during the session and to develop further the children's understanding of Irish and of mathematical concepts.
- The staff know the children very well and always respond pastorally and sensitively to the children's needs and interests. They have a good standard of Irish and the quality of their interactions with the children is mostly good. On occasions however, the quality of the staff's questioning and interactions does not develop sufficiently the children's language and thinking skills.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscoil's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on learning and teaching, and outcomes. The mutually respectful relationships and inclusive ethos are strengths in the naíscoil.

7. Leadership and management

- All of the staff, the early years specialist from Altram and the management committee are committed to the naíscoil and work well collegially in the best interests of the children. They have managed effectively, as a team, a number of staffing changes over recent years.
- The staff have developed an understanding of the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement with the support of the early years specialist from Altram. An appropriate development plan, associated action plans and a range of supporting evidence are in place which guide well the process.
- There are very good links with the parents who are kept informed of the life and work of the naíscoil through social media and an informative weekly note; the parents also attend a range of workshops in the naíscoil. There are very good links with the local Bunscoil to which a majority of the children transfer to Rang 1.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children reflect the guidance from the relevant Departments.

9. Overall effectiveness

Naíscoil Mhic Reachtain demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the children.

There are areas for improvement that the naíscoil has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The areas for improvement are to:

- develop the cycle of planning, observations and assessment in order to improve the outcomes for the children and the overall quality of provision; and
- embed and evaluate the impact of the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The ETI will monitor how the naíscoil sustains improvement.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website <https://www.etini.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

Quantitative terms

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and 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 school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school 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.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school 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 school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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