

Education and Training Inspectorate

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Naíscoil na Fíobha, Droichead Thuama, Contae Aontroma/County Antrim

Irish-medium voluntary playgroup DE Ref No (3AB-0661)

Report of an Inspection in April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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1. Context

Naíscoil na Fíobha is an Irish-medium voluntary playgroup located in Toome House, a community centre in the village of Toome, County Antrim. The naíscoil provided funded pre-school places for pre-school aged children for the first time in September 2018.

Number of children:	Class 1
Attending part-time	15
Under 3 years of age*	3
Funded by Department of Education	12
At CoP stages 1 or 2**	#

Source: data provided by the setting.

* On 1 July.

** 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

One-quarter of the parents and all of the staff responded to the confidential questionnaire; the responses were wholly positive. There were no additional written comments. A summary of the questionnaire responses was shared with the staff and early years' specialist.

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	Important areas for improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Outcomes for learners

- Most of the children engage in sustained, purposeful play and are making good progress across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They have good levels of independence as they: choose where they wish to play; put on their own aprons for water play; serve their own snack; and, fulfil with pride their leadership roles within the naíscoil. A very small number of children continue to have difficulty regulating their emotions and behaviour.
- Most of the children communicate confidently with each other and with the adults. Almost all of the children have a good understanding of the Irish spoken to them and are beginning to use single words independently in Irish. They enjoy singing a range of familiar songs and rhymes in Irish throughout the session and most participate enthusiastically in the group story and action songs at the end of the session.

- The children negotiate roles with each other and develop well their creativity and problem solving skills particularly within the role play, dough and construction areas. Most of the children are developing a good understanding of early mathematical concepts and the language, in Irish and English, associated with number, money and measures.
- Almost all of the children have well-developed fine motor skills as they: complete jigsaws; and, use with ease a range of small tools and utensils at the dough, soil, creative and role play areas. The children enjoy the opportunity to develop their skills of balance, throwing and jumping during the indoor physical session.

6. Quality of provision

- There are aspects of the organisation of the day that are not effective enough. The children are interrupted from play to come for snack and opportunities are missed to develop the children's communication and social skills during snack time. At the time of inspection, the end of the session was not managed effectively enough and, as a result, the behaviour of a small number of children deteriorated.
- While there is planning in place across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and evidence of good use of observations to inform the planning, the intended learning is not always articulated clearly enough and, consequently, evaluations of planning are often too vague. Planning for the role of the adult in supporting and extending high quality play is also underdeveloped.
- The children who have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning are fully included in all aspects of the naíscoil. The staff plan appropriately to meet their specific needs, record detailed observations of the children and keep the parents fully informed.
- The staff have created an attractive and well-organised indoor learning environment with an appropriate range of commercial and natural resources that provide opportunities for learning across the curriculum. Although the naíscoil has access to a small outdoor space, this was undergoing renovation at the time of the inspection and was not accessible to the children. The naíscoil also has use of an additional indoor area which is used for physical play.
- There is a variation in the quality of the staff competence and confidence in Irish. They are supportive and pastoral on all occasions in their interactions with the children and respond well to the children's needs and interests. The quality of their interactions are mostly good; however, there were missed opportunities to extend further the children's learning and thinking.
- Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscoil's approach to care and welfare impacts positively on the outcomes. The caring relationships and fully inclusive environment support the children well in developing confidence and independence.

7. Leadership and management

- The staff can articulate an understanding of self-evaluation and have evidence of improvements made to date, however, this is still at an early stage as this is their first year in the pre-school education programme. The staff and management committee have worked well collegially to establish Naíscoil na Fíobha and, with the effective support of the early years' specialist from Altram, appropriate systems are now in place for development planning and self-evaluation leading to improvement.
- The staff, although appropriately qualified, do not have sufficient experience in Irish-medium early years. They have identified appropriately their own capacity building and professional development as an area for improvement and have established partnerships with other pre-school settings to observe effective practice.
- There are good links with the parents and with other pre-school and primary settings, in both the English- and Irish-medium sectors.

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 na Fíobha needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the children.

The areas for improvement are to:

- improve the short-term planning in order to raise further the quality of the learning experiences and outcomes for the children and the quality of staff interactions;
- build further the capacity of the staff to deliver a high quality pre-school curriculum; and
- establish a shared understanding of development planning and embed the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement.

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 12 to 18 months.

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; 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 management¹:

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

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

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

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>

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