

# PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Naíscóil Charn Tóchair,  
Tirkane, Maghera

Report of an Inspection in  
April 2015

## 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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of pre-school centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: [Together Towards Improvement Pre-school | Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

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

The arrangements for this inspection included:

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

All of the parents and staff who responded to the questionnaire were wholly positive about all aspects of the life and work of the playgroup. The parents praised the approachable staff and the support they give to their children. The parents also commented positively on the use of Irish by the staff.

## 2. Context

Naíscoil Charn Tóchair is situated in Tirkane, outside the town of Maghera in County Derry. It is an integral part of the vibrant Irish language community that exists in the area of Carntogher.

## 3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

## 4. Overall findings

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

## **Key findings of the inspection**

### **5. Achievements and standards**

- The children are very well settled and are secure in the established routines of the day, such as snack, story time, song time and during tidy-up at the end of the day. They are well-behaved, engage in purposeful, concentrated play and show high levels of independence. The children are developing effective social skills and friendships as they play together and support each other.
- Almost all of the children have very good language and communication skills. They have a very good understanding of the Irish spoken to them and are beginning to respond in Irish using single words. They show a keen interest in books and enjoy story and song time, participating enthusiastically during both. The children have made very good progress with their early mark making and writing and they express their ideas well through representational drawings and paintings.
- The children are developing well their physical fine motor skills through activities such as pouring, threading, cutting, moulding and shaping. During the inspection, a small number of children engaged in physical energetic play indoors and many of them displayed good levels of balance, co-ordination and team-working skills during the indoor physical activity session.

### **6. Provision**

- The staff have created a stimulating and attractive learning environment, with a range of authentic resources that develop well the children's curiosity and maintain their interest for sustained periods of time. The children's work is valued and celebrated in attractive displays around the playroom. The World Around Us is a particular strength of both the indoor and outdoor provision, and the learning experiences are very well matched to children's interest and their personal experiences from home.
- The daily routine is very well organised and provides a very good balance between free play and the more adult-led activities.
- The quality of the interactions between the staff and the children is of a good standard. The staff use Irish in all of their interactions with the children and have created a linguistically-rich immersion environment for the children.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the playgroup is very good. There is a positive, warm and inclusive ethos and the staff treat each other and the children with care and respect.
- The planning is thorough and shows a very good understanding of the pre-school curriculum. The staff know the children well. They have developed an effective cycle of observing, recording and assessing the children's development across all areas of the pre-school curriculum and they use this information appropriately to inform effectively future planning.
- The playgroup gives good attention to healthy eating and good physical activity.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- There is a strong team ethos within the naíscoil and a culture of collegiality at all levels. The leader is a highly effective linguistic role model and is supported well by her staff and management committee in all areas of the life and work of the naíscoil. There is an effective culture of self-evaluation, supported by regular consultation with staff and parents, which informs effectively the development planning processes within the naíscoil.
- There are very good links with the parents, other pre-school settings, the local Gaelscoil and An Carn, the local Irish language community development group. The parents are kept informed about the life and work of the naíscoil through an informative monthly newsletter, regular meetings throughout the year and social events.
- The early years specialist (EYS) from Altram provides very effective support to develop the provision in the naíscoil.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the naíscoil has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the relevant departments.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this naíscoil is very good. The naíscoil is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION NAÍScoil CHARN TÓCHAIR

### 1. Details of Children

<b>Total number of children:</b>	<b>am session</b>	<b>pm session</b>
attending the pre-school setting	18	-
in their immediate pre-school year	13	-
funded by Department of Education (DE)	13	-
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	-	-
with a statement of special educational needs	0	-
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	*	-
with English as an additional language	*	-
who left in previous school year to attend reception provision within a primary school	0	-

\* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

Attendance** of funded children for the previous school year.	90%
Number of days open in previous school year	190

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

### 2. Details of Sessions

<b>Duration of morning session</b>	<b>Duration of afternoon session</b>
2½ hours	-

### 3. Details of Staff

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Part-time</b>
Staff, including leader	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	0	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

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

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

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