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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



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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Inspection

Sugar and Spice Playgroup
Drumquin, Omagh

Inspected: February 2007

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school centre:	Sugar and Spice Playgroup
Address:	Unit 7/8 Drumquin Enterprise Centre Castledearg Road Drumquin OMAGH Co Tyrone BT78 4PJ
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	26 February 2007
Date of previous inspection:	29 March 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	0	-
Attendance:		
• attendance** of funded children for the previous school year	93.3%	-

* 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	0	4
Staff holding recognised childcare qualifications	0	4
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
2½ hours	-	182

4. Parental Questionnaires

Number issued to parents:	24
Percentage returned:	54.2%
Number of written comments:	7

**SUGAR AND SPICE PLAYGROUP, DRUMQUIN, OMAGH, CO TYRONE,
BT78 4PJ (2AB-0347)**

1. The centre is situated in a rural location on the outskirts of Drumquin village. It is accommodated in an adapted unit within the Drumquin Enterprise Centre. Since the last inspection, the centre has moved to new premises, new resources have been purchased, an outdoor area has been developed and equipped and the centre has participated in a creativity project, building on the principles and practices associated with early years education in Reggio Emilia.

2. The parents, staff and management group were given opportunities to express their views about the centre through the inspection questionnaires. The responses indicate a high level of satisfaction with the provision; a number of parents contributed written and verbal comments to the Reporting Inspector praising the work of the staff.

3. The pre-school centre has appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The inspection evidence indicates that the staff implement these policies and procedures effectively and consistently to safeguard the children.

4. The pre-school centre demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting healthy eating habits among the children. Good opportunities are provided for the children to participate in a wide range of appropriate physical activities.

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

- The large playroom and outdoor area are set up and equipped to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment both inside and outdoors.
- The centre has a positive ethos based on mutual respect and care; relationships at all levels are excellent. The children are generally very well behaved and respond well to the staff.
- The staff are all caring and supportive and often demonstrate a high level of skill in their interactions with the children. They listen to and build on the children's own ideas and promote the children's oral language and thinking skills through extended discussions and good use of open-ended questions.
- There are satisfactory or good opportunities to learn in all areas of the pre-school curriculum. On the day of the inspection, there were many examples of co-operative and concentrated play, good opportunities for the children to develop their own creative art work, very interesting, purposeful play in the sand area and effective promotion of oral language and ideas among the more able children.
- The staff have developed good relationships with the parents and the local community.
- The involvement of the artist through the creativity project has motivated the staff to explore new approaches in how to build more effectively on the children's own creative ideas. The centre is in the early stages of developing this work.

- The committed leader is a good-role model in her own practice with the children. She fosters a strong sense of team-spirit among the hard-working and well-established staff team.

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

- The staff need to review aspects of the latter part of the day to ensure all of the time is used effectively to promote learning.
- The new methods of planning and assessment should be carefully monitored and revised to ensure that they guide the staff more effectively in meeting the needs of all of the children.
- The staff and management committee should ensure that the support from the early years specialist is more consistently matched to the needs of the centre.

7. The staff are committed to bringing about change and improvement; some useful progress has been made in improving the provision of more progression and challenge within the play activities and in developing the interesting and attractive outdoor areas. The centre has experienced a number of recent changes in their early years specialist support.

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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