

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sugar and Spice Early Years
Centre, Drumquin, Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in
May 2014

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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:

DESCRIPTOR
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 formal and 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, staff and members of the management group to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parent	17	8	47 ¹	7
Staff	*	*	100	*

* fewer than 5

Almost all of the responses and comments made in the confidential questionnaires were very positive about all aspects of the life and work of the centre. These responses and comments were shared with the staff and with the chair of the management group.

2. Context

Sugar and Spice Early Years Centre is situated in recently refurbished premises on the outskirts of the village of Drumquin within the Drumquin Enterprise Centre. The staff have worked together for many years, and at the time of the inspection, one of the assistants had taken on the role of acting deputy leader due to the absence of the current deputy leader. In the last year, and funded through the Big Lottery, the centre has developed an extensive, attractive and exciting secret garden to enhance the children's outdoor play experiences.

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.

¹ The ETI is trialling a new range of methods to collect the views of parents/carers and, as a result, the percentage of questionnaires returned may be low.

4. Overall finding

Overall Performance Level	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

Key findings of the inspection

5. Achievements and standards

- All of the children are happy and settle quickly to their play activities at the start of the session. Their behaviour is exemplary and they co-operate very well with one another, displaying high levels of concentration and independence.
- The children express their ideas with confidence, and are keen to talk about their activities and explain what they are doing. They are making excellent progress in the development of their communication and language skills. The staff give the written language a high priority, and almost all of the children show a keen interest in looking at the wide range of books, experimenting with mark making and listening attentively to stories.
- The children have many opportunities to develop an early understanding of important mathematical concepts, and show a very good awareness of, for example, number, shape, size, measure and capacity. A key strength is the high level of enthusiasm, interest and curiosity the children display in investigating a wide range of natural materials, and exploring their environment, particularly in the very well planned and thoughtfully resourced outdoor secret garden.

6. Provision

- The staff have a clear understanding of all aspects of the pre-school curriculum, and ensure that the wide range of activities provided extends and challenges the children's learning. They listen carefully to the children's ideas, and build on these to extend the children's language and thinking. The quality of the staff's interactions with the children is very good, and their comments and open-ended questions enhance the children's reasoning and creativity.
- The planned programme in the playgroup is broad and balanced, with excellent opportunities for learning across all of the areas of the pre-school curriculum. The staff keep relevant observation notes of the children's responses to their play activities, and use these well to track progress and guide future planning. There is a need for the shorter term planning to include more detail of the intended learning to be promoted in each play area.
- The centre provides outstanding pastoral care. There is a welcoming, inclusive and supportive ethos in which every child is valued and cared for.

- The centre gives excellent attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through the provision of healthy snacks and the opportunities for the children to participate in physical activity. The recently enhanced outdoor play area and secret garden are used very well by the children for regular, energetic play.

7. Leadership and management

- The leader of the centre is highly motivated and provides very effective leadership; she is an excellent role model and is supported very ably by the acting deputy leader and the other members of staff. Working relationships among this long-serving and hard-working staff team are excellent, and they work very effectively and collaboratively for the benefit of all the children.
- The centre has very effective links with the parents, seeking their views and keeping them well-informed about their children's progress. There is also a close link with the nearby primary school, ensuring a smooth transition for the children to the next stage of their education.
- The early years specialist from the Early Years Organisation provides very good support to the staff. She has worked closely with the staff to prioritise and develop key curriculum areas.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre 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 centre is very good. The centre is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the children; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Name of pre-school setting:	Sugar and Spice Early Years Centre
Address:	Unit 7/8 Drumquin Enterprise Centre Castleberg Road DRUMQUIN Co Tyrone BT78 4PH
Management Type:	Voluntary

Date of inspection:	7 May 2014
Date of previous inspection:	26 February 2007

1. Details of Children

Total number of children:	am session	pm session
attending the pre-school setting	23	
in their immediate pre-school year	17	
funded by Department of Education (DE)	17	
qualifying under DE admission criteria 1 & 2	0	
with a statement of special educational needs	0	
without a statement but receiving therapy or support from other professionals for special educational needs	5	
with English as an additional language	1	
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	99%	

* Special Educational Needs = fewer than five

** Calculated from the date when the intake was complete

2. Details of Staff

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Staff, including leader	2	3
Number of staff holding a recognised child care qualification	2	2
Number of staff holding a recognised teaching qualification	0	0
New appointments within previous 12 months	0	0

Number of: ***	
Students	1
Trainees	1

*** 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	-	188

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