

EOTAS INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Omagh EOTAS Centre,
Omagh, County Tyrone

Report of an Inspection (Involving
Action Short of Strike) in
April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Views of parents and staff	1
3. Focus of the inspection	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	4
9. Overall effectiveness	4

Appendices

- A. Health and Safety/accommodation
- B. Examination performance and other statistical data
- C. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- D. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

The Omagh Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) centre is situated in the grounds of the former Arvalee Special School site on the outskirts of Omagh. The centre is part of the Education Authority (EA) overall provision for pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and provides education for 10 key stage (KS) 4 pupils in the Omagh region. One room in the centre is currently used by the exceptional teaching arrangements (ETA) service, restricting the centre's current intake. The young people attending the centre have an additional range of learning difficulties, including dyslexia, autism, and attention deficit disorder. Pupils may be placed in the centre at any time during the school year. A senior teacher has responsibility for managing both the Omagh and Strabane EOTAS Centres. The centre has a full-time youth worker, 2 permanent full-time teachers and one temporary full-time teacher. There are no learning support assistants or administrative support within the centre.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the organisation informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

2. Views of parents and staff

A small number of the parents or carers responded to the confidential questionnaire and indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the centre. In particular, the parents and carers highlighted their appreciation of the staff in supporting the needs of their children. The small number of staff responses were largely positive. The small number of the referring schools completed the questionnaire and affirmed the support from the centre for their pupils, along with their concern over a lack of behaviour service support for KS3 pupils in school.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupil, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the EOTAS centre leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes; and
- inform the centre planning for improvement.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance available
Quality of provision	No performance available
Leadership and management	No performance available

5. Outcomes for learners

- The centre's evidence states that for the past three months, the average attendance of the pupils in the centre is 80 percent. During the last three years, two pupils have reintegrated into their mainstream schools.
- A majority of the pupils have a reduced timetable in the centre. The centre is not meeting the minimum requirement for the hours of attendance as stated in the Department of Education (DE) EOTAS guidance 2014/24¹.
- In the previous academic year, two of the six pupils in the centre achieved both a literacy and numeracy qualification. Two of the pupils achieved a qualification in GCSE mathematics, and two of the pupils attained a literacy qualification at level 1. One pupil achieved a level 2 qualification, and one pupil achieved level 1, in ICT. Five pupils gained accreditation from the Prince's Trust personal development course. None of the pupils achieved five or more qualifications in public examinations.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- progression in the pupil's learning; and
- the pupil's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The pupils are supported well to develop their social, emotional, life and employability skills through highly personalised youth work programmes, including the Prince's Trust and a Life Skills programme. The pupils are involved closely and effectively in setting targets and tracking their own progress. Diagnostic and baseline pupil assessments are used well to inform the pupil's individual education plans, with targets set collaboratively by staff and pupils. Almost all of the referring schools provide information for their pupils when they move to the centre.
- The curriculum is limited and does not meet the needs of the pupils or the minimum requirements as stated in the DE guidance 2014/24². The pupils would benefit from further opportunities to attain accreditations, including GCSEs. Most of the pupils do not have opportunities to return to study in their own schools, on a part-time or full-time basis, in accordance with EOTAS Guidance 2014/24. Whilst a minority of the referring schools meet centre staff to discuss the individual learning needs of the pupils, the majority do not engage sufficiently with the centre, limiting significantly the joint planning of education programmes for their pupils.

¹ Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: Department of Education

² Department of Education (2014) *Guidance for Education Otherwise Than At School* Bangor: Department of Education

- Transition meetings for a parent and their child as part of the induction process into the centre are individualised, highly supportive and informative regarding the provision package offered. Parents of pupils leaving the provision also benefit from positive transition meetings with support from centre management and EA officers to inform the planning for the pupil for the next stage of their education or training. The parents express trust and confidence in the centre.
- A majority of the pupils attend and engage well with vocational education at the local Regional College; the provision includes beauty therapy, building services, hospitality and vehicle studies. A careers officer provides individual support to the pupils in the centre. There is a lack of support from the educational psychology service to support the diverse and complex needs of the pupils. The centre management report that the counselling support for the pupils is inflexible and lacks focus; as a consequence pupils are reluctant to engage with the service.
- The lack of a C2k facility in the centre prevents the pupils from accessing the range of educational programs available to their peers in mainstream schools. (see appendix 1) The provision of information and communication technology (ICT) resources are limited, the computers in use are slow and this restricts, at times, the pupils' motivation and opportunities to extend their learning.
- The pupils spoke with the inspectors about their appreciation of the support provided by the staff in the centre, but almost all expressed their wish to return to school, part-time or full-time. They stated that they want a wider curriculum, including science, design and technology, physical education, and more accreditation opportunities.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare.

7. Leadership and management

- The senior teacher manages two centres, in different towns, consequently he is not based full-time in the centre.
- The management of the centre have in place a development plan in the format of priorities for improvement. There is an appropriate focus on the recruitment of teaching and support staff, with plans for a permanent full-time senior teacher, and a teacher of GCSE English to be based in the centre. They have also appropriately identified the need to review the curriculum provision, opportunities for pupils to return to study part-time in their referring schools, and the development of a KS3 partnership programme.

- The centre management need to send the attendance data to the referring schools each week to enable the schools to record their pupil's attendance at the centre.
- The centre management have identified the need to develop further the reward system in order to support and motivate the pupils.
- The EA should ensure that referrals to the centre of year 12 pupils are only made in exceptional circumstances, to avoid a detrimental impact upon pupil outcomes as outlined in the DE EOTAS guidance 2014/24.
- The centre is governed by an EA head of service, an advisory officer, and a senior teacher. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection the parents and staff can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The EA should consider how to facilitate greater involvement of local referring schools, community representatives and parents in supporting the work of the centre with representation on a local governance group.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership;
- the effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process.

8. Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. There is a need for the designated teacher to update their training.

The small number of pupils with whom the inspectors met, report that they feel safe in the centre and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the centre teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. The organisation is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

Health and safety/accommodation

The lack of access to C2K inhibits effective communication or efficient transfer of appropriate educational information with mainstream schools and other education providers, and is a barrier to learning.

Examination performance and other statistical data

OMAGH EOTAS	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Enrolment school	16	12	12	10
% Attendance	75.5	65.8	75.2	75.8
FSME Percentage ^[1]	N/A	10	9	5
Newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

^[1] The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's [Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework](#) is available on the ETI website.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- Inspectors scrutinised documentation and held formal and informal discussions with pupils, and staff with specific responsibilities; and
- a meeting with the EA officer with responsibility for management and governance and the opportunity for all parents, referring schools, teaching and support 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 management³:

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.

³ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2019

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk