

Education and Training Inspectorate EOTAS INSPECTION



Newry EOTAS, County Down

Report of an inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
November 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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1. Context

Newry Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Centre is situated in a former old residential house in Newry. The pupils travel to the centre from Newry and surrounding areas. Providing education for up to 12 pupils from key stage (KS) 4 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, the centre is part of the Education Authority (EA) EOTAS provision. An EA advisory officer has overall management responsibility for the centre. At the time of inspection there was a senior teacher with responsibility for the daily running of the centre and four teachers, a behaviour intervention officer, youth worker and senior executive officer. The centre was most recently inspected in February 2017.

The trade unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute, and also workload and other management issues. The industrial action includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the organisation informed the ETI that all of the teachers including the senior teacher would not be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education and the professional practice of teachers 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 made available at the time of the inspection.

2. Views of parents and staff

A very small number of parents and non-teaching staff responded to the questionnaires. The responses were almost wholly positive with additional written comments which affirm the commitment and dedication of all the staff. The very small number of issues concerning attendance and therapeutic support were discussed with the EA officer with responsibility for governance and the senior teacher.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for pupils; in particular, how the organisation is addressing individual needs;
- the quality of provision in the organisation; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

As a result of the industrial action by the teachers, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the quality of the provision for the care, welfare and support of the pupils.
- the centre's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects, they are reported below.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Outcomes for Learners

- Most of the pupils achieve accredited qualifications in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, personal and social education, creative crafts and occupational studies. As baseline assessment information was not made available, the appropriateness of these qualifications for each pupil cannot be ascertained.
- Of the cohort last year, two-thirds had attendance below sixty percent and this remains an important area for improvement.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the progression in the young people's learning; and
- the young people's wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of provision

- The timetables demonstrate that the time available for pupils to study literacy and numeracy has increased since the last inspection and is now appropriate. There is, however, a lack of therapeutic support and interventions to meet effectively the complex needs of the pupils.
- There is a lack of dedicated educational psychology support for the pupils and staff within the centre.
- At the time of the inspection, two pupils were in a shared placement with their mainstream school, attending the centre for two days each week and their referring school for three days. It is a matter of concern that more of the mainstream schools do not provide opportunities for their pupils to return to school part time to study and have access to their full curriculum entitlement.
- Most pupils now attend a training organisation to study a planned programme of vocational education.
- The deficiencies in the building outlined in the last report have not been addressed; the building remains unfit for purpose and does not reflect the same standards for access, security, and health and safety required of a school building, and as set out in EOTAS Guidance 2014/24. The limitations of the building restrict the number of pupils who can be accommodated in the centre at one time.
- All of the windows in the building still have metal grilles and the external appearance is cold and uninviting. Despite the efforts of staff to brighten the rooms many are dark and have little natural light and are unsuitable for groups of pupils with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. There is no space for pupils to walk in order to de-stress and to de-escalate. This matter has not been addressed since the time of the previous inspection.

Since the previous inspection the EA have carried out a number of surveys in relation to the building. The safety, security and mechanical and electrical services reports conclude that if the recommendations made in the reports were to be implemented, the building would become fit for purpose from the perspective of safety and security.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness of guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, engagement, teaching/training and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The centre is governed by officers from the EA. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection the parents and staff can have limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated due to the failure to address the serious limitations of the accommodation.
- The EA need to address urgently the serious deficiencies in the accommodation outlined in the 2017 ETI report and as also highlighted in the recent EA reports. Consideration should be given to relocating the centre to more suitable premises as a matter of urgency to comply with EOTAS guidance 2014/24.
- 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 the 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 are unsatisfactory.

The areas for urgent improvement include the need to address:

- the lack of evidence of risk assessment and management plans;
- the serious deficiencies of the building as outlined in the previous ETI report and in the recent EA reports;
- the basic immediate necessities to ensure the safety and security of the building including the provision of CCTV, a door entry system and reception window;

- the fitting of vision panels to classrooms and offices; and
- the repair of the hinges to the fire escape door on the first floor.

The pupils with whom the inspectors spoke report that they feel safe in the centre and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare. They report positive working relationships with all staff. However, owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding.

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the staff, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider community and stakeholders of the quality of education and safeguarding being provided for the young people.

The organisation is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

The ETI will return to the organisation within six weeks to evaluate and report on the arrangements for safeguarding.

Health and safety/accommodation

- All windows in the building have metal grilles installed and the windows cannot be opened effectively. All windows in the building are single glazed wooden windows that are ill-fitting and consequently the building can be cold and difficult to heat. One of the teaching rooms has no natural light except a small fanlight over a door way.
- The centre does not have an electronic door entry system or security camera systems installed. Staff therefore do not have controlled access and exit from the building.
- The centre is located on a busy street and it can very difficult for the pupils to safely cross the road and access or exit taxis safely when entering and leaving the building during times when traffic is extremely busy on the road outside.
- The centre is located over three floors and it is very difficult to supervise and manage the pupils who have social and emotional and behavioural difficulties in premises that were not designed as a centre for the education of pupils with this profile.
- The building and the small rooms over three floors is placing severe constrictions on the number of young people who can access the building at one time.

Statistical data

Newry EOTAS Centre	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Enrolment	21	14	13	13
% Attendance	76	59	65	65
% FSME ¹	N/A	14	10	7

Source: data as held by the organisation.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of young people entitled to free school meals.

Inspection method and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework which guides inspection and self-evaluation within EOTAS settings is available on the ETI website.

<https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/isef-eotas.pdf>

Inspectors scrutinised available documentation and held formal discussions with young people in groups, and the EA officer with management responsibility for the centre and a member of staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 when reporting on Achievements and outcomes, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

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 organisation.

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF NEWRY EDUCATION OTHER THAN AT SCHOOL CENTRE IN NOVEMBER 2019

SAFEGUARDING

In line with the child protection/safeguarding procedures of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), the ETI returned to Newry EOTAS Centre on 20 January 2020 as a follow-up to the inspection which took place on the 11 November 2019; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory in the inspection, had been addressed.

In the interim period, the centre received support from an officer from the Education Authority who has been trying to assist the centre in addressing the deficiencies of the building.

At the time of the follow-up visit, the centre provided evidence of appropriate risk assessment and management plans.

The hinges to the fire escape door on the first floor had been repaired and the door is fully functioning.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection and as confirmed at the follow-up visit, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils remain unsatisfactory.

In particular the organisation must address urgently the:

- serious deficiencies of the building as outlined in the November 2019 ETI report and in the recent Education Authority reports;
- basic immediate necessities to ensure the safety and security of the building including the provision of CCTV, a door entry system and reception window; and
- fitting of vision panels to classrooms and offices.

Further action will be considered by the Department of Education.

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