

# Education and Training Inspectorate EOTAS INSPECTION



Newtownabbey EOTAS Guidance Centre, County Antrim

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in  
March 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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Department of Education  
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CUSTOMER  
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## **1. Context**

Newtownabbey Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Guidance Centre (NEGC) is located in Monkstown. The centre is part of the Education Authority (EA) EOTAS provision. Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes to staffing, leadership and governance. The tuition service has been reorganised to provide exceptional teaching arrangements and this service, along with Lea Green primary EOTAS centre, is no longer managed by the NEGC EOTAS Centre manager but by two EA officers who have overall management and governance responsibility for the centre.

The centre is now a Key Stage (KS) 3 partnership programme. It provides for pupils attending the centre weekly on a part-time basis, with the remainder of the week spent in their own referring school. The pupils receive a cycle of support for up to three terms depending on their individual needs and progress. Their placement is reviewed with a focus on reintegration. The centre also provides outreach support, targeted advisory support and group work for KS3 pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Seven KS3 pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties were attending the centre at the time of the inspection. The pupils travel to the centre from Carrickfergus, Glengormley and surrounding areas. At the time of the inspection there were four permanent full-time teachers including the acting centre manager, one part-time teacher, one behaviour support assistant, building supervisor and an administration support worker.

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 centre informed the ETI that the teachers would not be co-operating with the inspection. The leadership co-operated with the inspection in relation to their governance and safeguarding responsibilities. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education and professional practice among 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 as made available at the time of the inspection.

## **2. Views of parents and staff**

A small number of parents, teaching staff and referring schools responded to the questionnaires. The responses were wholly positive with a small number providing additional written comments which expressed appreciation and support for the new centre leadership and the KS3 partnership provision.

### 3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

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

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

### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

### 5. Outcomes for learners

- The centre's data indicates that half of the pupils have improved their attendance since they attended the centre.
- The centre leadership reports that last year almost all of the pupils successfully reintegrated back to their mainstream school.
- The inspectors met with a small group of pupils. Almost all were confident and enthusiastic in expressing their enjoyment of the rewards system and the opportunity to go horse-riding. The pupils emphasised their appreciation for the centre staff who have taught them strategies to manage effectively their behaviour and emotions which are helping them to maintain their place in school.

The ETI was unable to evaluate (fully):

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

## **6. Quality of provision**

- At the time of the inspection one KS4 pupil has been placed in the centre in exceptional circumstances. It is a matter of concern that there is no appropriate KS4 provision to meet the pupil's needs.
- As part of the partnership model, all of the KS3 pupils return, appropriately, to their mainstream school to study part-time.
- The number of pupils supported on the partnership programme has remained constant, although the number of pupils who are in receipt of outreach support has more than doubled.

The ETI was unable to evaluate (fully):

- the quality of the curriculum;
- 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 for pupils.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The EA officers responsible for governance have successfully managed the transition to the partnership programme and the recent changes to the management and staffing of the centre.
- 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:

- the effectiveness and impact of the strategic and middle leadership.
- 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 DE guidance.

The pupils report that they feel safe in the centre and they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

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

**Statistical data**

NEGC EOTAS	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Enrolment centre	N/A	9	6	6
Enrolment outreach	N/A	58	66	139
% Attendance	N/A	40	80	86
FSME Percentage	N/A	N/A	50	76

**Source:** data as held by the organisation.

**Inspection methodology 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.

Inspectors scrutinised available documentation and held formal discussions with young people in groups, and the EA officers 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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management<sup>1</sup>:

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 centre:

The centre has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the centre sustains improvement.

The centre demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the centre sustains improvement.

The centre needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The centre 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 centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

<sup>1</sup> And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

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