

EOTAS INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lagan Valley Education Project,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
April 2016

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 Achievement and standards, 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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and outcomes	2
6. Provision for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	5
8. Overall effectiveness	6
Appendix	

1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) centres, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>

Inspectors observed learning and teaching, scrutinised documentation and the young people's written work and held formal and informal discussions with young people, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- meetings with a representative from the Education Authority (EA) and the chairman of the governance group; and
- the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete confidential questionnaires.

Seventy per cent (14) of the parents or carers responded to the confidential questionnaire and indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the work of Lagan Valley Education Project. In particular, the parents and carers highlighted their appreciation of the welcoming ethos of the project, the supportive and patient staff who listen to and value the opinions of the young people and understand the difficulties they experience. The significant positive progress most of the young people have made in behaviour, attendance and disposition was also highlighted. Eighty-nine per cent (8) of the staff responded to the questionnaire and indicated very strong support for the leadership and work of the project. Issues concerning staff pay structures and a lack of resources were discussed with the head of EOTAS service of the EA and the head of the project.

2. Focus of inspection

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

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the young people;
- evaluate the project's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes; and
- inform the project's planning for improvement.

3. Context

Lagan Valley Education project is a community based organisation providing Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) provision for up to 20 key stage 4 young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties located in the Colinbrook estate in Poleglass Belfast. The project receives funding from the EA and contributes to the provision within the Lisburn area for young people disengaged from mainstream education and at risk of social and educational marginalisation. Most of the young people who attend live in Lisburn and the surrounding area. All of the young people have significant gaps in their learning and have attainment which is below that typical for their age because they have experienced disrupted schooling, non attendance or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most have significant personal challenges and issues.

The Lagan Valley project is managed by a head of centre, with a core staff of three teachers. There are two staff with responsibilities for managing the vocational and academic curriculum and a learning support assistant. In addition there are three vocational tutors. The C2k information management system has recently been installed in the project.

Lagan Valley Education Project	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	22	22	21	20
% Attendance	84	81	83	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	86	91	81	85

Source: data as held by the organisation.
N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address Important areas for Improvement
Achievements and outcomes	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Achievements and outcomes

- The majority of the young people have improved their attendance and effectively re-engaged with education since attending the Lagan Valley Education Project. In the last three months, the project's data indicates that a small number of the young people have attendance greater than 90%, including a few with 100% attendance. In the month prior to the inspection eight of the eighteen young people had attendance of 80% or more including six with attendance of 100%.
- Almost all of the young people are making progress in numeracy and literacy in relation to their baseline attainment. In 2015 almost all of the young people gained an entry level three certificate in English and mathematics accredited by CCEA² and a small number achieved a level one essential skills numeracy qualification.
- The young people study successfully for vocational qualifications in construction, joinery, catering and media. The project's data indicates that last year the majority of the young people gained an occupational studies qualification accredited by CCEA. All attained a qualification in the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) accredited by OCR³. A majority of the young people obtained the Prince's Trust xl level two award as part of their personal and social development and a small number completed the level two award in Food Safety and Catering accredited by RSPH⁴.

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

² Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessments

³ Oxford Cambridge and RSA

⁴ Royal Society of Public Health

- Almost all of the young people engage well with their learning and, with support, persist with tasks and complete activities within the specified time frame. Most become self-motivated and enthused when activities are matched to their individual learning styles.
- The behaviour of almost all of the young people at the time of the inspection was very good. They were courteous, respectful and most engage effectively in the project and respond to the care and support provided by staff. There is a need to develop further the young people's independence and resilience skills.
- The project's data indicates that last year almost all of the young people progressed to training or further education courses or employment, and almost all have sustained their placements. The management need to have a more robust system to track the young people and monitor carefully their engagement and attendance at their new placement.

6. Provision for learning

- The staff provide a caring and welcoming environment where the young people feel comfortable and accepted. There are excellent working relationships with the young people and their parents or carers and staff. The breakfast and break-time sessions are not used effectively to develop the social skills and positive dispositions of the young people.
- The quality of learning and teaching observed ranged from important areas for improvement to very good and most of the lessons observed were good. In the most effective practice there were clear learning intentions with the success criteria evaluated by the young people, differentiated teaching and the inclusion of well-planned active learning strategies. In the less effective practice the lessons lacked appropriate pace and challenge, were overly teacher directed.
- The education plans do not contain sufficient detail regarding the young people's emotional and behavioural targets or the strategies to support them. The staff need to provide greater opportunities for the young people to engage in target-setting and evaluate their learning.
- It is important that the referring schools, the young people and parents or carers attend education planning meetings to agree a suitable programme, the objectives of the placement, and how the school will contribute to the learning opportunities for the young person. Better communication from schools in sharing more effectively with the project the baseline assessment data about their pupils would provide a more holistic overview and inform planning.
- In numeracy lessons the young people can effectively track their progress through individual and class achievement charts. In literacy lessons baseline assessments are carried out to create effective literacy profiles of the young people. The planning within literacy and numeracy lessons requires further development to more fully reflect progression and skill development. Appropriately the project has introduced level one and two Essential Skills qualifications in literacy and numeracy to meet more effectively the needs of all of the young people.

- The staff have identified appropriately the need to develop ICT resources and equipment within the project to a level comparable with mainstream schools to further the pupils' learning. The C2k facility has been installed recently and staff have received initial training in using the resource.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is good. A caring, family ethos permeates all of the work and interactions within the project. Staff are fully committed to creating an improved future for the young people in their care and their families. The young people and their parents benefit from the sensitive and effective support provided, to enable them to cope during particular periods of stress and personal challenges.
- There are effective links with a number of external organisations including local sporting organisations who provide input into the personal development programme. The staff need to develop further the personal development programme to encourage the young people to participate in purposeful and enjoyable activities that will further develop their social skills.
- Staff have worked effectively to connect the learning within the Prince's Trust programme with the careers and entry level one communication lessons. For example the young people are developing their ICT, research and presentational skills through the use of a co-ordinated approach to investigate career opportunities and to design brochures.
- The young people enjoy the active learning opportunities provided by the practising vocational tutors and engage effectively with them whilst learning skills and gaining qualifications. The management have appropriately identified the need to provide additional opportunities where possible, for the young people to participate in vocational education in colleges of further education or training organisations to facilitate their effective transition upon leaving the project.
- The project liaises effectively with the Department for Employment and Learning careers service to support the young people in making informed career choices. They participate in individual career planning interviews and are also provided with opportunities to write job applications and attend mock interviews. They visit local training organisations, Regional Colleges and local job centres to access current labour market information. The staff have appropriately identified the need to ensure that all of the young people can participate in relevant work experience opportunities in the future.
- The young people are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles; they are taught about healthy eating and nutrition and benefit from the opportunity to learn to cook under the direction of a qualified chef each day as part of an accredited programme. The project makes good use of local recreational facilities to encourage the young people to adopt active lifestyles and participate in sports activities on one afternoon each week.

7. Leadership and management

- The Lagan Valley project senior management know all of the young people and their parents very well and demonstrate a very high level of commitment to supporting them and their families. The daily running of the project is effectively managed and the staff work collaboratively to ensure a calm and pleasant working environment for the young people. The senior management are highly effective in managing the challenging behaviours of the young people and supporting them to deal with their issues.
- The senior management need to articulate and share their strategic vision for the project through a project development plan and create a strong culture of self-evaluation, underpinned by the effective use of data, assessments and robust monitoring systems.
- The senior management has appropriately reviewed the management structure and recently created a management team to share the responsibilities, plan strategically for the project and develop quality assurance measures to ensure areas for improvement are effectively addressed.
- The staff have very good working relationships with the young people and are effective in managing their very challenging behaviour and complex needs. A senior youth worker trained and accredited in therapeutic counselling provides weekly support to the young people. The education authority needs to work with the management to develop a therapeutic support programme, in collaboration with the educational psychology service and other support agencies to address more effectively the complex needs of the young people.
- The project has a governance group who oversee the financial management of the project. 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. The governance group are not effective in challenging and supporting the management of the project and local referring schools, and parents are not part of the membership of the governance group.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the organisation has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The young people feel safe in the project and know who they can speak to if they have any concerns about their well-being. The following areas, however, need to be addressed: provide training for the chair of the management group in relation to recruitment and vetting of staff; update and ratify policies including the code of conduct and put in place a planned cycle of policy review.

8. Overall Effectiveness

Lagan Valley Education Project needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all learners. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the project's progress in addressing the areas for improvement which include the need to:

- improve the quality of self evaluation, planning, monitoring and assessment to meet more effectively the learning needs of all of the young people and improve their outcomes;
- ensure governors are trained in relation to recruitment and vetting of staff and update and ratify policies including the code of conduct; and
- develop the governance group so it provides greater challenge and support for the management of the project.

There will be a follow-up inspection in 12-18 months.

Accommodation

1. The management need to find an alternative to the practice of using extension cables to power appliances in the kitchen area. The kitchen facilities require updating and a review and risk assessment should be carried out in relation to the monitoring and security of sharp implements.
2. The shed used for the vocational classes for joinery and bricklaying is cold and not insulated and does not comply with the modern standards of school building provision. The management need to provide better facilities comparable to those of the modern school building with adequate heating.
3. The project does not have a lounge area that the young people could use to meet, relax and take part in large group work activities. The management need to review the current accommodation to provide a suitable area for the young people to use to relax and take part in large group activities.
4. Most of the doors within the project do not have vision panels. The management need to ensure that all doors to the workshop, classrooms, meeting rooms and offices have vision panels.
5. The management need to conduct a health and safety risk assessment to ensure that the physical and learning environment is meeting the needs of all of the young people.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

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