

Education and Training Inspectorate EOTAS INSPECTION



Lough Road EOTAS, County Armagh

Report of an inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in
February 2020



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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	2
5. Outcomes for learners	2
6. Quality of provision	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Safeguarding	3
9. Overall effectiveness	3

Appendices

- A. Accommodation
- B. Statistical data
- C. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- D. Qualitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

Lough Road Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Centre is located on the outskirts of Lurgan. The pupils travel to the centre from Lurgan, Dungannon, Cookstown and Armagh. The centre provides education for 16 pupils from Key Stage (KS) 4 with increasingly complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The centre is part of the Education Authority (EA) EOTAS provision. Two EA officers have overall management and governance responsibility for the centre. At the time of the inspection there were six permanent full-time teachers, including the centre manager, two full-time and one part-time classroom assistants and one full-time youth 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 include 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 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 very small number of parents, teaching staff and referring schools responded to the questionnaires. The responses were mostly positive with a very small number providing additional written comments which expressed support for the centre and the staff.

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

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

- The centre's data indicates that attendance, at 68%, remains an area for significant improvement.
- Only a small number of pupils returned to their mainstream school to study part-time in previous years.
- The inspectors met with a small number of pupils. The pupils were articulate, confident and most participated well in the discussion. Almost all of the pupils reported that they benefit from the use of the relaxation room, the support of the link teacher and the rewards system, which is enabling them to manage more effectively their behaviour and emotions.

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

- Although a small number of pupils reported that they had returned to school in the past two years to study part-time, at the time of the inspection none of the pupils were attending their mainstream school. It is a matter of concern that pupils do not return to their school part-time to study and to have access to their full curriculum entitlement.
- The centre provides a relaxation room as part of the therapeutic programme of support. Pupils learn relaxation techniques and mindfulness strategies to enable them to self-regulate.
- A small number of pupils report that the vocational education course they are studying is no longer being provided by the regional college and they are unable to complete their studies and gain a qualification. The staff in the Lough Road EOTAS centre are aware of the issue and have raised concerns with staff in the regional college.

- The centre has recently established a student council with clear roles for the pupils, such as student treasurer. The student council is promoting healthy lifestyles through the introduction of healthy morning fruit snacks and the purchase of reusable water bottles for all pupils.
- The lack of dedicated Educational Psychology support is impeding staff in developing suitable strategies to manage the increasingly complex needs and behaviours of the pupils.

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 governance group have been proactive in the procurement of site security, office facilities, the establishment of the relaxation room and staff training.
- 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. There is a need to review the online safety policy and formalise the annual child protection report to governors.

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.

Accommodation

1. Since the last inspection, electronic gates and a monitoring system have been installed to secure access to the site. In addition the centre office has been relocated to provide more effective monitoring of the entrance to the centre and reception area.
2. The classrooms over three floors accessed by narrow staircases are inappropriate for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and complex needs who require constant supervision.
3. The narrow and restricted steep stairways in the old residential part of the building are difficult for some of the young people with limited mobility to access safely.
4. The grounds of the building are very restricted and do not provide opportunities for the young people to play games, participate in sports or use the grounds to walk and de-escalate when they have emotional or behavioural incidents.
5. The accommodation and general facilities do not reflect the same standards for access and health and safety required of any school and does not comply with EOTAS Guidance 2014/24 6.1

Statistical data

Lough Road EOTAS	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Enrolment centre	26	22	19	16
% Attendance	71	75	67	68
FSME Percentage	65	45	53	56

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 management¹:

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.

¹ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2020

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