



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rathmore Educational
Guidance Centre, Antrim

Report of an Inspection in
January 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.

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of 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 (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

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

Fifty per cent of parents (11) and 60% of centre staff (6) responded to the questionnaires. All of the parental responses were positive; in particular, they value the caring ethos, the level of support offered, and the resulting progress made by the young people. The staff responded positively and indicated strong support for the centre management. Issues emerging from the questionnaires were discussed with the area manager and members of the senior management within the EA and, where appropriate, these have been commented on within the report.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all children, 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 centre's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes; and
- inform the centre's planning for improvement.

3. Context

Rathmore Educational Guidance Centre and tuition service is part of the Education Authority's provision for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and is located in Dunadry, county Antrim. The staff provide support for a small number of young people at the centre and outreach services for primary and post-primary schools in the towns of Antrim, Ballymena and surrounding areas. The work of the centre focuses on supporting young people to manage their behaviour and maintain their place in school. An area head of alternative education manages the centre and the work of five teachers, three behaviour support assistants, two permanent and thirteen temporary teachers in the tuition service.

A small number of young people at key stage 3 are referred by the educational psychology service and attend the centre full-time for up to three terms before re-integration to their own schools. The model of provision within the centre will change from February 2016 when the young people will attend the centre on a part-time basis for three days, whilst remaining in school for the rest of the school week.

Rathmore Guidance Centre	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Enrolment	6	7	5	*
Enrolment outreach	128	159	163	N/A
% Attendance	78	92	85	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	83	85	60	100
Newcomers	*	*	*	*

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and outcomes	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Outreach provision	Good

5. Achievements and outcomes

- During the inspection the behaviour of the young people in the centre and those in receipt of behaviour outreach support was of a very high standard. The young people were always co-operative and respectful to adults and to their peers. They recognised the boundaries and structures in place and, with appropriate support, managed their behaviour and emotions very well. The young people develop improved attitudes to learning and the high quality of individual support enables them to build positive working relationships with all the adults within the centre.
- The young people respond well to the individualised programmes of support. The work in the young people's books indicates that they are progressing in their learning and developing their mathematical thinking and literacy skills.
- All of the young people in the centre last year successfully completed the 'cook it' programme in home economics, a level three drugs awareness programme provided by a health education and training organisation and the 'Heart Start' health awareness course.
- Of the 163 young people who availed of outreach support during the last academic year, 99 were supported in primary schools and 64 were supported in post-primary schools. Importantly, of that total, almost all successfully maintained their school placements. Over the same period, of the five young people who benefited from full-time placements for three terms within the centre, almost half returned to their schools.

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

6. Provision for learning

- The young people in the centre benefit from a broad curriculum including science, history, home economics and art, taught in a mutually respectful learning environment where the staff have high expectations of the young people. Clear and consistently applied strategies enable the staff to manage the young people's behaviour. Appropriately, the management have recognised the need to develop further the curriculum with a greater focus on enabling the young people to manage their behaviour with therapeutic input, to build their self-esteem and resilience and help them maintain their place in school.
- The provision for literacy and numeracy in the centre is effective in meeting the needs of the young people who are making good progress and gaining in confidence. Lessons are planned effectively around the key stage targets and topics provided by the referring schools. Importantly, this work enables the young people to keep up with their peers and, when appropriate, re-integrate more effectively into their mainstream schools.
- Most of the learning and teaching observed within the centre and the tuition service is good or better. In the most effective practice, lessons are well planned with interesting and relevant topics which engage the young people who respond well to the positive climate for learning. Skilful questioning, good pace and challenge develop well the young people's thinking skills and personal capabilities. In the less effective practice, in a minority of lessons within the post-primary support and tuition service, there are inconsistencies in the teacher's planning with limited use of resources.
- Planning in the primary outreach service is individualised and thorough. The assessment of individual needs is informed well by the educational psychology reports and an internal acceptable behaviour curriculum audit. The centre has prioritised appropriately the trialling of additional baseline testing to improve further their measurement of young people's emotional well-being and academic ability.
- The centre monitors carefully the progress of all the young people who receive support. The outreach teachers and support assistants continue to track their progress, behaviour and learning when the centre support has ended and the young people are back in their schools. Appropriately, if required, ongoing support, has been put in place.
- The staff in the primary outreach service have developed a highly effective behaviour support resource pack which has informed both outreach practice and training for mainstream primary schools. The practical and adaptable resource pack, based on theory, research and experience, promotes capacity building and has been evaluated very positively by the mainstream schools.
- There is inconsistency in the information, support, resources and guidance provided by the pupil's schools to the teachers in the tuition service. In the best practice, in a small number of cases, schools accept responsibility for their pupils and remain highly supportive of their young person in receipt of tuition. These schools provide individual work, planning, resources and accommodation in school for the young people, and mark examination course work when necessary.

- The young people who avail of the tuition service do not have access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance in order to help them and their parents and guardians to make appropriate and informed career choices.
- Although information and communication and technology (ICT) available is used effectively to enhance learning within the centre, however, most of the young people who avail of the outreach and tuition service do not have access to ICT. The lack of C2K facilities in the centre prevents the young people from accessing the range of educational programmes available to their peers in mainstream schools.
- The very good pastoral care of the young people is a key strength of the provision. The staff create an inclusive, nurturing environment which is very conducive to learning. The young people engage effectively with the staff and they achieve well the agreed personal development and behavioural targets. They respond positively to the effective reward system which enables them to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
- The centre staff give good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, through, for example, the programme in home economics, the educational activities programme, and the individual support and guidance given to the young people.

7. Leadership and management

- The EA have an effective strategic vision for the centre in line with the Department of Education EOTAS guidance. They have focused appropriately on supporting schools to build their capacity to address the often challenging behaviour and complex needs of the young people and prevent them from becoming excluded from school. The senior management team now need to review the policies and procedures for the tuition service and carry out an audit to ensure that the staff have the appropriate resources, including ICT equipment, to carry out their work, and meet effectively the needs of the young people.
- The leadership is highly committed to the well-being and education of the young people and prioritises the development of very effective working relationships with them, their parents and the staff and encourages a calm and pastoral working environment. The need to review current procedures for monitoring and evaluating the learning and teaching within the centre and tuition service and to share the good practice identified in the primary outreach support service has been appropriately identified as an area for improvement.
- The centre is governed by the Behaviour Support Service Management Group (BSSMG). The BSSMG is well informed about the centre's provision and has supported the innovative development of resources by the primary outreach team. Appropriately, the EA is considering how to facilitate greater involvement of the local referring schools and parents in supporting the work of the centre and tuition service. To develop further this important work, the EA support services need to work together more effectively to enable the young people to be assessed and to transition efficiently and in a timely manner to the appropriate educational provision.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspectors, the young people reported that they feel safe while attending the centre and know what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being.

8. Overall Effectiveness

Rathmore Educational Guidance Centre demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement. In particular, the need to:

- monitor and evaluate the learning and teaching in the centre, outreach and tuition service, addressing, in particular, inconsistencies in the teachers' planning; and
- develop a curriculum with a greater focus on enabling the young people to manage their behaviour, with a therapeutic input to build their self-esteem and resilience to help them maintain their place in school.

Accommodation

1. The lack of C2K information management systems and infrastructure within this centre creates a barrier to learning. In addition, the lack of access to C2K system inhibits effective communication or efficient transfer of appropriate educational information between the project and mainstream schools and other education providers.
2. There is an urgent need to ensure that the C2K ICT systems are installed and functioning without further delay. The lack of C2K provision is having a detrimental effect on the education of the young people.

Health and safety

1. There is a need for the management to establish communication procedures and protocols for lone-working tutors to ensure their safety.

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