

EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSPECTORATE

EOTAS INSPECTION

Carrig Leap (formerly Limavady) EOTAS,
Limavady, County Londonderry

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in October 2022



Providing Inspection services for:
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Follow-up to the inspection of Carrig Leap (formerly Limavady) Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Centre

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) conducted an inspection of Carrig Leap (formerly Limavady) Educational and Guidance Centre in February 2018 when significant areas for improvement were identified, namely to:

- develop significantly the quality of learning and teaching, with robust systems to monitor the effectiveness of planning, teaching and learning, and pupil progression;
- put in place an effective therapeutic programme to address fully the needs of the pupils; and
- develop the education provision so that it motivates, challenges and engages pupils and more effectively meets their needs and improves their attendance.

Owing to action short of strike by the teaching unions during the two follow-up inspections in March and November 2019, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken and the extent to which the significant areas for improvement had been addressed. The ETI carried out a monitoring visit in May 2021 and a follow-up inspection in October 2022.

In the interval since the initial inspection, the centre has received support¹ provided by the Education Authority (EA) in relation to the recruitment of staff to ensure an appropriate staffing complement is in place. Currently, there are three full-time permanent teaching staff and one behaviour support assistant (BSA). Support has also been provided on staff professional learning in the EA's 'Pathways to Leadership' Programme, nurture training, restorative and trauma informed practice, assessment and target setting practices, safeguarding, digital skills and therapeutic interventions.

Over the same period, the key actions or changes which affect the work of the centre include:

- the engagement of all staff in well-targeted professional learning to improve the quality of provision, resulting in improved pupil outcomes in engagement, attendance and progression;
- the review of the curriculum provision to better meet the needs and interests of the pupils, including the development of nurturing and therapeutic teaching approaches and the development of the pupils' vocational skills; and
- the move to new, purpose-built accommodation which provides better access to new technologies.

¹ In EOTAS centres, the staff are employed directly by the EA and managed by the EA Post-Primary Behaviour Support and Provisions of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate.

As a consequence of the support, and the key changes and actions taken within the centre, there have been improvements in the quality of education as reported in the key findings section of this report.

Views of the staff, parents/carers and pupils

Almost all of the staff responded to the questionnaire. Their positive feedback highlighted their pleasure in recognising and celebrating the pupils' achievements and progress, and the positive impact of the therapeutic programme on pupils' engagement, in particular.

A majority of the parents/carers responded to the questionnaire. They emphasised the progress shown by their children since attending the centre and indicated their appreciation of the additional work-based learning and employment opportunities their children now have access to. They were also very appreciative of the new, purpose-built accommodation.

In discussions with inspectors, the pupils report they feel safe and happy in the centre and are appreciative of the high standard of the purpose-built centre and extensive facilities. They enjoy the family atmosphere, holistic support by staff and are beginning to plan for the next stage in their education and/or employment. When appropriate, they re-engage positively with their schools, for example, through a specialised curriculum one day per week.

Key findings

The centre staff monitor robustly the progress and outcomes for pupils from their baseline positions, allowing the staff to demonstrate and celebrate the highly positive impact of the intervention strategies used to engage and support the pupils. They know the pupils well and plan thoroughly to develop the pupils' skills in, for example, communication, using mathematics and personal and social development. With the pupils' needs and interests differing considerably, the staff provide well-differentiated, varied and stimulating lessons, along with periods where the pupils can learn to use strategies to relax and de-stress.

The curriculum has been reviewed effectively, through extensive research and staff training, to include an imaginative, high-quality therapeutic programme guided by theoretical models incorporating practices to support the social, behavioural and emotional wellbeing of the pupils. The therapeutic activities include a mentoring programme, nurture breakfast and lunch, plant and animal care, horticulture, and a reward system linked to individualised weekly targets. The therapeutic programme is evaluated termly through pupil achievement of educational and wellbeing targets and personal goals. The pupils are developing more confidence and self-belief that they can achieve and attain their goals. There is purposeful and supportive contact with parents on a regular basis.

The quality of the educational provision has improved, enabled by the improvement of the accommodation, digital technology and the provision of an attractive learning environment that demonstrates a commitment to and investment in the pupils' education. Attendance has improved considerably by over 50 percent since the original inspection, rising from 58 percent in 2017/18 to 89 percent in 2021/22. All of the lessons observed were highly effective in addressing the needs of the pupils and promoting successful learning. In the activities observed, the pupils engaged well, showed enthusiasm, co-operated with staff and displayed kindness and thoughtfulness to each other.

The appointment of three specialist teachers and their engagement in an extensive programme of ongoing staff professional learning has empowered them to develop well the curriculum provision and the range of teaching approaches used, including individual reading support; this is leading to improved pupils' outcomes. The appointment of a behaviour support assistant enables valuable support for pupils when attending their schools or the North West Regional College. The centre does not have dedicated provision from the Education Psychology Service; given the complex nature of the pupils' learning, sensory and psychological needs, both pupils and staff would benefit from its expertise through a regular arrangement. Access to effective youth provision would improve further the educational and social development provision.

Currently, the EA management provides the governance scrutiny and challenge function. Based on the evidence presented at the time of the inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that the centre requires independent governance, particularly in bringing impartiality to the oversight of the safeguarding arrangements.

Overall effectiveness

Carrig Leap (formerly Limavady) EOTAS centre now demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of all the pupils. The ETI will monitor how the centre sustains improvement, and how the EA enhances the pupils' access to the Educational Psychology Service and the Youth Service.

APPENDIX A: Health and safety

The outside space at the centre requires further development to provide additional outdoor space for the pupils to relax and participate in outdoor activities helpful to their wellbeing, and to develop further skills through outdoor learning activities. There are plans in place to develop car parking facilities on site.

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