



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

***Providing Inspection Services for***  
**Department of Education**  
**Department for Employment and Learning**  
**Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of a Follow-up Inspection**

#### **Groomsport Intensive Learning Unit**

**October 2015**

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THE GROOMSPORT INTENSIVE SUPPORT LEARNING UNIT**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Groomsport Intensive Support Learning Unit, in January 2013<sup>1</sup> when the quality of the provision was evaluated as satisfactory.

The ETI carried out two interim follow up visits on the 13 February 2014 and 30 September 2014 and a follow-up inspection on 9 October 2015.

The action plan received following the inspection was of a very good quality.

In the interval since the inspection, the following key actions and changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- there has been a change in the overall leadership of the unit with a new head of service appointed who has experience of managing a service for young people with challenging behaviour or who have disengaged from education;
- a permanent co-ordinator, based in the unit, has been appointed to manage and monitor the effectiveness of learning and teaching;
- two full-time permanent teachers have been appointed with specialist expertise in English and mathematics, respectively, and experience of managing young people with challenging behaviour; and
- the accommodation has been improved to create a more inviting and pleasant learning environment including a nurture room, small library and classrooms that are better equipped and resourced.

### **Key findings**

- The new head of service has initiated and developed a strategic plan with management structures that ensure staff work together and collaborate more effectively with professionals in the residential children's homes.
- The appointment of the permanent co-ordinator, based in the unit, to manage the provision has resulted in better planning and improved learning and teaching.
- The recruitment of two permanent qualified and appropriately experienced teachers has created a stable educational environment to enable the young people to develop effective working relationships with their teachers and acquire positive attitudes to learning.
- An educational psychologist is engaged at the unit for one day each week working with staff developing more effective strategies to support the young people in their learning.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-education-other-than-at-school-provision/inspection-reports-alternative-education-provision-2013/inspection-report-groomsport-intensive-support-learning-unit.pdf>.

- A classroom assistant and the youth worker have completed training in the development of nurture group practice, resulting in effective diagnostic assessment of the young people and more focused intervention plans to develop the resilience, tolerance and behaviour of each young person.
- The unit is supported by an employability project worker who has developed a programme to support the young people in career planning and through the transition to the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- The curriculum has been extended to include a more appropriate range of accredited courses including art and design, horticulture, and some GCSE courses.
- The young people have the additional opportunity to attend vocational education classes with an external provider and are successfully studying the Curriculum Council for Examinations and Assessment occupational studies joinery, bricklaying, digital technology and food safety in catering courses.
- The lessons are more focused on the needs and interests of the young people, resulting in a significant improvement in the quality of their work.
- The outcomes for the young people have improved significantly, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- The learning environment has been improved and is stimulating and well resourced providing a positive culture for learning.

### **Overall effectiveness**

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

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