



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Thornberry Pupil Referral Unit
and Sunlea Educational
Guidance Centre

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
(Involving Action Short of Strike) in
November 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THORNBERRY PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT AND SUNLEA EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE CENTRE, COLERAINE, BT52 2NL

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Thornberry Pupil Referral Unit and Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre in February 2015¹, which concluded that the centre needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI carried out a follow-up inspection in October 2016² which concluded that the centre needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all learners.

The areas for improvement included the need to:

- focus more clearly on the re-integration of young people into their referring schools within a shorter timescale for those who have the capacity to do so, and develop a longer term provision for the small number of young people who cannot return to their referring school;
- continue to develop the therapeutic approach to address the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the young people in order that they develop further skills to enable them to successfully return to their referring schools; and
- review the policies and procedures for the tuition service and provide the tutors and teachers with the appropriate resources, including information and communication technology equipment, to meet the needs of the young people.

The centres plans were revised in light of the inspection findings.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in October 2017 and a second follow-up inspection in November 2017.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the centre informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education 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.

In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the centre have taken place:

- staff have undertaken additional training in circle time and therapeutic education;
- the Education Authority (EA) have announced that the centre is moving to another location with better facilities from September 2018;

¹ Education Other Than At School Inspection – Thornberry Primary Referral Unit and Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre | Education Training Inspectorate

² [Follow-up Inspection - Thornberry Primary Referral Unit and Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

- the centre has started to provide counselling support to pupils through another agency each week; and
- most of the pupils who attended the centre last year have successfully re-integrated back to their school.

Key findings

- There is a clearer focus on the re-integration of young people into their referring school, however the timescale is not clearly defined and the EA has not yet developed a longer term provision for the small number of pupils who require it.
- The centre has continued to develop the therapeutic approach to address social and emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils.
- The policies and procedures for the tuition service are under review, and the tutors have been provided with some resources and information and communication technology equipment.

Owing to action short of strike the centre did not provide evidence with regards the out workings and improvement in:

- the effectiveness of the new model of provision;
- how the therapeutic approach to address social and emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils has developed; and
- the effect and impact of the procedures for the tuition service tutors or the resources and information and communication technology equipment allocated to them.

Consequently, there remains a need for Thornberry Pupil Referral Unit and Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre to address important areas for improvement.

Conclusion

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Further action will be considered by the Department of Education.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2018

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