



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lagan Valley Education Project,
Lisburn, County Antrim

Report of a Follow-up Inspection
in May 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
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CUSTOMER
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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF LAGAN VALLEY EDUCATION PROJECT, COUNTY ANTRIM

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Lagan Valley Education project in June 2016¹, which concluded that the centre needed to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the young people.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the quality of self evaluation, planning, monitoring and assessment to meet more effectively the learning needs of all of the young people and improve their outcomes;
- ensure governors are trained in relation to recruitment and vetting of staff and update and ratify policies including the code of conduct; and
- develop the governance group so it provides greater challenge and support for the management of the project.

The centre's action plans were adjusted appropriately in light of the feedback given by the ETI.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2016 and a follow-up inspection in May 2017.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions or changes which affect the work of the centre have taken place.

- The centre has recently appointed a temporary teacher to teach literacy and develop the therapeutic support programme.
- The governance group has been revised and now includes members with a wider range of expertise and experience in the education of vulnerable and marginalised young people.
- All staff in the centre have attended training in child protection and safeguarding.
- The teachers have received training in the use of diagnostic assessment systems to baseline the social and emotional development of the young people.

The centre reports that the Education Authority (EA) staff have provided advice and support which has impacted positively on improving the work of the centre.

Key Findings

- The outcomes for learners are now good. The centre's data indicates positive outcomes for almost all of the young people with most now achieving well in a wider range of appropriate accredited courses at levels that enable them to transition effectively to their chosen career pathways. In particular, the young people have achieved improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy. When the young people leave the centre their progress, engagement and attendance at their new placements is monitored effectively through the implementation of a robust tracking system.

¹ <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/eotas-inspection-lagan-valley-education-project-belfast.pdf>

- The quality of provision is now good. The teachers' planning is focused on meeting the learning needs of all of the young people and in the more effective practice reflects progression and skill development. The education plans have been revised to include appropriate targets and assessment data. The centre has recognised the need to develop the plans further to include strategies to enable the young people to achieve their targets. The teachers have received training in using diagnostic assessment systems to baseline the social and emotional development of the young people and are now using the information effectively to plan support programmes. The teachers are working very effectively together to develop a culture of self-evaluation that includes peer observation of teaching and evaluations from the young people to guide and improve classroom practice. The breakfast and break-time sessions are used more skilfully to develop the social skills and positive dispositions of the young people and assess their readiness to learn. The centre has made important business links that will provide the opportunity for the young people to participate in work experience.
- The referring schools do not enable their pupils to return to school on a part-time basis to study. Consequently, the centre needs to put in place educational planning meetings to enable referring schools to share essential baseline assessment information about their pupils and plan when their pupils will return to school part-time and when school staff will attend review meetings.
- The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement is now good. The management team are effective and have developed a centre development plan that sets out the strategic vision for the centre. They have implemented effective systems to monitor and evaluate learning and teaching throughout the centre. The daily briefing and staff meetings have improved communication between staff and facilitated better planning to meet the individual needs of the young people. The management team have reviewed all of the centre policies and implemented a planned cycle of policy review. The governance group have ratified the updated policies and the code of conduct for all staff and are well informed in the life and work of the centre. They are effective in challenging and supporting the management of the centre, however representatives of the local referring schools are not represented on the governance group. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection the parents and staff can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

Overall Effectiveness

The Lagan Valley Education Project 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 in:

- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the therapeutic and personal development programmes; and
- enabling referring schools to share essential baseline assessment information about their pupils and plan when their pupils will return to school.

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