

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
INSPECTORATE

EDUCATION OTHER THAN AT SCHOOL INSPECTION

Maydown EOTAS Centre, County Londonderry

Report of a Follow-up Inspection in November 2024

Follow-up to the inspection of Maydown Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Centre, Maydown, BT47 6UF

Introduction

Maydown Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) centre is located in the outskirts of County Londonderry. From September 2024, the centre no longer provides for key stage (KS) 4 pupils. The KS 3 partnership programme remains in place, alongside outreach provision to mainstream schools in the locality and their pupils. The centre's vision is to support early intervention for pupils and provide effective collaboration with referring schools.

Views of staff, parents/carers and referring schools

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) issued online confidential questionnaires to staff, parents/carers and the referring schools in advance of the follow-up inspection.

A small number of parents/carers and staff from the referring schools responded to the questionnaires, and almost all were positive. A small number of additional written comments from the parents and referring schools outlined the effective communication between the centre and the school, and the support provided.

Most of the staff in the centre responded to the questionnaire and these were mostly positive. All of the staff reported that they plan effectively to meet the needs of the pupils and that they had been consulted on and contributed to the centre development plan. A small number of written comments provided by the respondents were discussed with the centre leader and a representative from the Education Authority's (EA) governance group.

Key actions

The key actions which affect the work of the EOTAS centre are set out below.

The centre has received external support provided by the EA in relation to: their participation in a research informed review of the KS3 partnership model; the delivery and referral for outreach provision; and, staff professional learning.

The centre staff are providing outreach support to year 8 pupils in mainstream schools to help the pupils to manage the transition from primary school.

Morning 'link time' has been introduced which is scheduled time for each pupil to meet with their assigned member of staff to help the pupils to start the day feeling positive about themselves and to discuss their progress and assess their readiness to learn.

The therapeutic curriculum has been developed and includes learning with horses and art therapy, provided by external providers. The staff have also received professional learning on strategies to support pupils experiencing emotionally based school avoidance.

Key findings

- The recent changes to the centre's provision has enabled the centre staff to have a clear purpose which is focused on the KS 3 partnership programme and the provision of outreach support. The vision has been shared with the referring schools and communicated effectively to: establish clear roles and responsibilities in the delivery of the KS 3 partnership programme; support early intervention for pupils: and, provide effective collaboration with referring schools.
- Appropriate strategic priorities are outlined in the EA's post-primary behaviour and support provisions EOTAS service development plan and include: a review of all EOTAS policies; the implementation of a revised model at KS 3 EOTAS focused on consistency and early intervention; and embedding healthy and respectful relationships as part of the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework within EOTAS centres. The centre staff has begun to develop appropriately a centre development plan aligned to the EA EOTAS Service plan.
- An effective digitised system for monitoring the attendance, progress and wellbeing of the pupils has been devised by the senior teacher and shared with the locality advisor in the EA and KS 3 EOTAS centres in locality North. The senior teacher's analysis of the progression pathways is detailed and supports a focus on early intervention. There are also effective processes to monitor and share the pupil's progress when attending their mainstream school and the staff's use of 'link time', which is enabling timely and shared communication between all staff.
- The planning, teaching and assessment was mostly effective. In the lessons that promoted successful learning, there was sufficient pace and challenge, and they were underpinned by highly supportive relationships, effective planning which linked well to the theme of respect and provided opportunities for group discussion to support pupils in their decision-making process. The composition of the pupil groups remains appropriately under review by the staff, so they remain responsive to the pupils' individual learning and pastoral needs.
- In discussions with the pupils, they reported that they have very positive relationships with all of the centre staff, who support them well with their learning and emotional wellbeing. In particular, they discussed that they are learning to better manage their emotions through reflexology, horse-riding and use of the centre's 'chill room.' The pupils are very proud of their preparation, planning and organisation of a coffee morning which raised over £500 to support the work of the centre.

- The staff engage regularly in professional learning which is aligned well to identified priorities and includes: mental health first aid, child sexual exploitation, nurturing practices and principles, addressing bullying, lifesaver training provided by Heartstart and safeTALK provided by the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
- Almost of the pupils are reengaging well with their learning, which is evident in their improved attendance at the centre. Most of the pupils have significant gaps in their learning, with some having been absent from school for long periods of time. The centre staff should continue to work with referring schools and share centre strategies which have been effective in improving pupil attendance. The referring schools should also be supported by centre staff to evaluate the use of 'reduced timetables' by the referring schools to assess whether these are reinforcing non-attendance at school and are in the best interests of the pupil.
- The outreach support provision is managed effectively by the staff in the centre and is aligned to EA procedures. Regular communication takes place between centre staff and the pupils, parents/carers and staff in the referring schools. The range of support for individual pupils is recorded and monitored appropriately and there are identified actions for each referring school on completion of the outreach support.
- The EOTAS service is reviewing all EOTAS policies, beginning with the policy on addressing bullying, which requires regional parental and centre consultation. To support the centre's review of policies, the EA should establish and share a clear schedule of EA policy review to include the policy for critical incidents and special educational needs.

Areas for action:

- to continue to work with referring schools and share successful strategies to improve pupil attendance at school.

Child Protection

At the time of the inspection, the evidence provided by the EOTAS centre demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection align to the current statutory guidance. The EA needs to update its child protection policy to reflect accurately the arrangements for child protection training for governance leads.

Going Forward


Maydown EOTAS Centre has a clear vision for pupil and school support, aligned to the EA EOTAS service development plan. The staff know the individual pupils very well, and supportive and encouraging relationships are enabling pupils to reengage with their education and achieve success.

The ETI will continue to work with Maydown EOTAS to monitor the progress in addressing the areas for action as laid out in this report. No further follow-up inspection is required.

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