



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

The Pathways Project,  
Belfast

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
in October 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THE PATHWAYS PROJECT, BELFAST, BT15 IBH**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of The Pathways EOTAS in June 2016<sup>1</sup> which concluded that the school needed to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement identified in the follow-up inspection were the need to:

- develop further the opportunities and motivation of the pupils where appropriate, to study for GCSE accreditation;
- extend the curriculum to include vocational, creative and expressive opportunities for the pupils; and
- increase the hours of attendance for all the pupils in accordance with the EOTAS Guidance 2014.

The centre's action plans were of a good quality and identified key actions to promote improvement. The centre reports that they received support in some areas from the Education Authority (EA).

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

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

- the curriculum has been revised significantly to include literacy and numeracy frequently and appropriately on four days each week and to offer regular creative and expressive opportunities;
- the centre has advanced plans to provide vocational education opportunities;
- the centre has provided further opportunities for the pupils to study GCSE accreditation in English, maths and information and communication technology; and
- the available hours of attendance for all the pupils has increased in line with the DE guidance 2014/24.

### **Key Findings**

Outcomes for learners are now good. The centre has worked successfully to broaden the curricular offer. The curriculum planning process is now more pupil-centred, flexible, with a focus on the pupil's future careers. The centre has sought a short term vocational education programme organised and financed by themselves. Whilst the centre has organised the vocational education independently through their own means, there remains a need for the EA to ensure that prior to approval of placements referring schools apply for vocational education funding for their pupils and agree opportunities for them to return to school to study as appropriate to their needs. In addition the EA needs to plan strategically for the needs of the pupils by facilitating education planning meetings with senior teachers from the school and centre staff and parents, pupils before placement begins.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/>

The quality of provision is now good. The pupils have regular opportunities to participate in a wide range of creative and expressive activities with numerous providers based on their needs and interests that motivate and engage them. The centre has increased the length of the school day to ensure that it meets the requirements of the DE guidance.

In the previous cohort of pupils, all were given the opportunity to study for GCSE qualifications and almost all studied GCSE Maths and ICT, however the opportunities for pupils to study GCSE English were curtailed by the lack of coursework from their former schools. It is of some concern that the majority of pupils placed by the EA in this centre are year 12 pupils with only two year 11 pupils who can attend the centre for two years effectively completing their studies. In accordance with the DE guidance referrals into EOTAS during Key Stage 4, particularly during Year 12, can have a detrimental impact upon pupil outcomes and measures should be put in place to refer pupils in year 11 enabling better educational outcomes.

The quality and effectiveness of strategic leadership, management and action to promote improvement is good. The senior leadership team within the centre are committed to the centre improvement process and improved outcomes for the pupils. They provide a wide range of professional development opportunities for staff, which informs well decisions around the planning for individual needs.

## **Conclusion**

The Pathways centre demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following area for improvement for the EA to:

- ensure that prior to approval of placements, referring schools apply for vocational education funding for their pupils and agree opportunities for them to return to school to study as appropriate to their needs: and
- refer pupils in year 11 and plan strategically for their needs by facilitating education planning meetings with senior teachers from the school and centre staff and parents, pupils before placement begins.

The ETI will monitor how the centre sustains improvement.

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