



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Thornberry Primary Referral  
Unit and Sunlea Educational  
Guidance Centre

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
in October 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF THORNBERRY PRIMARY REFERRAL UNIT AND SUNLEA EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE CENTRE, COLERAINE, BT52 2NL**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of Thornberry Primary Referral Unit (PRU) and Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre (EGC) in February 2015<sup>1</sup> which concluded that in almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by Sunlea EGC for key stages 3 and 4 (KS3 and KS4) young people was inadequate<sup>2</sup>. The areas for improvement identified at the inspection were the need to:

- review the current model of KS3 and KS4 provision to ensure that the needs of the young people are more fully addressed and that there is a clear focus on re-integration within a shorter timescale for those that have the capacity to do so; in addition, to establish a longer term provision for the very small number who cannot return to mainstream school;
- provide a more therapeutic approach to addressing the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties of the young people, in order that they develop further skills to enable them to return and integrate successfully to their mainstream schools; and
- review and improve the management arrangements to ensure that the learning and teaching within the centre, and for the tuition service, are appropriately and effectively monitored and evaluated with robust arrangements to track effectively the progress and well-being of the young people.

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 October 2015 and a follow-up inspection in October 2016.

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

- the centre has changed the model of provision for KS3 pupils to ensure they attend their referring school for at least two days per week for up to three terms;
- the centre has provided training for staff to deliver a therapeutic programme with circle time and a social skills programme;
- there is a comprehensive system of baseline assessment for the young people, including social and emotional wellbeing assessment;
- the senior management in the Education Authority have put in place new systems of referral to the centre;
- the mobile classroom that is used by the KS3 and KS4 young people has had a simple entry system installed;

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<sup>1</sup> [Education Other Than At School Inspection – Thornberry Primary Referral Unit and Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre | Education Training Inspectorate](#)

<sup>2</sup> From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of a school previously evaluated as inadequate will now be reported as having significant areas for improvement.

- fewer young people now attend the centre and there is a strong emphasis on supporting the young people to maintain their place in their referring school;
- there are significant financial constraints that restrict the ability of the centre to purchase essential educational resources; and
- the majority of the resource and health and safety issues raised in the inspection of 2015 have not been addressed.

## **Key Findings**

The Thornberry Referral Unit for KS1 and KS2 has continued to meet effectively the needs of the children referred and is supporting them very well, towards successful re-integration to their mainstream school.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement in Sunlea Guidance Centre is now an important area for improvement. The centre has developed more effective working partnerships with schools and reviewed the model of provision; however there remains a need to refine and develop the provision further including the re-integration of the young people into their referring schools within a shorter time scale.

The quality of learning and teaching is now good, with clear planning and learning intentions. Lessons in numeracy are part of a coherent overall scheme devised in collaboration with the referring schools. In literacy, further development is required to match the content of lessons to those in the pupils' referring schools.

Although at an early stage, the pupils are responding well to the therapeutic support to develop their social skills, and to the strategies to build their self esteem and confidence in literacy and numeracy.

## **Overall Effectiveness**

Sunlea Educational Guidance Centre needs to address important areas for improvement. The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement including 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 ETI will conduct a further follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

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