

# EDUCATION OTHER THAN AT SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Groomsport Intensive Support  
Learning Unit

Report of an Inspection  
in January 2013



Providing Inspection Services for  
Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## APPENDICES

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## Inspection methods and evidence base

The inspection evaluations are based on evidence gained from 10 lesson observations, from scrutiny of the young peoples' work and interactions, and from a range of documentation, including the centre's internal data. In addition, the inspection team held discussions with the young people, and with teachers and support staff.

The views of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff were sought through confidential questionnaires prior to the inspection. The reporting inspector discussed any issues raised through the questionnaires with the head of service. A summary of the outcomes from the questionnaires is included in section five of the report.

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## 1. Context

The Groomspoint Intensive Support Learning Unit (ISLU) is based in the village of Groomspoint and provides education to young people who are resident in Ashgrove and Oaklands Intensive Support childrens' homes. These childrens' homes are part of the Lakewood Regional Centre and provide intensive specialised residential care for looked after children (LAC) as deemed appropriate by the South Eastern Health Trust. The Trust has been allocated educational placements for twelve young people aged between 11 and 16 years old. The South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) may also place up to four young people with statements of special educational need for social, emotional or behaviour difficulties. Groomspoint ISLU is staffed by a temporary head of service, three permanent staff, a teacher, a youth worker and a learning support assistant. There are four part-time temporary teachers and two temporary full time learning support assistants. The head of service was seconded to the post two years ago. In addition to her responsibilities for the Groomspoint ISLU, she manages also the Beechcroft Education Centre, the Crisis Assessment Intervention Team (a regional service) and the Anxiety Based School Absence Service.

## 2. Focus of the inspection

The inspection of Groomspoint Intensive Support Learning Unit focused on achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and on leadership and management.

The inspection also focused on the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection and safeguarding and the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG).

## 3. Overall findings of the inspection

**In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this organisation is satisfactory, and the pastoral care is good.**

The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, achievements and standards, and in learning and teaching, which need to be addressed if the needs of all of the young people are to be met more effectively.

### 3.1 Main findings

- Most of the young people attending Groomspoint ISLU make good progress in their education; however the curriculum offered is too narrow.
- The majority of the young people have increased their levels of attendance and engagement in education but further measures need to be put in place to bring their attendance and hours in the ISLU to an acceptable level.
- The lack of management personnel permanently based at the ISLU inhibits efficient decision making and the ability to respond to the developing needs of the young people.

#### 4. The findings in detail

##### 4.1 Achievements and standards

###### **The quality of the young people's achievements and standards is satisfactory.**

The young people who attend the centre make good progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy and most respond well to the high levels of support and care provided. Most require additional support because their difficulties with learning have been compounded by histories of non attendance and disrupted schooling. The majority of the young people have increased their level of attendance in education and one third of the young people have an average attendance greater than 87%, however raising the attendance of the majority of the young people and increasing the number of hours allocated to them is an area for improvement for the ISLU.

- The young people respond well to the effective system of rewards and incentives which encourage them to achieve and engage effectively with learning.
- There is a limited range of accredited courses available to the young people. A small number achieve sufficient accreditation to enable them to successfully transfer to appropriate further education courses on leaving the ISLU, whilst a few have successfully transferred to alternative education placements.
- The young people produce some very good work that should be shared, celebrated and displayed prominently in public areas throughout the ISLU.
- The evidence indicates that the majority of the young people develop their social and emotional skills, increase their capacity to control their negative behaviours and develop more positive attitudes to learning during their time in the ISLU.

##### 4.2 Provision for learning

###### **The overall provision for learning is satisfactory.**

The quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from very good to satisfactory and the quality of the learning experiences is always at least satisfactory. In the best practice, in almost half of the lessons, the context is relevant to the young people, active learning is a feature and the teacher engages them fully in a range of challenging tasks. In those lessons that are satisfactory, the teaching is over directed and lacks variety; the lessons, although based on the interests of the young people, rely too much on the use of worksheets. In addition the individual education plans do not specify long term expectations and outcomes and need to be more sharply focused on addressing the young people's behavioural needs.

- The permanent staff are well trained and experienced practitioners; they meet with the rest of the staff team each afternoon to reflect on their practice and to discuss strategies to support the young people.
- The constant employment of temporary teachers is an unsettling factor for the young people consequently it is difficult for the teachers and young people to establish effective working relationships and this has a detrimental effect on learning.

- The provision for CEIAG is satisfactory for the minority of young people who attend regularly and avail positively of the provision however the young people in years 11 and 12 do not have sufficient opportunities to participate in practical vocational education courses in further education colleges or training organisations.
- The curriculum offered is too limited and there are too few opportunities for the youth worker to develop the social, emotional and group skills of the young people through activities during the day and evenings when possible.
- The young people, although re-engaging with education, are often taught on their own and do not have the opportunity to interact with their peers. The head of service needs to plan more effectively with the teachers to provide the young people with opportunities to work for short periods in pairs or small groups to develop their ability to work collaboratively.
- The learning support assistants are caring and supportive of the young people but are not deployed effectively to encourage the young people to become independent learners.
- The provision for information and communication technology requires updating and development; the young people do not have access to appropriate information communication technology resources within the classrooms.
- At the time of the inspection the quality of pastoral care is good; the ISLU provides a supportive ethos and all the staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the care and welfare of the young people. In order to improve the pastoral care further the organisation needs to provide the young people with wider opportunities to develop their social and vocational skills. The ISLU gives good attention to promoting healthy eating however there is a lack of opportunity for physical activities including outdoor pursuits.

#### 4.3 Leadership and Management

##### **The quality of the leadership and management of the ISLU is satisfactory.**

The management of the ISLU demonstrate a strong commitment to the welfare and well-being of the young people. The head of service knows the young people well and takes a keen interest in their individual needs and education, however the lack of management personnel permanently based at the ISLU inhibits efficient decision making, monitoring of the provision and evaluation of the effectiveness of learning.

- The management are successful in developing and maintaining an appropriate environment for the young people and staff of the ISLU.
- The planning and tracking of progress of the young people is comprehensive and effective.
- The day to day communication in the ISLU is effective in keeping staff informed of practical information; however the management need to communicate more effectively with members of staff, parents and carers.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the ISLU has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people; these arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the young people they commented on the activities in the ISLU that they enjoy, and indicated that they feel safe and secure and know where to seek help if they have concerns.

## 5. Evidence from questionnaires

Questionnaires	Issued	Returned	Additional Comment
Parents	20	6	5
Teachers	9	*	*
Support Staff	9	6	6

\*Number redacted

Almost all of the questionnaires returned by the parents and carers were very positive and commented on the helpful attitude of the staff and the good relationships that have developed between the young people and staff, however the need to inform the young people of any changes to routines was raised.

A majority of the teachers and support staff commented positively on their work in the ISLU. A number of concerns were raised regarding effective communication with management, and guidance and support for staff dealing with the behaviour of the young people. The ETI reported to the head of service the areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

## 6. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by Groomsport ISLU is satisfactory; the strengths significantly outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards, learning and teaching, which need to be addressed if the ISLU is to meet effectively the needs of all the young people.

**The main areas for improvement include the need:**

- to review the management arrangements to ensure that there is a manager located onsite at all times to make decisions, monitor the provision and evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching in the ISLU;
- for management to review the policy of appointing temporary teachers who are often inexperienced in working with young people who have considerable barriers to learning and whose education is inhibited by constant changes of teachers; and
- to develop the curriculum and increase the range of accredited courses available to the young people, including vocational courses, in collaboration with other providers.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the ISLU's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

### **Evidence of the inspection**

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation are available in the Inspectorate's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>

The inspectors scrutinised documentation and the young peoples' written work and held formal and informal meetings with the young people, teachers, learning support assistants and management of the ISLU. Inspectors paid particular attention to CEIAG, individual education plans, policies, links with parents, and young people's records and provided oral feedback to the head of service and Assistant Senior Education Officer. In total, 10 lessons were observed.



### Accommodation

- Sections of the roof in the main teaching block and the home economics area are leaking and require attention.
- The cables running along the external gable of the main administration block are exposed and are a potential risk to the young people.

### Resources

- The lack of C2k information management systems and infrastructure within this AEP is a barrier to learning. In addition the lack of C2K inhibits effective communication or efficient transfer of appropriate educational information with mainstream schools and other education providers.

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