

# EOTAS INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Beechcroft Education Unit,  
Belfast

Report of an inspection (Involving Action  
Short of Strike) in January 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **1. Context**

The Beechcroft Education Unit (Education Unit) is situated in the Forster Green Healthcare campus in South Belfast and was opened in 2010. The Education Unit provides education for adolescents who are patients in the adjoining Beechcroft Child and Adolescent Mental Health regional in-patient unit. The Education Authority (EA) manages the teaching staff in the Education Unit and oversees the educational provision. The Education Unit provides full-time education for up to 36 young people between thirteen and eighteen years of age who have a range of acute, complex and severe mental health difficulties and who are in full-time education at the time of admission. The young people are often admitted at very short notice to the in-patient unit and the average length of stay is fourteen weeks. A senior teacher has responsibility, on an interim basis, for managing the Education Unit, with five permanent full-time staff comprising three teachers, a learning support assistant and an administrator. There are also a small number of part-time teachers employed to provide specialist subject tuition when required.

Four of the teaching unions which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the organisation informed the ETI that none of the teachers would be co-operating with the inspectors. The ETI have a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

## **2. Views of parents and staff**

A small number of the parents or carers responded to the confidential questionnaire and indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the Education Unit. In particular, the parents and carers highlighted their appreciation of the staff in supporting their children to develop confidence, maintaining the link with education and ensuring regular communication. None of the teachers responded to the questionnaire. The support staff and a significant number of schools (14) attended by the pupils admitted to the in-patient unit completed the questionnaire and affirmed the support from the Education Unit which facilitated the return of the pupils to their schools.

A small number of issues raised were discussed with management and the EA officers responsible for governance.

## **3. Focus of the inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all children, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the Education Unit's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes; and
- inform the Education Unit's planning for improvement.

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Unable to assure the quality of education
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	No performance level available
<b>Quality of provision</b>	No performance level available
<b>Leadership and management</b>	No performance level available

#### 5. Outcomes for learners

- In the past three years, 180 pupils have been admitted to Beechcroft Child and Adolescent Mental Health regional in-patient unit and can access 20 hours of education per week.
- At the time of the inspection, there were ten pupils of compulsory school age, the majority of whom were attending the Education Unit as their illness and treatment permitted. Their attendance is variable depending on the medical treatment programme and the pupils' health each day.
- In the past year, just over half of the pupils who were clinically approved to engage with education, did so. It is important that attendance should be monitored and recorded accurately. The education unit management should develop the education programme to meet the needs and interests of the pupils and increase their attendance. In addition collaboration between the education unit staff and the Occupational/Art Therapists should be further developed with consideration of joint working and delivery.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- progression in the pupil's learning; and
- the pupil's wider skills and dispositions.

#### 6. Quality of provision

- The Education Unit management should consider ways to develop further the pastoral, social and health education programme to support pupils in developing their social, emotional and independent life skills.
- The Education Unit has established a partnership arrangement with the referring schools to support the care and education of their pupil. Most, but not all, of the referring schools share planning to assist the teachers in meeting the individual learning needs of the pupils.
- The on-site educational psychologist has recently introduced aspects of a Dialectic Behaviour Therapy programme to a group of pupils to develop their skills in building positive relationships and effective communication, and reducing conflict escalation.

- It is important that diagnostic and baseline assessments should be developed in collaboration with the on-site Educational Psychologist to inform learning, teaching and measurable progression effectively. The assessments do not inform explicitly the strategies and interventions to be implemented within the Education Unit.
- The Education Unit management need to use the C2k system to record more effectively pupil attendance and share it openly with the referring schools every week. The schools should also record their pupil's attendance at the Education Unit each week.
- The Education Unit management have identified the need to develop means for pupils to voice their views on their education and to review further the reward system in order to support and motivate the pupils to attend the education unit.

The ETI was unable to evaluate:

- the quality of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching, learning and assessment in promoting successful learning; and
- care and welfare

## **7. Leadership and management**

- There has been significant change within the strategic leadership of the Education Unit within the past 18 months. As a consequence, management are in the process of reviewing appropriately all the policies and procedures. However, it is important that the management develop, in consultation with all the staff, a robust unit development plan from which their self-evaluations may inform improvement.
- The Education Unit is governed by an EA head of service and senior management. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection the parents and staff can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The EA should consider how to facilitate greater involvement of local referring schools, community representatives and parents in supporting the work of the Education Unit with representation on a local governance group.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the strategic leadership;
- the effectiveness and impact of the middle leadership;
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement, including self-evaluation and the development planning process.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. The management have identified appropriately the need to:

- review and ratify a small number of pastoral policies, to include anti-bullying, positive behaviour management and attendance; and
- ensure that appropriate educational risk assessments are in place for those pupils who require them.

The small number of pupils with whom the inspectors met, report that they feel safe in the Education Unit and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the Education Unit staff, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. The organisation is a high priority for future inspection with no further notice.

## Examination performance and other statistical data

Beechcroft Education Unit	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Enrolment school	60	61	43	29
% Attendance	Unknown	Unknown	62.9	68
FSME Percentage**	Unknown	Unknown	6.9	10.3
Newcomers	Unknown	Unknown	*	*

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

\*\* The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of young people entitled to free centre meals.

**Inspection methodology and evidence base**

The ETI's [Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework](#) is available on the ETI website.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- Inspectors scrutinised limited documentation and held informal discussions with a small number of pupils.( in a group); and
- a meeting with the EA officers with responsibility for management and governance and the opportunity for all parents, referring schools, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.



## Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

### Quantitative terms

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%

### Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management (and the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable):

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

### Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The centre has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the centre sustains improvement.

The centre 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.

The centre needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

The centre needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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