



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
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**Department of Education
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Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**Belfast Education and Library Board
Youth Provision in the
North Belfast Area**

May 2009

FOLLOW-UP TO THE BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD YOUTH PROVISION IN THE NORTH BELFAST AREA

The north Belfast area is one of four divisions within the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) youth service, managed directly by an Area Youth Officer (AYO).

The area inspection in April 2008 found the provision to be inadequate. It identified a few strengths in the delivery by the BELB of youth provision within north Belfast including: the wide range of activity-based programmes within youth centres; the good collaboration with external agencies to enhance the provision for, and the experiences of, the young people; and the high standards of care and support for the young people displayed by the youth workers.

The inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- a review of the area plan to demonstrate the outcomes for the young people, the quality of those outcomes and how the BELB will promote and sustain continuous improvement;
- more effective strategic leadership and management of the youth provision in north Belfast to ensure the best use of the limited human and physical resources, to establish a shared understanding of quality provision and to ensure that it is achieved; and
- the identification by staff of their training needs, including those associated with new or emerging leadership and management roles, and their undertaking of continuous professional development to improve their capacity to fulfil the roles.

The Education and Training Inspectorate carried out a follow-up inspection in May 2009. The inspectors talked with the Acting Assistant Senior Education Officer in the BELB, the AYO for north Belfast, the team leader for the North Belfast Area Project and two full-time youth workers. They also looked at a range of documents provided by the AYO.

Against a background of continuous financial constraints and a reduction in staffing levels, there has been minimal change or progress since the original inspection.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the youth provision within the area have taken place:

- the AYO has requested all part-time units to submit monthly evaluation reports; and
- the senior youth worker from the Curriculum Support Unit within the BELB provided support to youth groups to deliver aspects of the Model for Effective Practice.

Inadequate progress has been made in the important areas for improvement identified during the original inspection. The areas for improvement in the original report remain to be addressed, namely:

- the action plan needs to be fully implemented with sufficient evidence of promoting improvement in the outcomes for young people;
- the leadership and management need to make more effective use of the monitoring procedures to effect and demonstrate improvement in the quality of the provision; and
- the leadership and management need to develop more robust self-evaluation and action-planning processes through the training of full-time youth workers and managers.

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of the youth provision provided by the BELB in north Belfast remains inadequate; the significant areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. Important areas for improvement identified in the original inspection in leadership and management remain to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the young people.

This report has been referred to the Department of Education to determine the next steps to be taken to address the issues which the follow-up inspection has identified.

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