

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ardoyne Youth Centre,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in December 2012



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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

1.1 Ardoyne Youth Centre in north Belfast is managed by a local management committee and is funded primarily by the Belfast Education and Library Board. According to data provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the centre is located within one of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The current membership of the centre is 520, which represents an increase of 28% since 2009. Currently, 22% of the young people living in the catchment area attend the centre. During the inspection, the average nightly attendance was 150 young people.

1.2 The centre is staffed by one full-time youth worker, three youth support workers, five assistant youth support workers, and four volunteers. The programme operates over five evenings each week, including two late evenings. The range of activities includes: good relations group work, arts and crafts, and health and fitness programmes. Additional activities take place at the week-end, including competitive football, project work and residential visits.

1.3 The premises are used extensively by local community and activity groups, including the local nursery and primary school. While this generates income for the centre, it also illustrates the valuable contribution the centre makes to the community.

2. Focus

The inspection focused on:

- the young people's achievements and standards;
- the quality of the provision; and
- the quality of the leadership and management, including the organisation's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

3. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of provision and the quality of pastoral care in this youth centre is very good. The centre has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

Summary of key findings

Overall performance level	Very good
Contributory performance levels:	
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

4. Key findings

4.1 Achievements and standards

The quality of the young people's achievements and standards is very good.

4.1.1 The young people demonstrate high levels of commitment and enjoyment; and participate enthusiastically in relevant activity programmes and issue-based group work sessions. They value and recognise the significant progress which they make in the development of their personal and social skills, in particular, their increased self-confidence and improved communication skills.

4.1.2 The young people aspire to achieve and succeed, to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills, to make informed choices about their lifestyles and to widen their horizons. In the last year 76 young people achieved appropriate accreditation in leadership skills, health and well-being, sports development, citizenship, and a further 336 completed non-accredited courses. The young people value the benefits of these opportunities and programmes to their future training and career pathways. They recognise well how their learning in the youth centre compliments educational opportunities experienced during their formal education.

4.1.3 The young people enjoy very good working relationships with each other; they demonstrate initiative, and problem-solving skills, and work collaboratively with their peers and with adults. They are well motivated and make a very valuable contribution to the community through the centre's programme of volunteering.

4.2 Quality of provision

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

4.2.1 The quality of the majority of the youth work sessions observed ranged from very good to good. The wide range of programmes on offer is matched well to the identified needs, abilities and ages of the young people. The core values of equity, diversity and interdependence are promoted suitably enabling individuals to gain a fuller appreciation of difference and tolerance in relation to working with others within the wider community.

4.2.2 The staff meet the young people's needs well through the very good delivery of a wide range of suitable activities. Good use is made of the monitoring framework to collate evidence of the evaluations and contributions of the young people to improve future provision. The staff have identified the need to disseminate further and to review more regularly the good examples of group work practice in order to consolidate the young people's learning.

4.2.3 The staff are well-motivated and work systematically to improve the quality of the provision; and have established effective and respectful working relationships with the young people. A good range of informal opportunities are provided for individuals to express their views and to offer suggestions for future programmes. The after-hours provision is a very good example of how well the staff have listened and responded to the young people's ideas.

4.3 Pastoral care

The quality of pastoral care is very good.

4.3.1 The supportive ethos in the centre demonstrates the mutual respect and the positive relationships among the young people, and between the young people and the staff. The youth workers know the young people and their families well and are aware of the social issues that may have a negative impact on individual, family and community life. The staff provide valuable caring support and advice to all of those attending the centre.

4.3.2 The centre has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspection team, the young people reported that they feel safe in the centre and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

4.4 Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management provided by the centre is very good.

4.4.1 The management committee and the full-time youth worker demonstrate a commitment to excellence and quality improvement at all levels. The full-time youth worker has established an effective self evaluation process which is used well by the staff to identify the young people's progression. He also provides very good curricular leadership to ensure high quality provision, which meets the needs of the young people and the wider community.

4.4.2 The full-time youth worker has established a very good range of mutually beneficial links with both voluntary and statutory agencies to support and meet the needs of the young people. For example, the young people enjoy and speak highly of the Youth Work in the Community programme, which they undertake over a year and achieve accreditation. The programme provides good opportunities to build new friendships with their peers from neighbouring communities, and to discuss issues pertinent to their experiences as young adults.

4.4.3 The full-time youth worker makes very good use of a range of relevant data and information to assess accurately the needs of the young people. The information is used well to inform the programme and to attract additional funding to develop and extend the programmes and resources.

5. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of provision and the quality of pastoral care in this youth centre is very good. The centre has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement

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