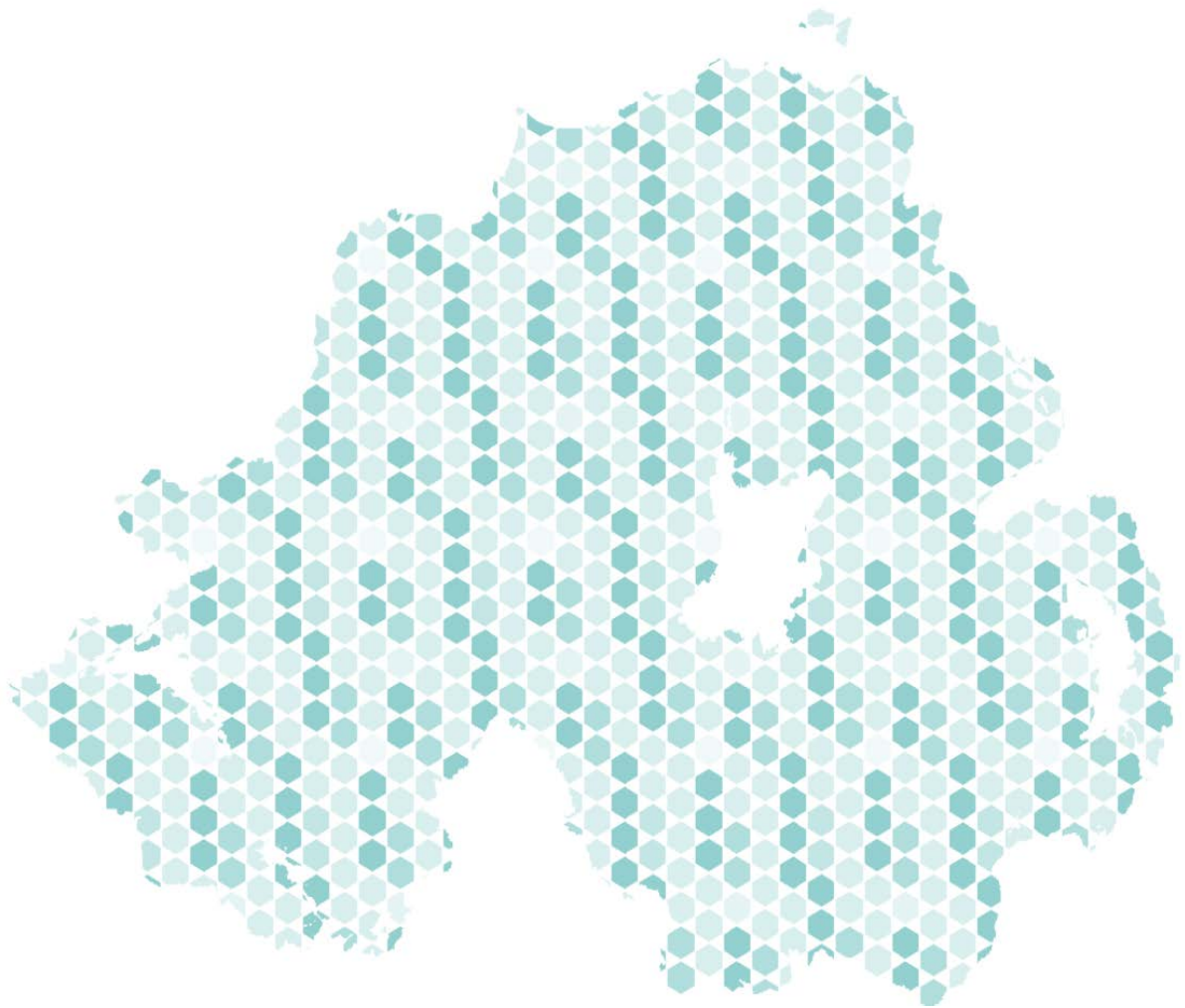


YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballymagee Youth Centre,
Bangor

Report of an Inspection in
October 2013



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

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	Context	1
2.	Focus of inspection	1
3.	Overall findings of the inspection	1
4.	Achievements and standards	1
5.	Provision for learning	2
6.	Leadership and management	2
7.	Conclusion	3
	Appendices	

1. Context

Ballymagee Youth Centre is a purpose-built controlled youth wing attached to Ballymagee Primary School in Bangor, County Down, managed by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board. The majority of young people who are registered members live within close proximity of the centre.

The centre operates on five evenings a week, including extended opening hours on Friday evenings, and on two afternoons a week for primary school children, most of whom attend the adjacent school. There are currently 286 members which is an increase in the total number of registered members last year; 10% of the current members have had continuous membership for at least 4 years. According to figures supplied by the centre there is an average daily attendance of 38 young people. The current membership represents approximately 19% of the local youth population.

The centre is managed by a full-time youth support worker-in-charge who is out of the centre on a one-day per week professional study programme. There are five part-time paid staff and 15 volunteers; the recently appointed management team of a senior youth worker and an area youth officer provide good support and supervision for the worker-in-charge.

2. Focus of Inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall performance level	Good
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Good

4. Achievements and standards

The young people demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and motivation, and participate enthusiastically in a range of recreational activities and issue-based programmes. They acquire new interests and skills sequentially through their engagement and active participation in the different programmes which are appropriately tailored to meet their needs.

In most of the sessions observed, the young people work together well using initiative and good problem solving skills. They apply their learning successfully in other social and learning environments, including formal education.

The senior members enjoy good working relationships with one another. They accept responsibility confidently and participate regularly in the planning and management of their own programmes. They use their group work skills to take decisions and make well-informed choices about important issues as demonstrated in the effective peer mentoring project. A small number of the senior members achieve accreditation. The centre needs to attract new senior members from across the wider community.

Almost all of the young people display understanding and sensitivity towards others and in particular to those young people with additional learning needs who attend the centre.

5. Provision for learning

In the majority of the sessions observed the quality of the youth work was good or very good. The best practice was exemplified by: effective individual session planning; good challenge that stimulated discussion; and meaningful interactions by the staff in both the planned and unplanned youth work.

There is an effective, well-established practice in gathering and recording young people's comments and written evaluations at the end of each session. The staff have embedded the process of self-evaluation into their daily youth work practice. The staff maintain very good quality recordings of the learning and achievements to illustrate good outcomes for the young people.

There is an age appropriate curriculum that reflects well the core principles in Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice. The relationships at all levels provide a very good ethos and a sound basis for the personal and social development of the young people.

The staff have developed strong links with the adjacent primary school, which the school values highly. In the 'Buddy' session observed, the young people articulated how they use the skills learned to help and support other children in the school playground. They also use these skills by building positive working relationships with their peers in the youth centre.

The quality of the pastoral care is very good. There is an inclusive and welcoming environment that permeates throughout the life and work of the centre. This was endorsed by the parents interviewed and in the discussions held with the senior management of the primary school. In addition, the young people spoke positively about their experiences and informed the members of the inspection team 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. There are very good displays of young people's work, including those around promoting personal safety, that help to create an attractive and caring learning environment.

6. Leadership and management

There is very effective leadership and management of the staff team within the centre. The staff work well collegially, using a variety of skills and experience to good effect in raising achievement and supporting the young people.

The strategic planning process is based on a good analysis of the available internal and external research and data. The three-year centre development plan reflects the identified needs of the young people and is linked appropriately to the South-Eastern Education and Library Board business and area development plans.

The centre staff and management need to prioritise the objectives and targets in the annual action plan, including the need to increase the senior membership and meet more effectively the wide range of ability and needs of the young people.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre has comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

The premises are well maintained and the ancillary staff make a much valued contribution to day-to-day running of the youth centre.

7. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of provision in this youth centre is good. The centre has important strengths in most of its youth work provision; the inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated its capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the progress on the area for improvement.

The main areas for improvement are the need for:

- the centre staff and management to prioritise the objectives in the annual action plan, including the need to increase the senior membership; and
- more effective provision to meet the wide range of ability and needs of the young people.

APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Total Membership

Age	4-9		10-15		16-18		19-25		Total
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	
2009/10	49	51	76	72	15	25	11	12	311
2010/11	23	22	124	119	11	10	13	12	334
2011/12	56	37	54	31	10	14	10	7	219
2012/13	60	64	69	56	11	12	*	6	282
current	56	38	90	74	10	7	6	5	286

*denotes numbers fewer than 5

Total local population of young people aged 4-25 years 1545 [NISRA statistics 2011]
 Percentage of local youth population attending youth centre/project: [19%]

APPENDIX 2

Table 2: Leadership training

Title and date of course including accreditation details	Number of young people enrolled	Number of adults enrolled	Percentage completing successfully
ELB Youth Work Training Course SEELB November 2013	/	*	Applied for & pending
Leadership in Youth Work for Young People OCN Level 1 October 2013	*	/	Applied for & pending
Young Adult Development Programme OCN Level 2 September – December 2013	12	/	Pending
Peer Monitoring OCN Level 1 October – December 2013	16	/	Pending
Child Protection Training September 2013	/	15	100%
Reflective Practice May 2013 Unit based	/	15	100%
Programme Development OCN Level 3 April 2013	/	*	100%
Leadership in Youth Work for Young People OCN Level 1 October 2012	*	/	100%
Introduction to Youth Work OCN Level 2 September 2012	/	*	100%
BSc Community Youth Work at University of Ulster, Jordanstown September 2012 – onwards	/	*	Year 1 complete
Disability Awareness Positive Futures Training February 2012	/	12	100%
Programme Development OCN Level 3 January 2012	/	*	100%
Inclusion Training Youth Net November 2011	/	12	100%
Introduction to Youth Work OCN Level 2 September 2011	/	*	100%

*denotes numbers fewer than 5

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