

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Belvoir and Carryduff Area  
Project, Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2009

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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, the Inspectorate relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## **1. CONTEXT**

1.1 The Belvoir and Carryduff Area Project (the project) in east Belfast is managed by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) youth service. The project was established in 2004 to respond to the needs of young people in the Belvoir area. An area youth worker (AYW), who is not professionally qualified, is employed on a full-time basis to manage the project. He is supported by a team of five part-time youth workers, one of whom is a volunteer, and six junior leaders. In 2007, the Carryduff area was included in the AYW's responsibilities.

1.2 The project provides age-appropriate programmes for young people between the ages of 7-20 years. According to the figures supplied by the organisation, they have retained successfully the majority of the members over the last four years. At the time of the inspection the total membership of the project was 173. The figures indicate an increasing membership over the last three years, with one-quarter of the membership for the period 2008-2009 over the age of 16 years (Appendix). During the inspection, there was an average nightly attendance of 13 young people engaged in group work programmes and 40 junior members attending the junior drop-in evening.

1.3 This evaluation is based on the observation of six youth work sessions and discussions with the Area Youth Officer (AYO), the AYW, five members of the advisory committee, almost all of the staff, six external partners, 23 young people and two parents. The inspection team examined relevant documentation for the centre, including the action plans and the curriculum evaluation and quality assurance reports for the year 2008-2009.

## **2. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

2.1 The senior managers of the SEELB youth service provide good curricular leadership and effective support through the strongly committed AYO. He, in turn, has a clear focus on effecting improvement and advises and guides well the enthusiastic AYW. The working relationship between the AYO and the AYW is very good; they pay good attention to assessing and responding to the needs of the young people, the staff and the wider community.

2.2 The action plans for the project, which have been developed in consultation with the staff and the young people, reflect the SEELB strategic plan for the youth service. However, the action plans and the documents which are used to evaluate the project do not make sufficient evaluative comment on the quality of the intended outcomes for the young people. The AYW and AYO need to monitor, evaluate and record more rigorously the young people's learning.

2.3 The project has an advisory committee which is representative of the local community and includes parents, residents, statutory organisations and young people. Unfortunately, despite good attempts by the AYW to bring them together, this committee has not met since February 2009.

2.4 The project is located in a portacabin in the grounds of Belvoir Park Primary School and the staff have use of the nearby school building and the Lough Moss Centre in Carryduff. Although the accommodation is limited, the lack of space does not unduly restrict the range or quality of the programmes. The project has strong links with the local primary school and the project has good use of the school facilities in the evenings.

2.5 The AYW demonstrates effective leadership through his good support for the staff; he encourages them to provide programmes which challenge and engage the interests of the young people. The staff meet together on a regular basis and have clear roles and responsibilities which they use well to support the AYW. The majority of the staff have developed further their youth work skills through the range of accredited courses on offer from the SEELB youth service.

### **3. QUALITY OF THE YOUTH PROVISION**

#### **3.1 QUALITY OF THE PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

3.1.1 The quality of the youth work observed in the project ranged from satisfactory to very good, with the majority of the work being good. The young people and the staff plan well together for a range of programmes to challenge and stimulate the young people's interests. The AYW uses a variety of suitable approaches to assess the needs and interests of the young people, for example, the use of members' and parental questionnaires. In the majority of his planning, he takes good account of the young people's ideas and feedback. In a minority of instances, there is a need to communicate more fully to the young people, the reasons that certain programmes are selected over others.

3.1.2 The young people have good opportunities to direct and evaluate their programmes. They report that they are encouraged to negotiate with the staff at the start of each year, the programme, the rules and acceptable behaviours. The AYW needs to identify more adequately the appropriate learning outcomes, to agree them with the young people and to ensure that they are integrated into the planning. The young people require more direction to reflect on and articulate more clearly the personal and social skills which they are developing.

3.1.3 The staff use their good interpersonal skills well to provide a wide variety of relevant activities and issue-based youth work, which are well-matched to the young people's needs and abilities. There are good examples of creative arts programmes, such as drama, which engage the young people's interest effectively and which develop a range of appropriate skills.

3.1.4 The AYW and AYO recognise the value of developing programmes to attract junior members and have reserved one evening each week for this age group. However, there is a clear focus on targeting the majority of the programmes towards young people who are at post-primary school. On three evenings each week the AYW works with young people from the Belvoir area and currently spends one evening each week supporting a group of young people from Carryduff. The young people are from different religious backgrounds and the AYW has successfully combined these two groups to work on a community relations drama programme. The programme reflects well the three core principles of the curriculum document, 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice'. The range of activities offers the young people a good balance of recreational, residential, and personal and social development programmes.

3.1.5 The AYW's collaborative work with a local primary school and a post-primary school enhances the educational experience of the young people. He delivers an anti-bullying programme in the primary school and an InSYNC<sup>1</sup> course at the post-primary school. This non-accredited course is assessed by the teacher and the youth worker. Both staff plan together for the content of the lessons; their joint working could be further enhanced if they were to share and agree their responses to sensitive and challenging situations. Through this mutually beneficial contact, young people are informed about and encouraged to participate in youth provision in their local area.

3.1.6 The AYW works well with local community providers and external agencies to build positive connections between the young people and their community. This effective collaboration with organisations such as Castlereagh Borough Council, the Police Service for Northern Ireland, the Happenstance Theatre Company, OSSIA Music and Taylor Court Fold enhances the provision for the young people and increases their understanding of the community in which they live. The well-conceived inter-generational programme with Taylor Court Fold promotes good relationships, and provides the young people with experiences which make them more understanding of the needs of others. The young people are encouraged to develop as individuals and to contribute positively to their community.

3.1.7 The project staff and the young people work hard to secure additional funding and have raised £54,730 from external sources since the project commenced four years ago. In the financial year 2008-2009, the AYW and the young people were successful in receiving £13,000 of funding from Castlereagh Borough Council, to enhance further the project's annual Rock School, which last year attracted 40 young people aged 11-19 years. On completion of the programme this summer, the young people made a very effective presentation to a funder aiming to secure £6,000; the success of their presentation and the evidence of progress and engagement resulted in an investment of double the amount they were seeking. The ability of the young people to articulate and demonstrate the skills they had developed is an example of the success of the programme-based work.

3.1.8 The project has very good working relationships with three other local SEELB youth centres; they organise regularly a range of inter-club events. The AYO is keen to encourage this collaborative working in order to forge better relationships among the young people who may have misconceived perceptions about those from other areas. There are also benefits to the four full-time staff who work effectively together as a team to meet the needs of the young people across their area.

## 3.2 QUALITY OF PASTORAL CARE

3.2.1 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the project is very good. The young people adhere consistently to the agreed codes of behaviour. All of the young people interviewed reported that they feel safe and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being. The young people also spoke highly of the regular

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<sup>1</sup> InSYNC is an educational resource produced by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and the Education and Library Boards across Northern Ireland. It was designed to help schools meet the personal development requirements of the Revised Curriculum at Key Stage 3.

contact that the AYW has with their parents. In discussions with a few parents, they endorsed the very good quality of the pastoral care and confirmed that they were informed regularly about the child protection policy and procedures. One parent was very appreciative of how her son had been integrated into the project and of the new friends and the skills he was learning.

### **3.3 CHILD PROTECTION**

3.3.1 The centre has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding the young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

### **3.4 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

3.4.1 The young people are acquiring a range of new skills and knowledge through their participation in this project. They learn how to work confidently in small groups, to support each other to achieve tasks and to negotiate roles and accept responsibilities. They are given good opportunities to extend their knowledge in particular areas such as music, drama and history. The young people involved in the Borderlines music project are competently writing and recording their own songs and have performed to a variety of audiences.

3.4.2 Young people were observed making very good use of the Internet to research topics and to access information about The Somme. There are three computers in the portacabin which are not linked to the SEELB system. During the inspection, the young people were using the computer facilities at Ardarnet Youth Centre and developing good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In these well-facilitated sessions, the young people developed their self-esteem, thinking skills and learned about researching topics such as history and art on the Internet. In discussions, the young people recognised and built on the connections between their formal education in school and their non-formal education in the project.

3.4.3 The young people are highly motivated and respond enthusiastically to the planned activities and courses organised by the SEELB. Six young people completed the SEELB Trainee Young Leaders' course this year; they make good use of the youth work skills they have developed to benefit others in the project. The AYW celebrates well the achievements of the young people and encourages them to participate in a range of programmes and courses to develop their personal and social skills. The young people have successfully gained certificates from the Northern Ireland Youth Awards and the SEELB Outstanding Achievement Awards in recognition of their good work and involvement.

3.4.4 The AYW promotes the increased participation of the young people in the community; two members currently represent the project on the Castlereagh Area Youth Council, and two of the young people attend the advisory committee for the centre. Four young people seeking further leadership opportunities have secured places on a new peer education programme facilitated by the SEELB.

## **4. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

4.1 The strengths of the provision include:

- the well-developed and appropriate project-based youth work which is meeting effectively the needs of the young people;

- the good working relationships which the AYW, the staff team and the young people enjoy with one another, and which ensure sustained interest and engagement in the project;
- the enthusiastic response and the positive contribution of the young people to the programmes, which help them to develop skills in independent and collaborative working;
- the good relations programmes which develop an understanding of others and which promote well the values of equity, diversity and inter-dependence;
- the well-established and effective external links with a range of providers and practitioners, which make meaningful connections for the young people to their community; and
- the good support of the AYO and his effective team-work with the AYW to plan for a range of challenging experiences for the young people.

4.2 As a key area for improvement, the inspection has identified the need for the staff:

- to monitor, evaluate and record more rigorously the young people's outcomes and learning, to better inform the programmes.

## 5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 In this project, the quality of youth provision is good. The area project has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement, which the project staff have demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the progress of the project in addressing the area for improvement.



## APPENDIX

<b>Total Membership</b>									
Total membership over last three years indicating male/female and age group:	Male 4-9 yrs	Female 4-9 yrs	Male 10-15 yrs	Female 10-15 yrs	Male 16-18 yrs	Female 16-18 yrs	Male 19+ yrs	Female 19+ yrs	<b>Total</b>
2006-2007	9	14	26	34	16	18	0	0	<b>117</b>
2007-2008	17	18	29	38	11	20	0	1	<b>134</b>
2008-2009	13	20	33	37	13	22	1	4	<b>143</b>
2009-2010 current membership	10	16	47	56	19	17	1	7	<b>173</b>

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