

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

New Lodge Youth Centre,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection in
December 2013



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



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

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1. Context

New Lodge Youth Centre is a purpose-built youth provision, located within North Belfast. In April 2012, the management of the centre transferred from the Belfast Education and Library Board to the Ashton Community Trust; and the centre now operates under an agreed memorandum of understanding. The full-time youth worker is seconded to the Ashton Community Trust and is managed by a centre manager. In addition, there are eleven part-time paid staff and six volunteers.

The centre operates on five evenings and three afternoons each week, including extended opening hours on Friday evenings. There are currently 363 registered young people, which is a 40% increase from the previous year. The current membership represents approximately 19% of the local youth population.

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 effectiveness	Very good
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

4. Achievements and standards

The young people participate enthusiastically in the age-appropriate programmes and activities. In the junior section, the young people develop creative thinking skills throughout the programmes, and in particular, through the well-organised drama and arts and crafts sessions, they produce tangible and clear outcomes. Through the very good variety of activity sessions, the young people are developing more healthy lifestyles.

The young people, in the senior section, engage purposefully in issue-based group work; they understand the personal and social benefits of group work to enhance their learning experiences. They enjoy participating in the good range of leadership and volunteering roles and use these opportunities to develop their self-esteem and build positive relationships with their peers.

The young people, who are actively involved in the centre's youth forum, contribute positively to the life and work of the centre; they give thoughtful, mature responses and demonstrate high levels of trust in their youth workers. They are good role models for the younger members.

In discussions with the young people, they highlighted the enriching experiences of the variety of residential experiences and international exchanges. Through their engagement in these programmes, they enhance their life skills, widen their horizons and broaden their understanding of other people and their cultures. Many of the programmes have a strong emphasis on community relations work and reflect well the Community Relations Equity and Diversity¹ policy. For example, as part of the Jordanian exchange programme, the young people were observed thinking critically about the cultural differences and similarities between the two groups of young people.

5. Provision

In all of the sessions observed, the quality of the youth work was good or very good, with over one-third very good. The best practice was exemplified by the well-planned group work and activity sessions, where the discussions between the staff and the young people were consistently meaningful. The staff are beginning to plan effectively for each session; they recognise the need to be more reflective and evaluative of their work.

The youth centre curriculum, which is relevant to the different age groups, has a very good balance of activity and issue-based programmes, matched well to the interests and needs of the young people. A particular feature is the extensive seven-week summer programme, which responds positively to the tensions between young people from neighbouring communities, and engages them successfully in diversionary programmes.

The staff use a range of interventions to support those vulnerable young people who encounter a range of social and educational barriers. In particular, the *'Amazing Buddies'* and the *'Mind your Mate'* programmes support those young people who may experience mental health issues.

The quality of the pastoral care is very good; relationships at all levels provide a sound ethos for the personal and social development of the young people. The young people highlight the supportive and long-standing relationships that they have with their youth workers. In addition, they spoke positively about their learning experiences; and informed 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 is a consistent and effective focus on promoting positive behaviours throughout the centre. The recently developed positive behaviour programme for younger children and their parents is beginning to impact positively.

6. Leadership and management

The management at all levels have a clear and realistic strategic vision, which has led to the continuous improvement of the centre. The full-time staff lead the team effectively to work collegially in achieving positive outcomes for the young people.

Through a comprehensive needs analysis process, the targets and objectives in the unit delivery plan are agreed in consultation with the staff, the young people, and the wider community. The centre has recognised the need to align better the current planning documents, to develop a more coherent approach to action-planning.

¹ **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) policy.** The aim of the CRED policy is to contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination, and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions.

The part-time staff lead and manage effectively their individual projects and demonstrate a commitment to self-improvement and further professional development. The young people are encouraged to get involved in the planning of their own programmes; they discuss, challenge and negotiate important decisions that directly affect them.

The centre has developed and maintained very effective links with an appropriate range of community and youth organisations, which add value to the provision. For example, the youth centre staff and the staff from the New Lodge Arts work co-operatively to deliver a high standard of programmes.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre has satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education, but the following area needs to be addressed; there is a need for the centre staff and management to review further with the parents, the arrangements for the younger children arriving and leaving the centre.

7. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of the overall provision is very good. The centre is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Total Membership (complete where applicable)

Age	4-9 years		10-15 years		16-18 years		19-25 years		Total
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	
2009/10	28	20	46	46	12	11			163
2010/11	*	7	25	27		*			67
2011/12	126		94		7				227
2012/13	73	69	56	50	*	*			254
current	88	104	82	76	7	6			363

*denotes numbers fewer than 5

APPENDIX 2

Table 2: Leadership training provided for young people and youth workers in the last two years.

Title and date of course including accreditation details	Number of young people enrolled	Number of adults enrolled	Percentage completing successfully
Young People:			
<u>Non-accredited:</u>			
Global Awareness Red Cross Project (peer education)	14		100
Amazing Buddies (developing a resource for peer education)	10		100
Youth and Community 2: Cross Community (youth facilitation)	13		Ongoing
Irish Polish Cultural Exchange (steering group as leaders)	20		75
Ireland Jordan History and Culture Project	16		100
Tell Me Your Story Cross Community Project	20		Ongoing
Connect 4 Cross Border Project	*		100
Sports Development (steering group of young leaders)	6		Ongoing
<u>Accredited:</u>			
First Aid with Red Cross	6		Ongoing
Youth and Community 2 Facilitation (being developed in to OCN 1)	13		Ongoing
Young Leaders Project with New Lodge Arts	6		Ongoing
Staff/ Volunteers:			
<u>Non-accredited:</u>			
Staff Team Building and Visioning Residential (June 2012)		8	100
Staff Team Building Residential (Nov. 2013)		12	100
Managing Challenging Behaviour (14th June 2012)		8	100
Finger Print Learning (13 th + 29 th November 2102)		5	100
Child Protection Training (November 2012)		*	100
Child Protection Training (February 2013)		7	100
Volunteer Induction Training		*	100

Israel Connecting Cultures Network Building (April 2013)		*	100
Designated Child Protection Officer Training (19th April 2013)		13	100
Outreach/ detached Youth Work (9th + 10th September, 17th October 2013)		*	100
Child Protection Training (10th + 15th October)		*	100
Fire Warden Training (September 2013)		*	100
NGO Involving Volunteers Training (November 2013)		8	100
Fire Safety Training (February 2013)		*	100
<u>Accredited:</u> BCU Level 1 Paddlesports coach / 2 star canoe and kayak (2013)		*	100
First Aid (13th + 20th November)			

*denotes numbers fewer than 5

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