

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Patrician Parish Youth Centre,
Downpatrick

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013

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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 The Patrician Parish Youth Centre is located in Downpatrick, County Down. The youth provision is managed by a local management committee and receives funding from the South-Eastern Education and Library Board. According to data provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the centre is located in the Ballymote ward, which is within the top 10% of the most socio-economic deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The current membership of the centre is 1460, which represents approximately 39% of the local youth population; half of the young people are aged between 10-15 years. During the week of the inspection, the total attendance of young people was 1382, with an average daily attendance of 197. The membership of the centre reflects the local youth population and is drawn from a wide range of socio-economic and diverse backgrounds.

1.2 The youth programme operates over six evenings each week and provides afternoon programmes on four days each week. There are two full-time youth workers employed: a senior youth worker and a centre-based youth worker, and a total of 29 part-time and volunteer staff. The management committee has sourced successfully additional funding to employ four specialist staff to support the arts programme within the centre. The range of activities includes: Duke of Edinburgh awards programmes, good relations group work, drama, music, arts and crafts, and health and fitness programmes. Additional activities take place at the weekend, including football coaching, discos and residential visits.

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 centre'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 are friendly, welcoming and demonstrate a strong sense of collegiality and commitment to the centre. Through programmes, such as the accredited disability awareness project, they learn to be more reflective about their perceptions of others and to be fully inclusive of their peers.

4.1.2 The young people demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and motivation through their active participation in the range of programmes. They use the many volunteering opportunities effectively to support their peers, younger members and their local community. Through projects, such as the development education programme, they work well together to support young people in Zambia. As a result of the strong values promoted in this programme, the young people demonstrate understanding, concern and empathy for others.

4.1.3 In the last two years, 69 young people achieved accreditation, and a further 152 are due to complete similar qualifications. The young people recognise the relevance of these programmes to their school studies and the positive contribution the additional qualifications make to their future careers and training choices. The portfolios which they complete are presented to a very high standard and demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues.

4.1.4 The members' forum in the centre is dynamic, challenging and enthusiastic. The young people's opinions are valued well and they work closely with the centre-based youth worker to identify areas for improvement. During the inspection, they were keen to share their views and well-conceived ideas for programme development with members of the inspection team.

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 outstanding to good; a majority was of a very good or better standard. The staff are highly experienced and offer an extensive and enjoyable range of programmes, which are matched well to the needs of the young people. The centre has longstanding connections to other youth organisations across Northern Ireland, and during the inspection the young people enjoyed a well-planned good relations programme.

4.2.2 The full-time youth workers support the part-time staff effectively to develop and deliver the recreational and group work activities. They co-facilitate programmes and the full-time youth workers use their highly effective group work skills to support those part-time staff who are less experienced. The dedicated and enthusiastic staff have a very good rapport with the young people, and support them well to consolidate, develop and extend their knowledge and skills.

4.2.3 The quality of specialist coaching is consistently of a high standard. In football, a wide range of abilities is supported and the young people are encouraged to enjoy their sport, with those who work hardest recognised and celebrated. In the preparations for the forthcoming pantomime, the young people receive music, singing and acting tuition, which is delivered well and helps them to improve.

4.2.4 The youth work staff work well alongside other non-youth specialists and have very good opportunities to share practice and to learn from each other. The effective partnerships established with local schools help to connect well the learning experiences for the young people, and demonstrate how the formal sector is supported effectively by the skills of the youth workers.

4.2.5 The quality of pastoral care is very good. There is a strong inclusive ethos within the centre, in which all of the young people feel valued. All of the staff know the young people and their families well, and support them empathetically in times of difficulty and crisis. 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 concerns about their safety and well-being.

4.3 Leadership and management

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

4.3.1 The management committee and the full-time youth workers demonstrate a commitment to excellence and quality improvement at all levels. The senior youth worker has established planning and evaluation processes, which the staff use to identify core skills for the young people to acquire. The full-time youth workers monitor effectively the young people's progress, and identify appropriately the need to involve the young people more fully in setting and self-evaluating their own skills development.

4.3.2 The full-time youth workers are extremely hard-working and have a comprehensive understanding of the local community and of the role they play in supporting the young people. They are highly committed to increasing the youth membership, and have made a good start to analyse a range of data to assess and prioritise the needs of members and non-members of the centre.

4.3.3 Both full-time youth workers provide excellent curricular leadership, matched well to the 'Youth Work: A Model For Effective Practice'. They are reflective and enthusiastic youth workers, who aspire to provide the highest quality programmes for the young people in the area. The team of highly skilled part-time staff receive continuous professional development and are very well deployed.

4.3.4 The centre has also developed a comprehensive range of after-school activities in collaboration with a nearby primary school. The school uses funding from the extended schools programme to support this initiative, and the school staff value the contribution which the centre staff make to the social and personal development of the young people.

4.3.5 The management of the centre work closely with others to support those families most in need. The senior youth worker has established an excellent range of mutually beneficial links with both voluntary and statutory agencies to support, enrich and meet the needs of the young people. She has highly effective partnerships with social services and across the diocese to ensure that the safeguarding and pastoral care of the young people is of a very high quality.

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

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

APPENDIX

Title of course including accreditation details	Number of young people enrolled	Percentage completing successfully
OCN Level 1 Teamwork Programme	10	Pending
The Award Programme -The Duke of Edinburghs/ Presidents Award (Gold, Silver, Bronze)	69	Ongoing
European Union 'Youth Pass' (skills associated with participation in an international experience)	13	100%
Members Forum/Leadership Training	10	Ongoing - October 2012 - June 2013
OCN Level 1 & 2 Disability	10	Ongoing - October 2012 - June 2013
Award Programmes - Duke of Edinburgh / Presidents	55	Ongoing - October 2012 - June 2013
Pope John Paul II	8	Ongoing - December 2012 - May 2013
OCN Level 1 Trainee Leader Course	14	100%
OCN Level 1 Community Relations Course	12	100%
OCN Level Disability Awareness	10	100%
OCN Level 1 Drugs and Alcohol Awareness	10	100%

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