

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Rosario Youth Centre, Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in May 2011

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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 Rosario Youth Centre has been operating for over 40 years and is a voluntary youth centre, managed by a local management committee. The youth centre is located within the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) youth service area on the Ormeau Road in Belfast. The building was refurbished extensively in 2010.

1.2 The catchment area for the centre has a population of 1596 young people aged 4-25 years. The figures provided by the centre report a membership of 382, which is 24% of the local youth population in this area. In 2009/10, the membership figures included young people involved in the Rosario football club. Figures included in the table below, for the other years, represent the membership of the youth centre only. The organisation has a systematic record of those young people who maintained their membership for more than three years and it demonstrates clearly a significant increase. The staff attributes this increase in membership to the refurbishment of the centre last year and the ongoing outreach youth work programme. In addition, a significant number of young females have been attracted recently to the centre; they state that the current programmes are relevant and, matched well to their needs and interests.

Table 1: Total membership

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19+		Outreach/ detached	TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2007/08	61	59	42	48	5	0	0	0	0	215
2008/09	55	52	91	73	14	0	0	0	0	285
2009/10	92	45	243	81	70	14	26	0	46	617
2010/11	42	60	123	78	19	25	0	0	35	382

1.3 A majority of the part-time staff have completed a good range of relevant recognised youth qualifications through the Open College Network (OCN) to level three. They are keen to develop further their knowledge and skills as youth workers.

1.4 The centre currently opens five evenings and is staffed by one full-time youth worker, seven part-time paid staff and two voluntary youth workers. The chair of the management committee has been in position for approximately two months, and is developing his role in leading the committee and managing and supporting the full-time youth worker.

2. FOCUS

2.1 The inspection focused on: the efficacy of the leadership and management of the youth centre; the quality of provision; and the achievements and standards of the young people.

3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 The quality of the strategic management of the centre is good. The management committee is hard-working and supportive of the staff. They know well the needs of the young people and the local community. The chair of the committee demonstrates good strategic vision and has a clear understanding of the future direction of the work of the centre. The committee manages the building and its limited resources effectively; they draw on their broad range of skills and expertise to support the full-time youth worker in the local community. They have identified appropriately the need to attract and involve additional members with relevant youth work experience to the management committee.

3.2 The quality of action to promote improvement is satisfactory; there is a need to develop further the planning to ensure consistent improvements in the youth work provision. The management committee needs to monitor more robustly the youth work programmes, and to evaluate with the full-time youth worker the impact of such programmes on the young people. The full-time youth worker has identified accurately the need to develop further her day-time youth programme, to meet more fully the BELB basic expectations of full-time youth centres. In discussions, the full-time youth worker spoke of the good support and advice she receives from the BELB Area Youth Officer.

3.3 The staff team is deployed effectively to provide a variety of relevant activities and issue-based group work, which reflect appropriately the youth service curriculum document 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice'. The full-time youth worker gives good support to the staff team and the working relationships among the staff are excellent. There is a good structure to the evening programmes and the full-time youth worker briefs the staff well prior to each session. She has identified correctly the need for a more detailed analysis of each programme in the evening de-briefing session, focusing more clearly on the outcomes for the young people and the learning for the staff.

3.4 The full-time youth worker encourages the staff to use evidence files to record the planning and the evaluation of their work with the young people. However, there is limited evidence of how they reflect on their practice with young people and how they evaluate and plan for improvements. The action plans and the documents which are used to evaluate the projects are mostly descriptive, and do not make sufficiently evaluative comments on the outcomes which the young people achieve.

3.5 The full-time youth worker has a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the area. She works well with other local community providers and youth workers to build positive links among the young people, and between the young people and their community. Throughout the inspection, there were consistent comments from the parents, the staff and the young people of the high regard that they have for her leadership.

4. QUALITY OF PROVISION

4.1 The quality of the youth work observed ranged from satisfactory to very good, with the majority of the work being good or better. There is a broad and diverse range of activity- and issue-based programmes. Two of the part-time staff are deployed effectively through outreach and detached youth work, to engage, and re-engage successfully, young people from the local area.

4.2 The youth programme for the centre contributes significantly to the personal and social development of the young people. In the best practice, the activities were matched well to the ages and the individual needs of the young people. The staff had a clear purpose for their work and used their good interpersonal and organisational skills to engage well with the young people.

4.3 In the less effective practice, there was a lack of planning and preparation. The time for the group work plenary sessions was not adequate and the evaluation was not linked sufficiently to the planning. The young people in the least effective sessions were not given adequate opportunities to reflect on, and to articulate, the skills, knowledge or understanding which they developed through the programmes. The full-time youth worker is highly skilled in group work and needs to support further the professional development of the part-time staff through modelling best practice.

4.4 The centre has developed good external links: for example, the management committee facilitates a private organisation to provide an after-school programme for the young people. As a result, the limited staffing resources are targeted appropriately at the evening sessions for the young people. Several outside community groups use the building each week, including Rosario football team and senior citizens. The 'Buddies' group of junior female members has developed good working relationships with one group of local senior citizens. The young people spoke enthusiastically about their involvement in this inter-generational project and they have developed a good understanding of the needs and the life experiences of these senior citizens.

4.5 In addition, the centre has established positive working links with several other external organisations, including the Police Service for Northern Ireland, the Cedar Foundation and the Irish Football Association. These partnerships contribute to a more diverse programme for the young people. The centre also has very good relationships with other local youth centres, and they organise regularly a range of inter-club programmes. During the inspection week, there was a visit from three local youth centres to participate in two very successful programmes to promote good relations.

4.6 There are good opportunities for the young people to meet and engage with others in a range of diverse groups. For example, the 'Old Firm Alliance' programme, which was facilitated skilfully by staff from the Belfast Community Sports Development Network, involved two groups of culturally diverse young men improving their football skills, and discussing issues pertinent to the sport through effectively organised group work.

4.7 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the centre is very good. The key features include: the good development of a pastoral care policy that guides effectively the work of the staff; the very good procedures for reviewing pastoral issues each evening; and the agreed standards of behaviour and discipline which promote respect and the acceptance of differences. 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.

4.8 The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place 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: the designated members of the management committee with responsibility for safeguarding, need to receive appropriate, recognised and up-to-date training.

5 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

5.1 The quality of the achievements and standards reached by the young people in the centre is good. The young people participate regularly in the activities provided and demonstrate high levels of commitment and enjoyment. A small number of the senior members were observed in supervisory roles and engaging responsibly with younger members. Almost all of the young people stated that they are consulted well and are involved in deciding which programmes are delivered.

5.2 The young people acquire a range of social and personal skills in programmes which develop their interests. For example, the young people value highly the learning opportunities and new experiences provided by a range of programmes, including: the Rosario Media Group; the Youth Forum; and the Democracy Works Programme. In these well-facilitated sessions, the young people developed their self-esteem and thinking skills, and had good opportunities to build new relationships with their peers.

5.3 In the Youth Forum, the young people accept responsibility for leadership roles and work well together to make decisions about the planned programme of activities for the summer scheme. The young people spoke of the confidence they acquire when presenting information to others and the new relationships they have developed with young people from other communities. Their knowledge of political systems and effective decision-making has been increased and they are working well together to support the staff in the delivery of programmes to younger members.

5.4 The senior members are excellent role models for their younger peers and have mutually respectful relationships with all of the staff. They learn how to work confidently in small groups and to support each other to achieve tasks through effective teamwork and shared responsibility. However, there are insufficient opportunities provided for the young people to avail of accredited programmes. The full-time youth worker needs to research and promote appropriate training courses relevant to the youth work experiences of the young people.

5.5 The good relations programme involving Rosario, St John Vianney and Knocknagoney youth centres demonstrates clearly the ability of the young people to engage willingly, and to resolve contentious issues in a mature and responsible manner. The young people worked diligently on an art project to illustrate their perceptions of peace. The workers facilitating this group guided them skilfully to think creatively and to agree collectively a suitable piece of work to display in their respective centres.

5.6 The young people display a very good understanding and sensitivity towards the rights and feelings of others, and they are developing well an appreciation of difference. From the discussions held with the young people, and observations of behaviours, the young people are accepting of different traditions and promote an inclusive environment, where diversity is promoted and celebrated. The older members demonstrate good levels of tolerance and maturity in their conversations and interactions with their peers.

6. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 The main strengths of the provision include:

- the hard-working, dedicated and supportive management committee, who respond well to the needs of the young people and the wider community;
- the enthusiastic leadership, and the very good group work skills demonstrated by the full-time youth worker;
- the good range of activity- and issue-based programmes, that are matched well to the needs and interests of the young people;
- the caring ethos, which promotes mutual respect, trust and positive relationships at all levels;
- the very good culture of inclusion promoted by the young people and the staff; and
- the high levels of motivation, commitment and enjoyment demonstrated consistently by the young people.

6.2 As areas for improvement the inspection has identified the need for:

- the full-time youth worker, the centre staff and the management committee to monitor and evaluate more robustly the quality of the youth work programmes; and
- the full-time youth worker to research and provide relevant, accredited programmes for the young people.

7. **CONCLUSION**

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

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