

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Comgall's Parish Youth  
Centre, Bangor

Report of an Inspection  
in May 2012

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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

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
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## 1. CONTEXT

1.1 The St Comgall's Parish Youth Centre is located in Bangor, County Down. In 2004, the two parish youth centres of St Comgall and St Columbanus were amalgamated. The St Comgall's site is located in the recently refurbished parish centre; the St Columbanus site operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of St Columbanus's College. The youth support worker is on a full-time temporary contract since she commenced her post almost three years ago. The youth provision is managed by a local management committee and is funded primarily by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board.

1.2 The youth programme operates over four evenings each week. The youth support worker also delivers programmes to two local primary schools and one post-primary school. There are currently 278 young people registered as members. Almost all of the young people are aged 10-18 years, and most of those aged 16-18 assist as junior leaders. According to the data collated by the organisation, approximately 7.3% of the overall local youth population attend the centre, and almost 22% of the young people have been members for more than four years (Appendix 1).

## 2. FOCUS OF THE INSPECTION

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 FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

**In the areas inspected, the quality of provision in St Comgall's Parish Youth Centre is very good.** The organisation is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## 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 demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and motivation through their active participation. They recognise the significant progress which they make in the development of their personal and social skills, in particular, in their increased self-confidence and their ability to work effectively as a team.

4.1.2 All of the young people benefit significantly from a very good range of educational, social and cultural experiences. The young people respond consistently with enthusiasm to the youth workers and enjoy getting involved in new experiences. Many of the younger members are transferring from their schools to the next stage of their learning; they value the youth centre as a place to maintain their friendships, and as somewhere to make new friends.

4.1.3 The young people are involved in a range of activities, which support and extend their learning in their schools. They demonstrate very competent ICT skills; in one session the young people used 'movie-maker' software with confidence to design short animated clips of the Titanic's voyage. In their small groups, the young people worked closely together and encouraged each other to be creative. They articulated well the connection between this programme and their ICT programmes in school; they gave clear examples of how they apply their learning from the youth centre to their class work.

4.1.4 A large group of junior leaders accept responsibility enthusiastically and make a significant contribution to the operation of the centre. They demonstrate very good leadership and organisational skills and are excellent role models for the younger members.

4.1.5 The young people demonstrate very good performance skills, in particular, through singing and dancing. They are fully involved in the planning and preparation for talent shows and drama productions. In discussions, a small number of the parents spoke of the significant contribution which the creative arts programme makes to the personal and social development of their children.

4.1.6 Almost 100 young people have completed successfully a good range of accredited and recognised training courses in the past 18 months (Appendix 2). Within the next few months, a further 55 will complete similar courses. The young people recognise the benefits of these courses to their future training and career pathways. They cite readily examples of how they have put this learning into practice in the youth centre, and how the youth work courses have improved their leadership skills. Through these courses, the young people are well informed about a range of issues, including the impact of discrimination and prejudice on society. In addition, the young people engage willingly in charitable events, such as their collaboration with the young people from the YMCA to raise funds for the homeless.

## 4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

**The quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

4.2.1 Almost all of the sessions observed were of a good or better standard. The excellent range of structured and enjoyable programmes is matched well to the talents and interests of the young people. The dedicated and enthusiastic staff have a very good rapport with each other, and also with the young people. They encourage them to try new experiences and support them well to develop and extend their knowledge and skills. During the week of the inspection, most of the young people were taking examinations in school and the staff planned the programme to take account of the needs of the young people at this time.

4.2.2 The young people are consulted on a regular basis about their ideas for new programmes. In addition, each night they are encouraged to express their opinions, make suggestions and evaluate their experiences. The staff record the comments to inform their on-going planning and self-evaluation. At all levels, however, there is an agreement to establish a youth committee and more formal structures of participation for the young people.

4.2.3 The youth support worker has excellent working relationships with the local schools and her work is valued highly by the principals and the teachers. She delivers well-conceived personal and social development programmes to both primary and post-primary pupils. In St Columbanus's College, she provides additional pastoral support to the pupils through a beneficial drop-in facility at break and lunchtime.

4.2.4 The quality of the pastoral care for the young people is very good. The consistently high standards of behaviour reflect well the mutually respectful relationships observed among the young people, and between the young people and the staff. The young people and their parents spoke highly of the work of the centre and, in particular, of the very good leadership of the youth support worker. 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 any concerns about their safety and well-being.

#### 4.2.5 SAFEGUARDING

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

### 4.3 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The quality of leadership and management is good.**

4.3.1 The leadership of the youth support worker is very effective; she provides thoughtful and well-focused direction for the work of the centre. She is supported well by the staff and the management committee, all of whom have a strong commitment to improvement. The centre is managed and maintained to a good standard by the management committee.

4.3.2 Recently, the centre submitted a service level agreement document to the South-Eastern Education and Library Board to secure future funding. The document is of a very high standard and details clearly the outcomes which are planned for the young people and the direction of the work. To prepare for the service level agreement, the management committee and the youth support worker completed an extensive assessment of the young people's needs. The findings were informed by thorough research and robust consultations with the young people, staff and parents. The management committee has used effectively the subsequent analysis to establish an ambitious three-year development plan and a detailed one-year action plan.

4.3.3 The staff are in the early stages of embedding a culture of self-evaluation; their commitment to improvement is evident in the good standard of planning, reflections and discussions led by staff during the individual activities. The self-evaluative processes are well-supported by the SEELB quality assurance procedures, and in particular, the SEELB Youth Work Toolkit<sup>1</sup>. There is emerging evidence of some very focussed and coherent planning, which specifies clear learning outcomes for the young people.

4.3.4 The centre has established beneficial external links with other youth centres, schools and charitable organisations. For example, the young people enjoy and speak highly of the Community Relations Equity and Diversity programme, which gives them good opportunities to build new friendships, to learn new skills together and to discuss issues pertinent to their experiences as young adults.

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<sup>1</sup> The youth workers toolkit is a booklet of documents designed by the South Eastern Education and Library Board to support youth workers in their programme planning, delivery and evaluations.

4.3.5 The centre has a highly committed team of 28 part-time staff and volunteers. The current staff team is experienced, hard-working and attracts successfully large numbers of volunteers. The centre prioritises training for both staff and young people; in the last 18 months almost all of the staff have completed relevant accredited youth work training (Appendix 2).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of provision in St Comgall's Parish Youth Centre 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

### TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

	4 – 9yrs		10 -15yrs		16 – 18yrs		19 +yrs		Numbers of young people involved in outreach/ detached	TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2008/09	1	5	99	123	17	20	0	0	0	265
2009/10	2	3	104	117	19	21	0	0	0	266
2010/11	0	6	127	133	22	33	0	0	0	321
2011/12	2	6	109	107	28	26	0	0	0	278



## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

<b>Adult Training: September 2010 – March 2012</b> <b>Title of course including accreditation</b>	<b>Number of adults enrolled</b>	<b>Percentage successfully completing</b>
OCN Level 2 Introduction to Youth Work (Completed)	11	100%
OCN Level 3 Programme Development (Completed)	3	100%
OCN Level 3 Programme Development (Ongoing)	8	Ongoing
Child Protection Training	29	100%
First Aid Training	12	100%
Managing Challenging Behaviour	3	100%
OCN Level 2 Equity, Diversity & Interdependence	1	Ongoing

<b>Young People Training: September 2010 – March 2012</b> <b>Title of course including accreditation</b>	<b>Number of young people enrolled</b>	<b>Percentage successfully completing</b>
OCN Level 1 Leadership in Youth Work (Completed)	15	100%
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award (Completed)	8	100%
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award (Ongoing)	10	Ongoing
Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award (Ongoing)	13	Ongoing
First Aid Training	32	100%
50 Hours Millennium Volunteers Award	35	100%
John Paul II Award	6	100%
OCN Level 2 Understanding Diversity Within Society	32	Ongoing

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