

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St John Vianney Youth Centre,  
Belfast

Report of an Inspection  
in November 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

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

AYO	Area Youth Officer
BELB	Belfast Education and Library Board
DE	Department of Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
OCN	Open College Network

## 1. CONTEXT

1.1 St John Vianney Youth Centre is a long-established full-time parish youth centre located in the lower Ormeau Road area of south Belfast. It is sponsored by the BELB and is managed by a full-time youth worker; there are five part-time assistant youth support workers and five volunteers. The management committee is well established with a good representation from the local community including: residents, parents, a local councillor from the Belfast City Council and the parish priest of St Malachy's Church.

1.2 The centre is located in the Botanic electoral ward and is ranked in the top 10% of electoral wards, highlighted by the Noble Indices, as suffering multiple levels of social and economic deprivation.

1.3 The current membership represents 25% of the youth population in the electoral ward. This figure is distorted by the number of students from the local university who are on the electoral register but do not access the youth centre. The centre operates an after-school club four afternoons each week for the junior age group (5-10years) and an early evening session five nights each week for the same age group. The senior members (11+years) have use of the centre from 7.30-9pm five nights each week, although very few young people in the 16+ age group attend the centre. The junior members have access to two-thirds of the time that the centre is open.

1.4 The attendance and retention of young people have increased significantly over the last two years. Eighty percent of new members in 2011/12 were under ten years of age. Seventy-eight percent of the membership is under 15 years of age and almost equally divided between the 4-9 and the 10-15 age groups. (See Appendix)

## 2. FOCUS

2.1 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

**The quality of provision in this centre is good.** The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

### 4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

**The quality of the young people's achievements and standards is good.**

4.1.1 The young people participate regularly in the activities and demonstrate high levels of commitment and enjoyment. They acquire a range of social and personal skills in programmes which develop their interests. For example, the young people value the

learning opportunities and new experiences provided in relevant topics such as drugs and alcohol and peer pressure. In these sessions, the young people develop their self-esteem and thinking skills, and have good opportunities to build new relationships with their peers from other youth centres.

4.1.2 The majority of programmes are well planned to maximise the young people's learning and development. During a cookery session, the young people developed their confidence and ability to work with others. They followed instructions well, completed specific tasks and learned about food hygiene.

4.1.3 The young people achieve high standards in specific projects, including graffiti art and physical activities. The centre engages relevant external tutors to work in partnership with the centre staff to complete these projects successfully. The centre staff use their individual skills and experience well to extend the young people's achievements.

4.1.4 A small number of the young people involved in projects, such as the REC-IT programme<sup>1</sup>, demonstrate a good understanding of recent historical and political events which continue to affect them and the wider community. The REC-IT programme meets successfully the aims and objectives of the project as stated in the funding application to the Community Relations Council.

4.1.5 The older members develop relevant skills, knowledge and self-confidence through completing specific training courses. Eight young people are completing the OCN Trainee Leader's Course in preparation for assuming leadership roles within the centre. The inspection team observed the full-time worker co-deliver this course. He delivered it well and created a good learning environment. The young people made good use of ICT to demonstrate their good communication skills, their ability to research material and to provide constructive peer evaluation.

## 4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

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

4.2.1 The quality of the youth work practice observed ranged from satisfactory to very good, with a majority of the sessions evaluated as being good or better. The group work programmes are consistently good; the members and parents report that the summer provision offers a good balance of recreational and educational experiences.

4.2.2 The staff make good use of external agencies to provide innovative and creative programmes including 'We see the world', which is an interactive peer mentoring programme with young people in New Jersey, and the 'I citizen', which is an out-door programme to promote good relations and civic engagement, provided through Scoutlink.<sup>2</sup>

4.2.3 The staff plan their programmes carefully and communicate clearly the purpose of each session to the young people. They are planned to be enjoyable with learning outcomes which support the young people's personal and social development. The programmes include: health and fitness programmes; faith development; anti-racism and inter-generational events. The staff collate good evidence of the young people's contributions and evaluations; they need, however, to analyse this evidence to assess the outcomes more effectively.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a joint Community Relations programme with young people from Rosario Youth Centre and the East Belfast Area Project

<sup>2</sup> Scoutlink is a joint project between the Northern Ireland Scout Association and Souting Ireland

4.2.4 The staff listen and respond to the young people's ideas, which are used well to influence the programme. There is a need to provide more formalised structures for participation, which support the young people in making a more effective contribution to the planning and implementation of the programmes.

4.2.5 The after-school provision is well attended by a core group of 20 primary school children. They enjoy the good range of programmes including cookery, crafts and physical activities. The homework element of the after-school club is popular with most of the children, who enjoy the good support and encouragement of the staff. It is not planned for sufficiently and needs to be resourced more adequately in order to support further the children's learning.

#### 4.3 PASTORAL CARE

**The quality of the pastoral care is very good.**

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, which guides effectively the work of the staff; and the agreed standards of behaviour and discipline, which are well reflected in the respect the young people have for their environment, the staff and visitors. 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.

#### 4.4 SAFEGUARDING

The centre has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by DE.

#### 4.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

4.5.1 The management committee has a clear vision for the centre which reflects well the aims of a faith-based youth organisation. It provides effective governance through regular meetings to plan and evaluate the work of the centre. Members of the management committee attend relevant training, including Safeguarding, to fulfil their roles effectively. The committee provides timely support for the youth work team and the young people, and maintains good links with the BELB and DE to ensure adequate provision for the young people.

4.5.2 The BELB AYO attends the meetings of the management committee regularly and offers professional advice on the development of the youth provision. During the inspection the AYO acknowledged the significant contribution of the centre to the youth provision in south Belfast. He also supports the full-time youth worker well and provides an accurate evaluation of the centre's outcomes through the annual assessment process.

4.5.3 The full-time youth worker demonstrates effective strategic leadership and management. He has established, and maintains, good links with relevant youth agencies, government departments and community organisations. The full-time youth worker uses these links well to develop the good range of programmes and learning opportunities for the young people. He represents the centre on a number of key partnerships, including the South Belfast Partnership Board, Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal and the Down and Connor Youth Commission. The centre continues to build on its positive reputation and is a significant youth provider within the community.

4.5.4 The full-time youth worker is developing appropriate systems to evaluate the outcomes of the development plan in order to assure the quality of the provision and to promote improvement. All of the staff set appropriate goals for their work and benefit from the supervision and support provided by the full-time youth worker. They are becoming more reflective of their work and identify their training needs accurately

4.5.5 The full-time youth work makes good use of the annual report to reflect on the quality of the provision. He has identified accurately the strengths and the areas for development in the 2010-11 report. These assessments included the high levels of participation and increased membership over the last two years, and the need to increase the provision for the senior members, including an increase in the allocation of the time for the older age group.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 The quality of youth provision provided by St John Vianney Youth 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 area for improvement.

5.2 The main areas for improvement are the need to:

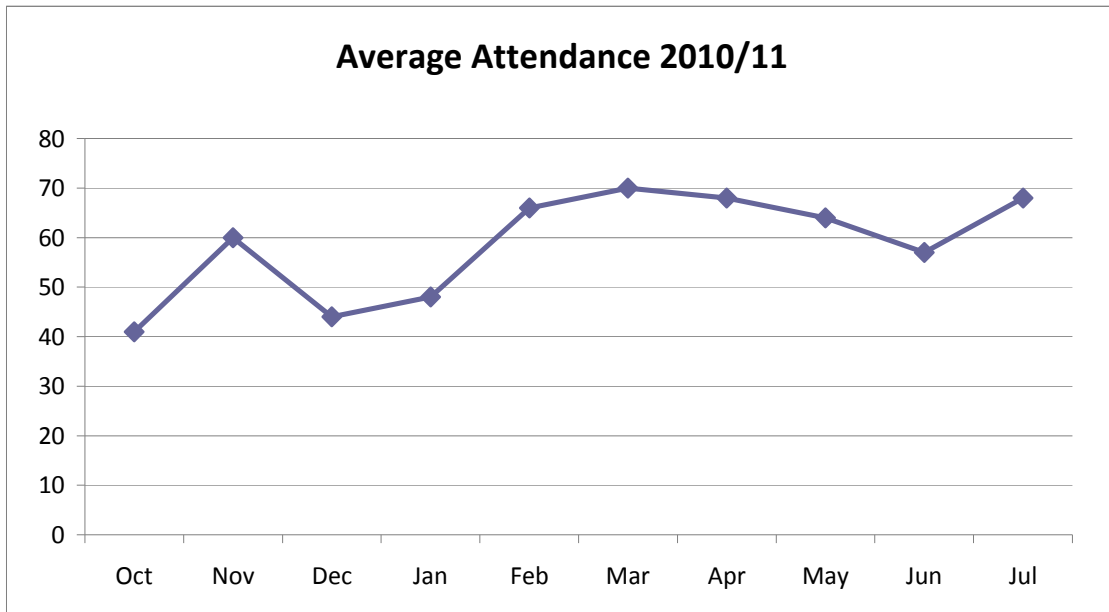
- develop a strategic plan for the after-school provision; and
- increase the provision for the over-16 age group in the area.

## APPENDIX 1

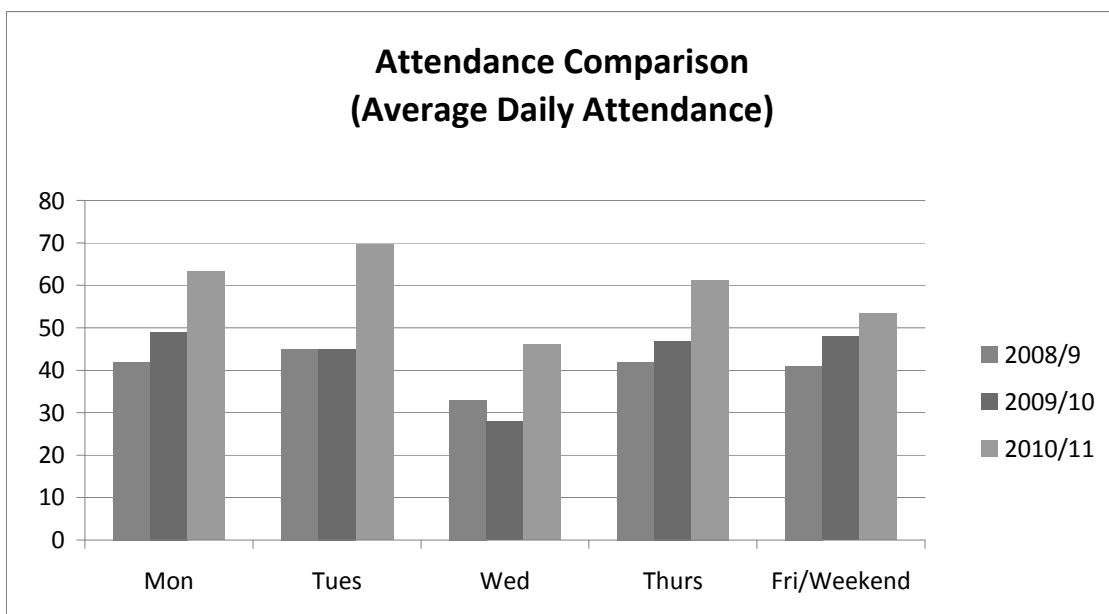
### TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19+		Numbers involved in outreach/ detached	TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2008/09	29	31	35	37	12	7	3			154
2009/10	30	37	56	49	15	13	-	2		202
2010/11	32	35	49	37	16	14	1	3		187
2011/12	40	40	50	24	6	6	4	8		178 (on 28 Oct)



**ATTENDANCE**

When compared to the data from previous years, there is a clear upward trend in attendance.



Wednesday evening shows lower levels of youth participation due to issue-based work with small groups of members. There is an upward trend in attendance over the last three years.

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