

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Oliver Plunkett Youth Club,
Crossmaglen

Report of an Inspection
in June 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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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

DE	Department of Education
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FTW	Full-time Worker
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NI	Northern Ireland
SELB	Southern Education and Library Board
SYW	Senior Youth Worker
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

1. CONTEXT

1.1 St Oliver Plunkett Youth Club (the club) is a voluntary youth club situated in the town of Crossmaglen in South Armagh, celebrating its 25th year in the current premises and funded by the SELB. The club lies in the Newry and Mourne local government district area. It is adjacent to a GAA complex which caters for a large number of young people; the club takes into account GAA activities in order to maximise the youth provision for young people in the local community. According to figures supplied by the club, the town has a population of 2441, which is a higher than average population of young people under the age of 16. It is ranked in the top ten percent of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland.

1.2 The management committee employs a full-time youth worker, six part-time paid youth workers, ten young volunteers and a part-time administrator. The SELB provides ongoing financial and professional support that is monitored on an annual basis through an agreed service level agreement between the management committee and the area youth officer.

1.3 Although funded for 46 weeks of the year, the club provides additional activities with the help of volunteers during school holiday periods. There is provision for age-specific activities and programmes for three distinct sections, aged 5-11, 11-14, and a senior group aged 14 plus; structured youth work sessions take place on five evenings a week. The club hosts a variety of local youth and community organisations including an after-school group and a gymnastics club.

1.4 According to the figures supplied by the club, the membership at the time of the inspection was 351, the same as the previous year but a significant increase since 2008-09. (Appendix, table 1) The figures also indicate that the club membership is almost 42% of the youth population which meets the current targets set by DE.

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 processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

2.2 The overall inspection process focused mainly on the youth work activities delivered by the youth work staff team.

3. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of youth work provided in this club is good.

3.1 The centre has important strengths in most of its education and pastoral 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.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

The quality of achievements and standards is very good.

4.1 The young people participate enthusiastically in a wide range of educational programmes and activities which build on their interests, developing very good personal and social skills. Information provided by the club indicates that approximately 14 relevant accredited programmes were completed in the last twelve months involving 360 young people and young adults. (Appendix, table 3) This achievement is very good given the educational, geographical and social context of the youth club.

4.2 The club has managed effectively to retain at least one-third of the total membership over the last four years. A core group young people, aged 15 plus, has made very good progress in gaining leadership skills and volunteer to provide excellent support to the younger members. All of the young volunteers demonstrate determination and resourcefulness: they identify their personal development in terms of greater confidence, better problem-solving and increased employability skills. The core group, some of whom have additional learning needs, made an outstanding formal presentation to the inspection team articulating well their learning from the courses attended.

4.3 During the visit to Newry police station for the 'Driving Change' road safety programme, the young people asked relevant questions to the police officers regarding road safety. By the end of the session all of the group clearly understood the legal consequences in relation to driving offences.

4.4 In one outstanding example of achievement, a senior member identified the need to raise disability awareness among her peers in the local school and youth club. Along with the teaching staff of the local post-primary school, a programme was developed that became part of an enrichment programme for eleven sixth-formers. All of the pupils successfully completed the programme successfully and were awarded 70 UCAS points. The school staff spoke very positively about the impact of the programme on the participants and how the initiative from the pupil and youth club member had developed relevant skills and confidence to work with disabled young people in the local community.

4.5 The youth workers have identified the need to encourage more young people in the fourteen-plus age group to avail of the very good range of appropriate personal development programmes that the club provides. They are considering new initiatives and a better recruitment policy.

5. QUALITY OF PROVISION

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

5.1 The quality of youth work sessions ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with the majority being good or better. In the more effective sessions observed the staff plan well and understand the role and purpose of youth work. The good evaluation process highlighted the need for a performance space for the many talented young musicians and singers from the local community. Members of the inspection team observed a good music/drama planning session, organised by the young people and the youth workers to plan potential recording and performance opportunities.

5.2 The part-time youth workers are enthusiastic and motivated to extend the young people's learning and plan appropriately for their progression. They meet the young people's needs well through the good delivery of a wide range of activities. The activities are age-appropriate and include: a summer residential experience involving over 100 young people, and an outdoor pursuit summer youth intervention programme. The weekly dance and drama sessions are used very well to prepare the members for the big performance events which are a significant feature in the club's programme.

5.3 The club has developed appropriate links with a range of community and youth organisations that add value to the programme and benefit the young people. The well-organised Halloween festival included staff, management and community working together to bring a safer, family-orientated festival to the town. Other important links that have been strategically developed to meet the needs of the local young people include, Regenerating Environments and Community Health (REACH), and Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE) in which nine young people participated successfully and which, according to them, helped to enhance their potential employment opportunities.

5.4 The good links being developed between the club and the local post-primary school are tackling social issues. The full-time worker facilitated a ten-week drug and alcohol awareness course that the school reported was well planned and delivered. There is, however, a lack of effective evaluation of the benefits for the staff working together or what the learning outcomes were for the pupils. Both organisations recognise the potential for closer links in order to target the underachievement of the young people who use both the formal and non-formal education services in the area.

The quality of the care, guidance and support of young people is very good.

5.5 The supportive ethos in the centre demonstrates the mutual respect and the positive relationships among the young people, and between the young people and the staff. The centre has many long-standing, family connections, which the staff and use well to support and develop community events.

5.6 SAFEGUARDING

The centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children and young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE, but the following areas need to be addressed: the need to ensure that the designated member of the management committee receives updated training; that all parents are informed of the safeguarding policy and the complaints procedure; and, that an adequate internet policy is in place.

6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

6.1 The well-informed management committee has a very good overview of the work of the centre. They are aware of the challenges of governance and recognise the need for further training and support. They also recognise the need for further knowledge and expertise to help them provide accurate judgements on the quality of the youth work programmes.

6.2 The full-time worker has been in the current post since 2009; he is hard-working and provides strong pastoral and curricular leadership. The majority of the part-time staff demonstrates effective short-term planning; the recording and evaluation systems that are in place do not link sufficiently with the outcomes for the young people.

6.3 The Southern Education and Library Board has developed a new process for quality assurance through an agreed service level agreement. The current action plan (April 2012-September 2013) highlights appropriate themes and associated actions that the staff of the centre are achieving well. The very good support provided by the SELB staff is helping the management and the staff to achieve the key targets.

6.4 There was no formal evaluation available of the previous year's action plan; there are few formal systems in place for recording the outcomes for the young people. The full-time worker needs to collate the very good achievements of the young people and to report formally to the management committee and the SELB to help inform more effectively the long-term planning. The management committee needs to review the effectiveness of the FTW's daytime face-to-face work.

7. **CONCLUSION**

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

7.2 The areas for improvement are:

- the development of more robust management systems that evaluate more effectively the quality of the youth work programmes to inform future planning; and
- the continuing building of more strategic links with the primary and post-primary schools in order to target underachievement for the young people who use both the formal and non-formal education services in the area.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Total membership (Data supplied by the centre)

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	13	2	51	23	15	6	5	7	4	126
2009/10	29	20	82	60	20	12	6	9	13	251
2010/11	46	36	87	84	23	32	6	10	26	350
2011/12	48	37	95	96	24	33	6	10	12	351

Percentage of youth population attending youth centre/project [42.6%]

Table 2: Length of membership in full-time units

Age group	4 - 9		10 -15		16 – 18		19 +		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
New/1st year of registration 2011/12	2	1	8	12	1	1	0	0	25
Registered 2 nd year	17	16	5	24	3	20	0	1	86
Registered 3 rd year	16	18	31	37	5	6	1	2	116
Registered 4 th year	13	2	38	23	5	6	2	3	92

Table 3: Leadership training from September 2011

Title of course including accreditation details	Number of young people enrolled	Number of adults enrolled	Percentage successfully completing the course and level of award
REC First Aid Training		1 Adult	100% Completed
Basic First Aid Training	6 Young People	3 Adults	100% Completed
First Aid at Work		1 Adult	100% Completed
NIOCN Training for Youth Work Programme		3 Adults	100% Completed
Cultural Awareness Programme (2 programmes)	30 young people		90% Completed
Drug & Alcohol Awareness Programmes (6 programmes, 1 School Based)	90 young people		90% Completed
Good Relations Programme OCN Level 1 (2 Programmes)	30 young people		100% Completed
Good Relations Programme OCN Level 2	6 Young People		100% Completed
Disability Awareness Programme (School Based)	15 Young People		100% Completed
Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE) Scheme N.I Fire Service	9 young people		100% Completed
International Women's Day Steering Group	10 young women		100% Completed
Summer Intervention Programme (2 Programmes)	30 young people		100% Completed
Driving Change (2 Programmes)	20 young people 15 young people		80% Completed Near Completion
Wider Horizons Programme	2 young people		50% Completed
Millennium Volunteers (2 Groups)	25 young people 15 young people		90% Completed Near Completion

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