

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Teresa's Youth Centre,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in March 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 St Teresa's Youth Centre in west Belfast is managed by a local management committee and is funded primarily by the Belfast Education and Library Board. According to figures provided by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the centre is located within one of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

1.2 The current membership of the centre is 599; according to the figures supplied by the centre, 20% of the young people living in the catchment area attend the centre. The centre is successful in retaining members, almost one-third of the current membership have attended over the past four years. During the inspection, the average nightly attendance of the membership was 78 young people.

1.3 The centre is staffed by one senior youth worker, one young women's participation worker, one after-school project leader, three youth support workers, eight assistant youth support workers, and six volunteers. The centre operates five evenings each week and additional activities take place at the week-end, including competitive football 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 findings of the inspection

The quality of provision in St Teresa's 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 organisation's progress in the areas for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Overall performance level	Good
Contributory performance levels:	
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

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 demonstrate high levels of commitment and enjoyment; and participate regularly in relevant activity programmes, accredited training and specialist activities. They make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills, in particular, their increased self-confidence and improved communication skills.

4.1.2 In the last year three years, 76 young people achieved accreditation, and a further 224 completed non-accredited courses. While the young people value the benefits of these opportunities and programmes to their future career pathways, many do not understand fully the contribution the centre makes to their personal and social development and learning.

4.1.3 The young people have very good working relationships with each other and demonstrate independent and collaborative working. They display tolerance, understanding and sensitivity towards the rights and feelings of others and the ability to handle conflict and confrontation with maturity. The senior members willingly accept responsibility to support the work of the staff, and make a valuable contribution through their levels of volunteering.

4.1.4 The good range of residential experiences, provide suitable opportunities for the young people to gain valuable personal and social skills in working well with others and in celebrating diversity.

4.2 Quality of provision

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

4.2.1 The quality of the youth work practice observed was good or very good, with the majority of the practice being of a good standard. The characteristics of effective practice included: in a small number of the sessions observed, the effective use of focused questioning by the staff and the range of programmes provided which were age appropriate, enjoyable and which built appropriately on the young people's prior knowledge and interests.

4.2.2 In the less effective practice, aspects of provision lacked coherent planning and evaluation, were over-directed by the staff, and did not involve adequately the young people in identifying and reflecting on their learning.

4.2.3 The centre avails of several activity or specialist coaches to deliver aspects of the programme. There is a need to review the planning for these programmes and to link more clearly the impact of this provision to the whole-centre strategic planning process.

4.2.4 The centre has a well-attended after-school programme, which supports the young people's formal education. The young people are supported with their homework and engage well in developmental group work to enhance their personal and social skills. In developing further this aspect of provision it is necessary for the youth service to use the effective links already established with local schools to update in current curriculum matters.

4.2.5 The young women's participation worker provides good opportunities for the young women to develop relevant skills and to volunteer in the after-school programme and the weekly disco. She makes a valuable contribution to the overall programme and supports the university youth work students on placement to develop required professional skills.

4.2.6 The part-time staff are experienced and have established effective and respectful working relationships with each other, the young people and their parents. They work well as a cohesive team and are committed to improvement in the best interests of the young people.

4.2.7 The senior youth worker has effective links with schools; in particular, a strong partnership is established with the Christian Brother's School. The centre's staff work closely with school staff to deliver accredited programmes which support well pupil's educational and personal development. The pupils enjoy coming to the youth centre for their courses and are well-facilitated by the senior youth worker to achieve their best.

4.2.8 The quality of the pastoral care is very good. The young people enjoy very good working relationships with each other and have established strong friendships within the youth centre. The staff have a sound understanding of the needs of the young people and demonstrate a strong pastoral focus in all aspects of their work. 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 good.

4.3.1 The management committee and the senior youth worker demonstrate a commitment to quality improvement. The senior youth worker has gained the respect and confidence of the management committee, staff and the young people. He is supported well by the staff team to ensure good quality provision within the centre and the local community.

4.3.2 The senior youth worker has established a good range of links with relevant agencies to support and meet the needs of the young people. For example, the joint work with Public Achievement, 'Fixers'¹, Belfast City Council and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. These programmes provide good opportunities for the young people to achieve a driving licence, travel outside Northern Ireland, build new friendships with their peers from other communities, explore issues relevant to their experiences as young adults and develop their understanding of diversity and other cultures.

4.3.3 The current strategic plan is not sufficiently focused enough and requires updating based on a more rigorous self-evaluation and recording processes leading to improvement. In taking forward this important work it will be essential to identify clearly the aims, objectives and well-targeted learning outcomes which reflect appropriately the assessed educational, personal and social needs of the young people. While the self-evaluation process is insufficient to identify and plan fully for the young people's progression, the management committee and the staff demonstrate the capacity to sustain continuous improvement and raise standards.

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

¹Fixers is a movement of young people tackling issues they feel strongly about to make a difference to others

5. Conclusion

5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of provision in St Teresa's 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 areas for improvement.

5.2 The main area for improvement is the need:

- to develop the centre's strategic planning processes based on more rigorous self evaluation which records and reflects most appropriately the educational, personal and social needs of the young people;

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		
2010/11	51	94	259	147	42	51	29	24	0	697
2011/12	43	109	272	153	44	43	40	25	0	729
2012/13	40	111	180	157	29	26	40	16	0	599

Health and safety issue

- An empty fire extinguisher was being used to hold an internal door open. At the report back the senior youth worker reported that the fire extinguisher had since been refilled.

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