

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Delamont Outdoor Education
Centre, Killyleagh

Report of an Inspection in
May 2015

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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:

| PERFORMANCE LEVEL |
|-------------------|
| Outstanding |
| Very Good |
| Good |
| Satisfactory |
| Inadequate |
| Unsatisfactory |

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1. 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 processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

2. Context

Delamont Outdoor Education Centre (the centre) opened in 1987; it is funded by the Education Authority (EA), Belfast Region, and is situated on the shores of Strangford Lough, a world renowned area of special scientific interest. The centre is approximately one mile from the village of Killyleagh and includes residential accommodation.

According to the statistical data provided by the centre an average of 53 primary and post-primary schools visit the centre each year. Youth organisations use the centre during the weekends, and over the past three years there was an average of 37 visits by youth groups each year. During the summer months, over the same three-year period, there was an average of 22 youth groups who used the centre. At the time of the inspection there were no specific targets set by management in relation to the occupancy rates.

The EA meets all of the recurrent costs for running the centre and there has been a significant recent investment to provide disability access. The warden is supported by 2.7 full-time equivalent outdoor education instructors. In addition, there is a small team of part-time staff, including a bursar, two cooks, ancillary staff and a full-time maintenance person. The assistant senior education officer for the EA has responsibility for the management of the centre.

At the time of the inspection, the Department of Education were in the process of reviewing outdoor education provision across Northern Ireland.

3. Overall findings of the inspection

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Satisfactory |
| Achievements and standards | Good |
| Provision | Good |
| Leadership and management | Satisfactory |

4. Achievements and standards

- The young people are motivated, relish the challenges set by the instructors and fully engage in the good range of high quality activities organised for them. They demonstrate very good relationships with each other and are developing a good range of key personal and social skills including, critical reflective thinking and the ability to manage their own behaviours in a range of environments. Through the planned activities, they develop resilience, support and encourage each other and are challenged to achieve to their full potential.

- During the activities the young people were observed working collaboratively and effectively in teams. They are developing a deeper appreciation of nature and the local environment, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the skills required to work successfully and safely in the outdoors. While the young people are extending their knowledge, skills and capabilities at the centre, opportunities are missed to build fully upon these at school. For example, the educational links between their work in school and the outdoor education environment are underdeveloped.
- There are good opportunities for young people and part-time staff to develop outdoor education skills and gain accredited qualifications including the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) award, the John Muir¹ award and hill walking courses. The part-time staff, who are involved in the DofE, are effectively transferring the skills they have learned to their own schools and organisations, providing good opportunities for more young people to become involved in the DofE awards scheme.
- The leadership module in outdoor education is providing one staff member with good professional development; however, there are few opportunities for young people to develop pathways to become volunteer outdoor education leaders.

5. Provision

- The quality of the sessions observed range from good to very good. The staff use their local knowledge and considerable experience skilfully to engage the young people in the planned activities which enhances their knowledge and understanding of the Mourne region. They have good organisational and group management skills and develop a good rapport with the young people often using appropriate humour and positive feedback to encourage the young people to gain a sense of achievement during the sessions.
- In the best practice, the staff get to know the groups quickly and set high expectations for the young people in relation to their behaviour, skill acquisition and the development of positive attitudes; the tasks are matched well to the young people's ability. The detailed risk assessment and ongoing risk management ensures that young people are taught appropriately how to keep themselves and others safe. The staff work well together to provide a well organised, supportive, and challenging environment for learning.
- The centre has received positive feedback on the quality of its provision, this includes a small number of user questionnaires that are completed by young people and schools which indicate a high degree of satisfaction. In addition, there are a number of good quality wall displays in the centre's classroom and good examples of school annual reports where the young people have written positively about their experiences.

¹ The John Muir Award is an environmental award that encourages people of all backgrounds to connect, enjoy and care for wild places through a structured yet adaptable scheme. There are 3 levels of the Award, **Discovery Award** (introductory level) minimum 4 days (or equivalent) , **Explorer Award** (intermediate level) minimum 8 days (or equivalent) and **Conserver Award** (advanced level) minimum 20 days (or equivalent) over 6 months .

- During the induction and on the first day of arrival there is a good process of involving the young people and staff from the organisation in choosing their own activity schedule that is always weather dependent. While there is a good range of activities provided, the centre needs to provide more challenging programmes that are contemporary and adapted to meet the changing needs and interests of the young people.
- A good range of appropriate policies help guide and support the pastoral care provision within the centre and during the activities. The centre has an inclusive, welcoming ethos. The young people reported that they feel safe and secure and they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

6. Leadership and management

- There is an urgent need for the EA senior leaders, the warden and staff to create a shared vision for the centre and establish a well-focused development plan, which sets out appropriate targets and is sufficiently resourced. The current plan does not adequately reflect an appropriate range of targets or actions for improvement. In order to help guide the strategic planning process there is a need to include actions and targets related to the policy for youth work, and the wider educational objectives.
- Improvements have been made recently by the EA on the quality assurance of the work of the centre through the introduction of additional support for the warden and staff. However, the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning is not systematic enough and needs to be developed to sustain and improve further the good quality of provision within the centre. This includes the need to develop a collaborative approach to planning, including consultation with key stakeholders, in order to identify key strengths within the centre, inform priorities for development and bring about improvement. In addition, there is a need to define roles and responsibilities for all of the staff to meet effectively the targets established, and the actions agreed.
- The warden provides efficient day-to-day management of the centre and has established good relationships with centre user groups and the local council and has developed positive links with other local outdoor education centres.
- The informal meetings between staff are helpful and meet the needs of the team on an operational, day-to-day basis. However, there is a need to establish, embed and sustain effective methods of formal communication among the staff to bring about the required improvements in leadership and management.
- The staff team are well-qualified and have particular strengths and specialist training in orienteering, water-based activities, climbing and biking. They are hard working and the centre deploys them appropriately.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following areas need to be addressed: to ensure all policies and procedures are applied consistently throughout the centre and to provide child protection awareness training for administration and ancillary staff members.

7. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of the overall provision for the young people is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the young people are to be met more effectively.

There is an urgent need:

- for the EA senior leaders, the warden and staff to establish a shared vision for the centre; in order to agree a well-focused development plan, which is appropriately targeted and resourced;
- to define clearer roles and responsibilities for all of the staff to meet effectively the targets and actions agreed in the new development plan; and
- to establish, embed and sustain effective methods of communication among the staff to bring about the required improvements in leadership and management.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over a 12-24 month period.

Table 1: Number of Schools using the OE Centre

| Year | Controlled Primary | Maintained Primary | Controlled Secondary | Maintained Secondary | Voluntary Grammar | Misc | Total |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2012-13 | 20 | 11 | 12 | 7 | * | * | 56 |
| 2013-14 | 22 | 9 | 6 | 6 | * | * | 47 |
| 2014-15 | 24 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 5 | | 60 |

Table 2: Number of Youth Organisations using the OE Centre

| Year | Controlled | Voluntary | Uniform | Misc | Total |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2012-13 | 18 | 10 | 5 | | 107 |
| 2013-14 | 7 | 8 | * | 13 | 98 |
| 2014-15 | 23 | 15 | * | 10 | 68 |

Table 3: Number of youth Intervention Programmes using the OE centre

| Year | Controlled | Voluntary | Uniform | Total |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2012-13 | 16 | 10 | | 26 |
| 2013-14 | 16 | 9 | | 25 |
| 2014-15 | 12 | 5 | | 17 |

* denotes numbers less than five.

Health and safety

1. There is a need to risk assess the anti-slip paint on the steps leading to the dormitory in the stable block and on the steps leading to the computer room.

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