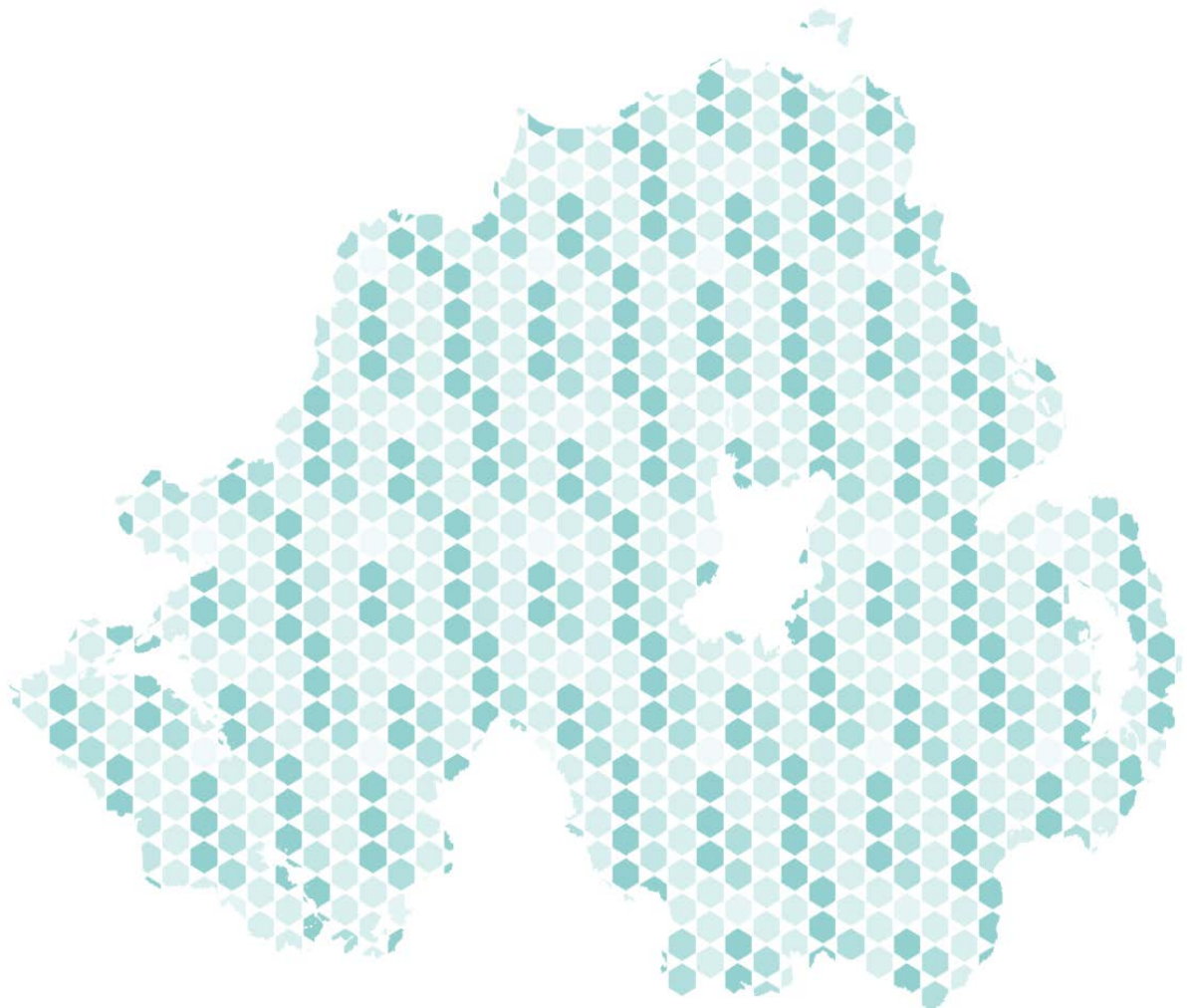


YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Girlguiding Ulster

Report of an inspection in
February 2015

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 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

The headquarters for Girlguiding Ulster is based at Lorne House, Holywood. The estate has a residential training facility¹, four campsites and outdoor activities on site.

As a branch of Girlguiding UK, Girlguiding Ulster is a registered charity within Northern Ireland, and has delegated authority to make its own financial decisions. The organisation is led by the Ulster Executive Committee, which is representative of the counties across Northern Ireland. Each county is divided into divisions and districts, with a District Commissioner, who is responsible for all the units and volunteers in their area.

In Northern Ireland, the membership consists of 625 units, with approximately 10,000 young people and 2,300 volunteer leaders. There are four main sections and age groups:

- Rainbows age 4 to 7 years
- Brownies age 7 to 10 years
- Guides age 10 to 14 years
- Senior Section age 14 to 25 years

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Very good
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

4. Achievements and standards

- The young people are friendly, courteous and have a strong sense of belonging to Girlguiding. They are enthusiastic and enjoy participating in programmes, where they demonstrate kindness, compassion and helpfulness. There are very good relationships among the young people; they have high levels of respect for their leaders and they show sensitivity towards one another.

¹ The residential facility at Lorne was not included in the scope of this inspection.

- From Brownies through to the Senior Section, the young people willingly get involved in a range of volunteering opportunities. The senior girls are well involved in planning and determining their own guiding experiences. These young people readily contribute their ideas and value the opportunities to manage their own programmes. They engage enthusiastically in discussions with their leaders and their contributions are mature and well thought out. The senior section are excellent role models for the younger girls and are developing leadership skills and taking responsibility for others from a very young age.
- Consistently, across the age sections, the young people have high levels of attendance and participate actively in the age-appropriate programmes. For example, during the inspection Rainbows were observed making choices about their activities, Brownies were involved well in planning a residential, and the Guides were leading and motivating their peers with their activities.
- The young people are encouraged to express their opinions and were observed making presentations to one another. They had meticulously researched their information and then confidently shared their knowledge and understanding with their peers. The recently introduced peer education programme gives very good opportunities for the young people to learn from one another. The 17 young people who attended peer education training in England are keen to apply and share the new skills they have learned with other guiding members in Northern Ireland.
- A particular strength of the organisation is the focus on developing useful life-skills among the young people. Very good attention is directed towards developing skills, such as team-work, problem-solving and organising programmes. In addition, they are learning very practical skills, from car maintenance to changing a plug. The young people respond well to programmes which challenge gender stereotyping and promote independence and resilience.
- Furthermore, the young people progress well in their skills development through experiences such as the Challenge Awards, the Chief Commissioners' Awards and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. They achieve well in these awards, with for example, 348 young people successfully completed the awards in 2014. In addition, in 2014, 1000 young people achieved badges through their participation in Community Relations Equity and Diversion programmes.

5. Provision

- All of the sessions observed were good to outstanding, with most very good or better. In the most effective practice, the leaders were very well prepared and their planning took into account the individual interests and needs of the young people. The programmes are creative, well-conceived and matched accurately to the ages and abilities of the young people.

- The organisation has excellent curriculum resources to support the programmes. The resources are flexible, progressive and assist the leaders to deliver a wide ranging curriculum; there is an appropriate focus on learning, health and well-being and developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. The website, which has been recently updated and improved, is already showing potential for increasing the membership and communicating more effectively with leaders and the young people.
- International awareness and global citizenship are given a high priority at all levels of the organisation. The young people have opportunities through both local and global events, to engage with others from a range of countries, to work together and to gain a deeper understanding and respect for one another's cultures. The opportunities for international visits to countries, such as Denmark and Mexico, are valued highly by the young people and help them to develop a sense of their place in the global guiding community.
- The leaders make very effective use of small group work and the young people enjoy moving around their 'stations'; there is a good pace to the activities and everyone gets the opportunity to participate. In the most effective group work, the leaders skilfully questioned the young people, giving them time to think and to extend their answers.
- The leaders have a collegial approach to delivering their programmes. They work collaboratively, sharing responsibilities, drawing on each others' strengths and involve the young leaders at all levels. The young people are given appropriate levels of responsibility, which progress as they move through the organisation. The progression and sustainability of young people into leadership roles is a key feature of this organisation.
- The quality of the pastoral care is very good across Girlguiding Ulster. There is a sound culture of respect, inclusion and friendship promoted among the members. Young people with a range of needs are welcomed and well integrated into the programmes. The leaders know the young people well and have developed very good relationships with their parents and carers.
- During the informal discussions held with the young people, they informed members of the inspection team that they feel safe in their units and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

6. Leadership and management

- The Ulster Executive Committee provides very strong strategic leadership for the organisation. The strategic management processes are well-developed and give much coherence to planning and decision-making. There is a clear vision for improvement to meet the needs of young people across Northern Ireland. The organisation, for example, through the Growing Guiding Outreach programme, has begun to expand successfully the provision into areas of social deprivation, where participation rates have been historically low.

- Governance arrangements are strong, with members of the Ulster Executive Committee setting an appropriate challenge function to the management team. They are highly committed and bring significant experience in industry and a range of professional bodies to their work. There is effective engagement with young people in the governance of the organisation; for example, two young people sit on the Ulster Executive Committee.
- The management team provides highly effective and competent leadership of the organisation. The coherent management structure is well-supported by volunteers, who willingly share roles and responsibilities to lead, direct and sustain the organisation. There are high levels of collegial working and distributive leadership is well-embedded across the organisation. The County and District Commissioners are pro-active and are highly supportive of the units. They are reflective and enthusiastic, and frequently review the organisations' planned actions to promote improvement.
- The staff and volunteers have a strong focus on the continuous improvement of the organisation. The views of young people, staff and relevant stakeholders are appropriately elicited in the planning and evaluation of the provision. The County and District Commissioners, for example, observe the quality of the sessions. While these processes are well embedded, more use could be made of the organisation's management information to identify the main strengths and areas for development.
- The participation of the volunteers is a major strength of the organisation. The leaders are enthusiastic, committed, long-standing, and bring a wealth of experience to their work. The continual professional development for staff and volunteers is a feature of the provision. In addition, the management of the training for the leaders and young people is excellent. There is an extensive range of well-attended training events; these are very well organised and include the Leaders' Conference every two years and the annual Commissioners' Conference.
- External links are very strong and enrich the quality of the learning experiences of the young people. There are close working partnerships with the other five uniformed organisations and the organisation is developing links with employer groups to enhance the employability skills of the young people.
- The public value of this organisation is strong, in particular, the contribution of volunteers, which enhances the learning experiences, and wider skills of the young people across the provision.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection Girlguiding Ulster has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education, but the following area needs to be addressed:
 - the development of a system to monitor the arrangements for initial and refresher safeguarding training across all units; and
 - the need to ensure that all children, young people and their parents or carers are aware of the safeguarding reporting arrangements, including the officers contact details, through clear displays in all units.

7. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of the overall provision for the young people is very good. Girlguiding Ulster is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

APPENDIX

Total Membership

Age	4-9		10-15		16-18		19-25		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2011/12		5633		3776		536		431	10376
2012/13		5854		3434		352		401	10041
2013/14		5941		3385		337		368	10031
current		5969		3436		481		402	10288

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