

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Lisburn Rural Project

Report of an inspection in  
December 2014

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:

<b>PERFORMANCE LEVEL</b>
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

The Lisburn Rural Project (project) is a controlled youth provision in the Lisburn division of the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB), which covers the geographical area between Glenavy and Dromara. The SEELB's strategy for the delivery of youth services in rural Lisburn has focused on building capacity within small communities to ensure future sustainability of the youth service.

The project provides support to local community groups and delivers specific interventions in response to identified needs. The youth support worker-in-charge currently works in three locations with local community associations and a post-primary school.

The school age population within the area is 6265 young people; the project works with 117 (2%) young people over four evening sessions each week, and during the summer months.

## 3. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## 4. Achievements and standards

- The young people involved in leadership courses develop their self-confidence and leadership skills, and achieve appropriate accreditation. For example, the young people who have completed the Millennium Volunteer Award and the Open College Network Leadership level 1 course use their learning to make a valuable contribution to the project. They also identify how well the outcomes in the youth sector support their learning in school.
- For those young people experiencing social isolation, the project provides opportunities to meet and to make new friends. The young people particularly enjoy the recreational activities, which are contemporary, set challenges, and encourage them to work together.
- Through the school-based 'Learning Together' programme, the young people are becoming more aware of the impact of their behaviours on others; however, for most of these young people, they need to develop further their self-awareness, team-work and resilience skills.

- In the other group work observed, the young people readily asked questions to clarify their tasks and learning; and a majority worked well together to solve problems and achieve purposeful outcomes.
- There are too few opportunities for the young people to reflect critically on their own learning. There is a need for the young people to be more involved in programme planning and evaluation, to ensure that provision accurately reflects their assessed needs. While the project has accurately identified the need to re-establish a rural youth forum, no formal participative structures were in place in the project at the time of the inspection.

## **5. Provision**

- The quality of all the provision ranged from good to satisfactory; most of the sessions observed were satisfactory. The planning for individual sessions is not always connected to the project's curriculum programme plans. The session evaluations are largely descriptive and do not sufficiently evaluate the objectives and the identified learning outcomes for the young people.
- In the more effective practice, the staff establish a good rapport with the young people, and through negotiation provide them with opportunities to lead small groups of their peers. The activities are appropriate and enable the young people to develop their leadership skills.
- The variability of appropriate group facilitation skills, when managing large groups of young people, was a feature of the less effective practice. In addition, the project does not have sufficient access to Information and Communication Technology; this limits significantly the opportunities for the young people to complete relevant research to assist their learning and development.
- In the primary schools, the youth staff support the young people in their transition from primary to post-primary school. In the post-primary school work, the project staff contribute to raising the young people's academic standards through accredited peer mentoring programmes.
- While the youth staff are targeting successfully young people with a range of complex needs, they require a greater understanding of developing resilience and coping strategies through group work. Additional professional support and co-working opportunities are required for the youth staff to develop further their group work skills.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate range of opportunities for young people to begin to address personal and social issues, including health, diversity, and employability. In partnership with the local communities, the project identifies and supports successfully marginalised and vulnerable young people. The leadership programmes enable and progress the personal and social development of the young people.

- The young people, staff and community volunteers enjoy good working relationships with one another. The youth staff pay close attention to the emotional development of the young people and make referrals to appropriate support agencies when necessary. Across the provision, the youth staff work hard to ensure the welfare and enjoyment of the young people and to promote an inclusive environment. The young people reported that they feel safe in the project, and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

## **6. Leadership and management**

- The SEELB and the staff have a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of the area. The project's 'Controlled Delivery Agreement' reflects accurately the issues facing the young people and is based on a detailed analysis of relevant local information and data. The SEELB demonstrates a strong commitment to build capacity within rural communities to support and guide them in responding to the needs of their young people.
- The project staff have established effective working partnerships with appropriate schools and community organisations, with an appropriate focus on providing more structured programmes for the young people. The community organisations report that the support from the SEELB is welcomed and valued and contributes to building their capacity to work with young people. Mutually beneficial partnerships have also been established with local primary and post-primary schools to support further the young people's learning.
- The SEELB managers and staff have assessed thoroughly the needs of the young people and their communities at both local and area level. While there are well conceived systems for overseeing the project, the monitoring and evaluation of the provision by management needs to be more regular and focus more sharply on the actions required to improve the provision. The project staff do not plan and evaluate sufficiently the learning outcomes identified for the young people to promote continuous improvement in the provision.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the organisation has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The staff need to plan and evaluate more effectively the learning outcomes identified for the young people to promote continuous improvement.
- The staff require additional professional support and co-working opportunities to develop further their group work skills.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the provision by management needs to be more regular and focus more sharply on the actions required to improve the provision.

## **7. Conclusion**

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

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.

**Total membership**

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19 +		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2011/12	*	*	39	37	17	23	*	*	116
2012/13	*	*	36	37	14	29	*	*	118
2013/14	*	*	29	36	18	33	*	*	118
current	*	*	19	18	30	39	*	7	117

Where \* denotes five or fewer



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