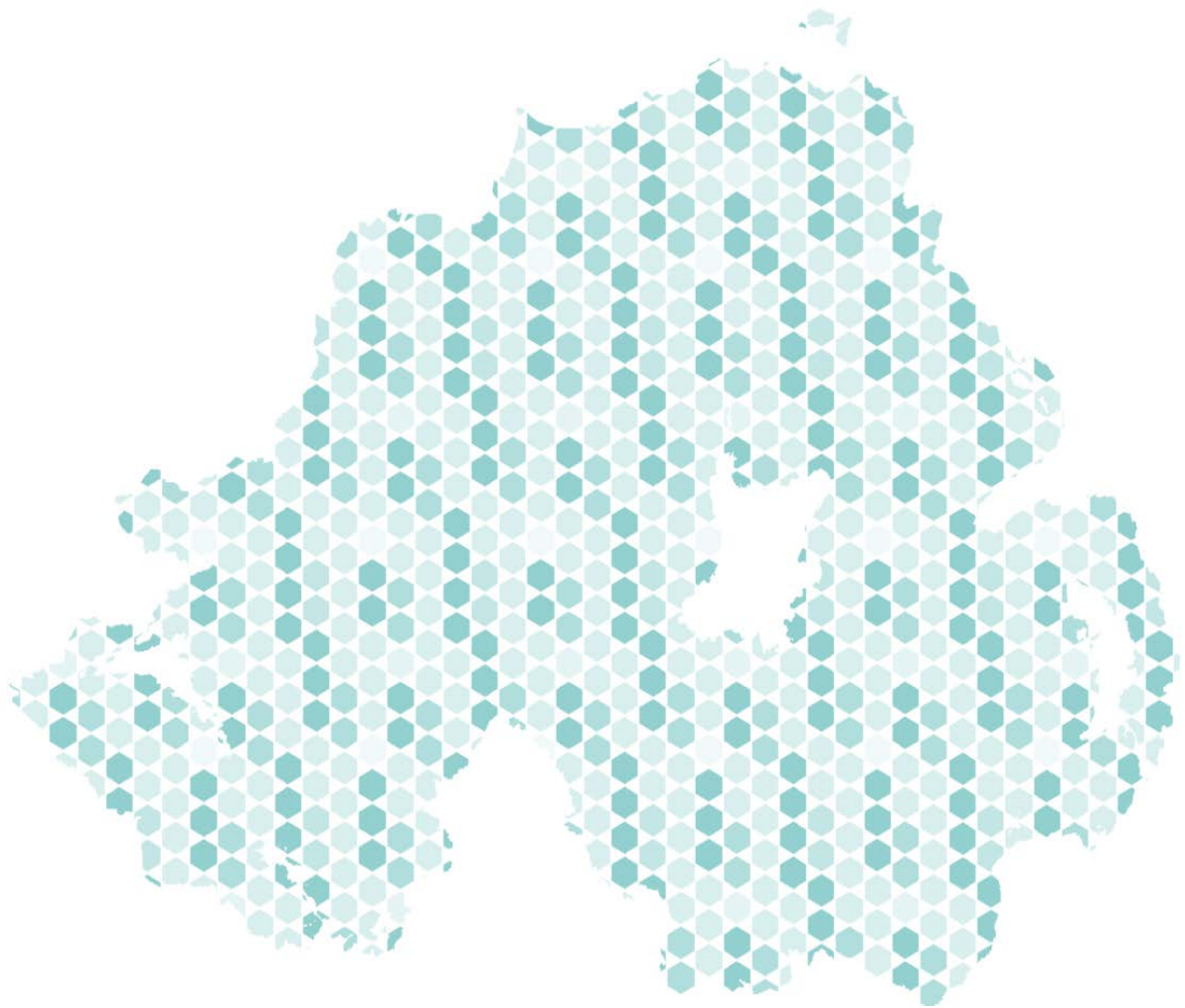


# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Omagh Youth Centre,  
Co Tyrone

Report of an Inspection in  
June 2015

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*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

Omagh Youth Centre is a full-time youth provision, located on the Old Mountfield Road in Omagh. The youth centre is managed by the Education Authority, Western Region and is also advised by a committee of local community representatives. The centre employs a senior youth worker and has a team of 10 part-time staff and volunteers. At the time of the inspection, the centre's programme was led by the part-time staff, due to the absence of the senior youth worker.

The youth centre is open on five evenings each week; in addition, the staff deliver learning programmes within two local post-primary schools. At the time of the inspection, the school programme had concluded for the current academic year. The current membership is 234 young people, aged 6-25 years. The membership of the youth centre has declined over the last three years; in particular, the numbers of young people attending in the 10 to 15 age group has decreased significantly<sup>1</sup>.

## 3. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## 4. Achievements and standards

- In the best attended provision, on the Friday evening, the junior members enjoyed participating in the recreational sporting activities and in the creative arts programme. Similarly, in the 15+ club, young people with additional learning needs are well engaged in programmes which interest and enthuse them. They are developing further their creative skills through music and arts; for example, they are preparing for, and participating in, the mid-summer carnival arts programme. A particularly effective strategy is the 'buddy programme', which supports members with additional learning needs to participate on other evenings in the youth centre. The 'buddies', who are senior members, demonstrate empathy and understanding for those young people who have additional learning needs. Furthermore, they are supportive, caring and well equipped to deal with the issues faced by these young people. Through their experiences at the youth centre, the young people with additional learning needs engage well with their peers, sustain friendships, develop their social and communication skills, and build on the learning experiences gained in their formal education.

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<sup>1</sup> Membership details provided in Appendix 1.

- The senior members involved in leadership projects are willing to assist the staff and engage well in opportunities to volunteer; including, for example, the preparation training for the annual summer scheme. These young people recognise and understand the connections between their youth centre training opportunities and their career choices. Through the Millennium Volunteer programme<sup>2</sup>, there is a good opportunity to celebrate the effective contribution made by the senior members. They are positive role models for the junior members; and in addition, they represent their centre on the Omagh Youth Council.
- At the time of the inspection, the number of senior members attending was too low. The young people require a more engaging range of experiences, to increase the attendance of senior members and to develop their leadership skills.

## **5. Quality of provision**

- The sessions observed range from very good to inadequate. In the most effective practice, the sessions are well planned; in particular, for the young people with additional learning needs, where there is an established nightly routine of highly appropriate learning activities. The staff are skilful in their delivery of creative arts programmes, and know well the young people who attend. Where the practice was less effective, the staff had not sufficiently planned for the generic evening programme and the young people were not engaged in purposeful activities.
- The staff celebrate the young people's achievements through displays around the centre of their work and presentation evenings for those who complete significant hours of volunteering. Good quality training is provided by the Education Authority staff to support the summer scheme volunteers and this helps them to develop their communication skills when working with the young people. While the youth centre action plan appropriately identifies issue-based programmes for the young people, a significant number of these did not take place or proceeded with small numbers in attendance. There is a need to improve the youth work skills of the staff through training, to develop further their capacity to meet the personal and social developmental needs of the young people.
- The quality of the care, guidance and support is good. The centre provides a welcoming and inclusive environment, where all young people, including those with additional learning needs, are valued and have a strong sense of belonging. In discussions, the parents of the young people with additional learning needs were highly supportive of the work of the centre staff and the progress made by their children. A key feature is the staff commitment to supporting the young people, with all of the staff giving significant voluntary time to support and develop further the youth provision. Most of the young people and staff enjoy good working relationships with one another; however, there is a need for the staff to implement consistently the centre's good behaviour policy. The young people reported that they feel safe in the centre, and most are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

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<sup>2</sup> Millennium Volunteers is a national programme that recognises volunteering through certificates issued by the Department of Education and is open to anyone aged between 14 and 25.

## 6. Leadership and management

- The centre has a long-standing and enthusiastic advisory committee in place. They are supportive and challenging in their engagements with one another and the Education Authority staff. Their commitment and enthusiasm is demonstrated by their vision for the future development of the youth centre which has the best interests of the young people at its core. They understand well their purpose and roles, and their breadth of experiences support well the staff of the Education Authority. The leadership and management of the Education Authority and the advisory committee have a strong commitment to developing the young people, including those with additional learning needs, into leadership roles
- The management of the Education Authority support the staff well within the youth centre and are committed to the strategic development of the centre to meet the needs of young people residing across the Omagh area. They meet regularly with the youth centre staff and the advisory committee and are committed to working together to appraise the future direction of the work with young people.
- The Education Authority managers and the advisory committee have a comprehensive and well-informed understanding of the needs of the area and the young people. The Education Authority area plan and the youth centre action plan are coherent and connected taking account of the local context. However, there is a need for more of the centres' programmes to reflect and be delivered in line with the youth centre action plan.
- While the management of the centre provides accredited qualifications for staff, through an annual training calendar, they have identified appropriately the need to support and train the staff to develop further their capacity as youth workers; this will need to include planning, programme delivery and evaluation skills. In addition, there is a need for the staff and the young people to plan, review and evaluate the provision regularly, to improve the quality of the generic and developmental group work provision.
- The leadership of the centre has made effective use of partnerships, with an appropriate range of community, educational and youth organisations, which has improved the breadth of experiences available to the young people. The centre has well-established links with the formal education sector, for example, through the Learning Together Programme<sup>3</sup>.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the youth centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education; however, there is a need to review the procedures for parents and young people accessing and leaving the premises, and to ensure that the roles and contact details of the designated staff are communicated to all of the young people.

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<sup>3</sup> The Learning Together Programme is a collaborative working partnership between post-primary schools and the Education Authority Youth Service.

## **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 achievements and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the young people are to be met more effectively. The areas for improvement are:

- to provide a more engaging range of experiences, to increase the attendance of senior members and to develop their leadership skills;
- for the staff and the young people to plan, review and evaluate the provision regularly to improve the quality of the generic and developmental group work provision; and
- to improve the youth work skills of the staff through training, to develop further their capacity to meet the personal and social developmental needs of the young people.

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.

**APPENDIX****Total Membership**

Age	4-9		10-15		16-18		19-25		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2011/12	53	45	48	69	26	18	23	12	294
2012/13	46	38	41	48	18	43	21	13	268
2013/14	61	42	69	81	24	23	24	18	342
current	56	38	43	29	18	14	24	12	234



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