



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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*Providing Inspection Services for*  
**Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**Cregagh Youth Centre  
Belfast**

**Inspected: May 2009**

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## **1. CONTEXT**

1.1 Cregagh Youth Centre is a full-time youth centre situated in east Belfast and managed by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB). A new centre was opened in 2003 on the same site as Cregagh Primary School and a community centre managed by Castlereagh Borough Council. The centre was planned as a 'shared space' to encourage co-operation and partnerships among the youth service, primary education and community providers.

1.2 According to figures supplied by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the total population of the Cregagh ward is approximately 2,151, almost 578 of whom are children and young people between the ages of 4-18 years. The centre aims to provide programmes for young people between the ages of 8-25 years. At the time of the inspection the total membership of Cregagh Youth Centre was 140. The figures supplied by the organisation, indicate a stable membership over the last three years, with 88.6% of the membership for the period 2008/2009 under the age of 16 (Appendix). During the inspection, there was an average nightly attendance of 39 young people, representing 40% of the total membership.

1.3 In addition to the full-time worker (FTW), there are seven part-time youth workers, one of whom is a volunteer. In the financial year 2008/2009, the FTW was successful in securing £8,900 of external funding to enhance further the centre's programmes. The young people also raised funds to purchase for the centre additional equipment, such as guitars and drum kits.

1.4 This evaluation is based on the observation of 12 youth work sessions and discussions with the Area Youth Officer, the FTW, a member of the advisory committee, almost all of the staff, a significant minority of the young people and five parents. The inspection team examined relevant documentation for the centre, including the action plans and the curriculum evaluation and quality assurance reports for the year 2008/2009.

## **2. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

2.1 The action plans for the centre, which have been developed in consultation with the staff and the young people, link to the SEELB strategic plan for the youth service. The action plans and the documents which are intended to support an evaluation of the provision focus mainly on a description of the proposed activities, without sufficient emphasis on the quality of the intended outcomes for the young people. Consequently there is insufficiently rigorous monitoring of what the young people achieve through their participation, and of how such information can inform better future planning and progression.

2.2 The FTW has a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the area. He works well with external agencies and community providers to build positive inter-generational links between the young people and their community, and to provide a relevant programme which clearly reflects 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice.'

2.3 The FTW demonstrates effective leadership through his good support for the staff and for the young people. The working relationships between the FTW and the staff in the centre are excellent. The planning for, and the evaluation of, individual sessions involve all of the staff. The youth workers are well deployed to provide a wide variety of relevant activities

and issue-based group work, which engages the young people well, and meets their interests and the needs of the community. The FTW identifies with the staff their training needs, and they avail of the good opportunities to develop further their skills through the range of accredited courses on offer from the SEELB youth service.

2.4 The FTW maintains an effective registration system, which records the number of young people attending since 2003; it contains information on all of the programmes in which the young people have participated during the last six years. The FTW recognises that this data could be further analysed to identify the trends and the patterns of the membership and to plan for the progression of the young people's achievements. The young people cite the approachability and commitment of the FTW and the staff as important reasons for their continued annual membership.

### **3. QUALITY OF THE YOUTH PROVISION**

#### **3.1 QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

3.1.1 The quality of the youth work observed in this centre ranged from satisfactory to very good, with the majority of the work being good or better. The staff use their good interpersonal and organisational skills to engage well with the young people. The staff and the young people plan well together for a range of contemporary and purposeful activities to develop the skills and the knowledge of the young people. For example, the junior girls demonstrated their good organisational skills in planning for a very entertaining talent show. The young people were taught new dances by their peers, they made confident judgements on the performances of other young people, and they discussed with the FTW how this event could be further improved. In another example, the staff worked well with a group of ten young males to prepare for a forthcoming trip to Berlin. The part-time youth worker facilitating this group work session, was supported well by the FTW in exploring with the young people a range of issues, such as racism.

3.1.2 The FTW has established very good links with three local primary schools and one post-primary school. Aware of the low levels of academic achievement of many of the young people leaving post-primary school, he works closely with local primary and post-primary schools to deliver social education programmes which complement the young people's experience in school. The partnership between Cregagh Primary School and the youth centre is mutually beneficial but could be developed further to benefit more young people. Through the 'New Beginnings' programme, the FTW supports year 7 pupils in the transition phase between primary and post-primary school. In the session observed, the youth worker and the teacher used a variety of appropriate strategies, including effective questioning, to encourage the pupils' thinking skills and to engage them in exploring the topic of bullying.

3.1.3 The centre has established positive working links with several external organisations, including the Police Service for Northern Ireland, the Cedar Foundation and the Irish Football Association. These partnerships contribute to a more diverse programme for the young people. They have the potential to provide them with experiences which will make them more sensitive to the needs of others. One example is an inclusion project with the Cedar Foundation, which promotes good relations between the young people of the centre and young people with disabilities. Consideration should be given to involving the young people more in the joint planning of the activities to promote a deeper understanding of the needs of one another.

3.1.4 The centre also has very good relationships with other youth centres, with which they organise regularly a range of inter-club events. During the inspection week, a visit from three local youth centres to participate in a football and pool competition encouraged enjoyment and the building of positive relationships among the young people involved. At this event, the mobile climbing wall belonging to the SEELB youth service was used to allow the young people to meet personal challenges and to encourage them to support each other.

3.1.5 The accommodation is attractive and well maintained. However, the lack of available space in the youth centre accommodation, on occasions, restricts the programme and the number of young people who can attend. The primary school offers the youth centre limited use of the assembly hall. There are currently no opportunities in the centre for the young people to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as a result of recent flooding which destroyed the computer equipment. The FTW has no access at the centre to the ICT network of the SEELB and the support and administration services it offers.

### 3.2 QUALITY OF PASTORAL CARE

3.2.1 The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care within the centre is very good. This centre promotes an inclusive and supportive ethos. The consistently good standard of behaviour reflects well the mutual respect and the good relationships observed among the young people, and between the young people and the staff. There are clearly understood and agreed codes of behaviour, which are promoted consistently throughout the centre, and the young people readily address any minor behavioural issues identified by staff. The FTW provides a good role model for the young people and staff, through his fair but firm leadership which is respected by all.

3.2.2 All of the young people interviewed, reported that they feel safe and secure in the centre, and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their well-being. A confidential questionnaire was issued to 50 parents; no returns were received. In discussions with a few parents, they endorsed the very good quality of the pastoral care and confirmed that they were informed regularly about the child protection policy and procedures.

### 3.3 CHILD PROTECTION

The centre has very good arrangements in place for safeguarding the young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The arrangements for safeguarding young people using the shared space are monitored and reviewed regularly by the staff of Castlereagh Borough Council, the FTW and the SEELB child protection officer.

### 3.4 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.4.1 There is an appropriate balance of recreational activities and group work, with a clear focus on issues pertinent to the young people. The young people state that the staff take their opinions and ideas into account when planning the programme. The junior talent show, 'Cregagh's Got Talent', demonstrated the involvement of a majority of the younger female members, who readily accepted responsibility for leadership and worked well together in making decisions about the organisation of the event.

3.4.2 The SEELB youth service provides a range of opportunities for the young people to achieve accreditation. Three young people completed the Open College Network Level 1 youth work course this year. The staff recognise that they need to encourage more young people to avail of the accreditation opportunities. The FTW delivers an ASDAN Wider Key Skills course at a local post-primary school. Currently 17 young people are entered for the award. The cohort of nine young people in 2007 all successfully achieved the award.

3.4.3 The FTW celebrates well the achievements of the young people and of the part-time youth workers. He encourages the young people to participate in a range of competitions which develop team-work and communication skills. The young people have successfully gained many trophies and certificates from events such as the Northern Ireland Youth Awards and the SEELB Outstanding Achievement Awards. The centre is also working towards its own celebratory evening planned for June 2009.

3.4.4 Through a very effective reward system, the youth workers encourage the young people in the after-school homework club to develop their ability to help within the centre. The young people respond well to the agreed targets set by the staff. Among the young people in the after-school homework club, there is good evidence of independent and collaborative working. There is a need to maximise the partnership between the school, the community centre and the youth centre, in developing further the outcomes of the homework club, to support learning and to promote healthier lifestyles for the young people.

3.4.5 The staff and the young people participate annually in a challenging cycle tour, the preparation for which involves regular cycle practices and culminates in a five-day residential. Twelve young people participated in the cycle practices and stages of the residential programme and four young people completed the 100 mile course. The young people set themselves challenging targets, develop good team-work and display high levels of resilience through their involvement in this programme. This project has successfully received the SEELB Award for Healthy Living.

3.4.6 A creative programme, developed in partnership with Studio ON, has made a valuable contribution to the development of the young people's digital technology skills. The programme encouraged young people between the ages of 11-16 years, and local adults over the age of 50 years, to work together to produce a short film about time travel. The group learned many new skills together, including planning, script-writing, directing and using cameras. Through this inter-generational programme, the young people and the older members of the community built effective and productive relationships.

3.4.7 The FTW has planned several programmes to promote the increased participation of the young people. He offers a few work placements each year to encourage the young people to become more actively involved in the management of the centre. This year three young people participated in the scheme. One member currently represents the centre on the SEELB Castlereagh Area Youth Council, and two of the young people attend the advisory committee for the centre. The FTW plans to establish a junior and senior youth forum in September 2009.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

##### **4.1 The strengths of the provision include:**

- the excellent ethos reflected in the mutual respect between the staff and the young people, and in the very good standards of behaviour;
- the very good quality of the working relationships among the staff, and between the staff and the young people, and the contribution which these relationships make to the personal and social development of the young people;
- the very good quality and range of the learning experiences, which develop within the young people their creative, practical and social skills, and which meet effectively their needs;
- the very good and informed leadership of the FTW, who has the confidence of the staff, the young people and the community;
- the effective deployment of well-qualified staff, who bring a range of relevant experiences to the work of the centre; and
- the good external links with the community and other organisations, which are of mutual benefit to the young people and their community.

##### **4.2 As a key area for improvement, the evaluation has identified the need:**

- to develop a more strategic approach to building on the planning, and to monitoring the progression and improvement in the practice and in the outcomes for the young people.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 In the areas inspected the quality of provision is good. The centre has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified an area for improvement, which the centre has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the centre's progress on the area for improvement.

## APPENDIX

### MEMBERSHIP FIGURES FOR CREGAGH YOUTH CENTRE

	Age	Male	Female	Total
<b>2006/07</b>	4-9	18	15	33
	10-12	21	19	40
	13-15	9	8	17
	16-18	5	6	11
	19-25	1	-	1
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>2007/08</b>	4-9	18	29	47
	10-12	27	25	52
	13-15	23	13	36
	16-18	8	1	9
	19-25	-	-	-
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>2008/09</b>	4-9	18	24	42
	10-12	28	25	53
	13-15	18	11	29
	16-18	9	7	16
	19-25	-	-	-
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>140</b>



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