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*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

Holy Trinity Youth Centre
Belfast

Inspected: March 2007

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	1
3.	QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	2
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	3
5.	CONCLUSION	4

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Holy Trinity Youth Centre (the Centre) is a full-time voluntary youth centre situated in Turf Lodge within the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). According to figures supplied by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency the Centre is in one of the most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland. The Centre was established in 1971 by a group of local people to provide for the needs of the young people within the area and to involve them in the life and service of their community. In 1999 the Centre benefited from a major extension and refurbishment. In particular the boxing facilities were upgraded to provide modern training facilities that are used by both amateur and professional boxers.

1.2 According to figures supplied by the Centre, they have a membership of 318 young people between the ages of eight and 18 years old, with an average nightly attendance of approximately 69 young people. The Centre operates five evenings each week and the staff provide a range of activities and programmes reflecting the youth work curriculum, well matched to the abilities and interests of the young people attending the Centre. The Centre is also used by a number of community groups including the local women's group, Action on Disability, Hip Hop dance group, Tae Kwon Do, The Link Centre (Secondary Pupil Support Service), West Belfast Area Project, St Gerard's Educational Resource Centre and Gaelscoil na Móna. The boxing section operates in separate premises each evening.

1.3 The level of full-time staffing in the Centre was reduced to one full-time youth worker in September 2006 when funding expired for the full-time Young Adult Development Worker. The Centre staff report that this has resulted in a huge reduction in the standard of service provided for the young people.

1.4 In addition to the full-time youth worker there are ten part-time youth workers including volunteers. Many of the staff are past members of the Centre and live in the local area. The cleaners make a significant contribution to the high standard of cleanliness and upkeep of the Centre.

1.5 As part of the arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care members of the inspection team held discussions with several groups of young people, parents and members of the Management Committee. Each group indicated strong support for the work of the Centre and for the commitment of the staff. The inspection findings endorse the supportive comments made by the parents and the young people.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 The inspection found strengths in particular aspects of the achievements and standards along with areas for improvement, which need to be addressed.

2.2 The main strengths of the achievements and standards include:

- the sense of enjoyment experienced by most of the young people;
- the good level of motivation of most of the young people to engage in the range of opportunities available through attending the Centre;

- the opportunities for some of the young people to work independently and consult with staff when necessary. This was illustrated by two senior members completing an application to secure Lottery Funding;
- the good level of behaviour encouraged by the staff and acknowledged by the young people as a feature of the Centre;
- the opportunities for the young people to develop their self-esteem and social skills which was reported by some of the young people, evidenced in some of the evaluations and observations recorded by staff and by the level of participation by some of the young people;
- the opportunities for some of the young people to progress to leadership and enhance their employability through their involvement in Open College Network (OCN) accredited training courses, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) sport and fitness course and international travel to South Africa; and
- the young people's progress and achievements are recorded and celebrated both within the Centre and throughout the wider community with the effective use of video and digital versatile disc (DVD) productions, photographs, displays and high profile events within the local community, for example the Holy Trinity Youth Centre Film Festival.

2.3 The main areas for development include the need to:

- provide for the development of skills and competencies in a progressive manner; and
- increase the level of membership.

3. **QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

3.1 The youth work curriculum and aims of the BELB Youth Service Business Plan are reflected in the Key Result Areas delivered by both the full-time youth worker and the part-time staff. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have been developed to assure the quality of the delivery of the programmes and take account of the needs of the young people within the context of the local community. The inspection found strengths in aspects of this provision and identified areas for development.

3.2 The main strengths of the quality of provision for learning include:

- the involvement of the young people in planning aspects of the Centre's programme;
- the staff's encouragement and support for the young people to take responsibility for their own development;

- the recreational activities which are well matched to the age and experience of the children and young people;
- the good use of technology in using the young people's creative ideas to develop aspects of the programme;
- the effective structures used to collect feedback and suggestions from the young people in relation to specific outcomes of planned activities and programme areas;
- a safe and secure environment for the children and young people attending the Centre;
- the good quality of mutual respect between the staff and the young people;
- the effective measures implemented by the staff to eliminate oppressive behaviour; and
- the use of the Centre by other groups working with the young people within the community.

3.3 In addition, there are strengths in the quality of the arrangements for child protection within the Centre. Policies and procedures are in place, to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and trained in child protection matters and promote the young people's self-esteem and self-confidence. However, the child protection arrangements within the boxing section do not comply with current legislation.

3.4 The areas for development include the need to:

- plan for developmental youth work especially in relation to the programme for the younger children;
- ensure that clear objectives are evident in the delivery of the programme; and identify outcomes beyond the activity;
- integrate the input from Action on Disability into the Centre's programme; and
- implement the current child protection legislation within the boxing section.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The very limited involvement of the management committee in the core business of the youth provision is a major weakness in the governance of the Centre. The full-time youth worker manages the Centre efficiently and is supported well by the staff to ensure the smooth operation of the provision.

4.2 The main strengths of the leadership and management include:

- motivated staff committed to continuous improvement;

- staff who understand and accept their level of responsibility in delivering the youth work curriculum;
- young people who are involved in the evaluation of specific opportunities and experiences;
- good leadership, support and challenge provided by the full-time youth worker for the staff;
- staff training needs are identified and receive appropriate support;
- the generous contribution of volunteers; and
- the monitoring of finance and expenditure.

4.3 The main areas for development include the need to provide:

- effective governance by the Management Committee;
- regular supervision and support arranged for the full-time youth worker;
- integration of all sections to enhance the outcomes and experience for all the young people attending the Centre;
- effective use of the staffing levels and resources to meet more effectively the need of all the young people; and
- greater opportunities to deliver issue-based group work and further face-to-face contact with young people.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Centre has important strengths in delivering the core curriculum and ensuring the effective pastoral provision for the young people. The inspection has identified areas for improvement relating to effective governance, which the Management Committee needs to address.

The District Inspector will monitor the centre's progress on the areas for improvement.

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