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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
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**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**

**Studio ON  
Crossnacreevy**

**Inspected: March 2007**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Studio ON is one of three creative learning centres established to encourage and support the use of digital technology in formal and non-formal education. Located on the site of the former O'Neill Memorial Primary School at Crossnacreevy and established in 2004, the centre provides an interactive space for training and experimentation in creative digital technologies.

1.2 The three creative learning centres have been developed in the context of several current initiatives which include the 'Unlocking Creativity' strategy sponsored by four Government Departments - Education (DE), Employment and Learning (DEL), Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) - along with the Wider Literacy Strategy of the Northern Ireland Screen Commission (NI Screen Commission) and the Empowering Schools Strategy for information and communication technology (ICT). Each of the three centres provides a body of expertise in the field of digital media and wider arts practice to educate and train children and young people, and their teachers or trainers, in the application of digital technology to a wide range of subject areas.

1.3 Studio ON opened in March 2004 and brought together the Nerve Centre and the South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) in a response to the 'Unlocking Creativity' agenda. Studio ON is funded under the NI Screen Commission education objective to develop new opportunities for learning through digital technology. The centre is managed by the Nerve Centre through its Director, and has a full-time staff of a Centre Director, a Director of Programming, a Finance and Operations Manager, an audio-visual support technician and a building supervisor. There is also a team of six full-time facilitators; the centre also draws on a team of experienced freelance facilitators.

1.4 The mission statement of Studio ON is that the 'Studio ON Creative Learning Centre is an exciting and imaginative space for young people and those who work with them to experiment, create and express themselves through digital multimedia technologies and the Arts.' To achieve this, the centre has built up a series of partnerships and developed and delivered a range of programmes, both in formal and non-formal education settings, for children and young people of all age groups and for those adults who work with them.

## **2. METHOD OF WORKING**

2.1 The Education and Training Inspectorate conducted an inspection of the educational work of Studio ON in March 2007. A team of six specialist inspectors visited a range of activities in both the centre and in schools, and observed a variety of programmes funded by the Children and Young People Funding Package (CYPFP), the SEELB, and the Renewing Communities initiative.

## **Case Study 1**

In a well-paced and well-taught instructional session on Flash Animation, post-primary students from three different schools used the package effectively to enhance the design and programming of partly developed websites on a diverse range of curriculum-based topics. The students were supportive of one another's learning and are well on their way to producing high-quality products and demonstrate marketable digital design and creative skills.

The focus of the sessions was a judicious balance between media skills and knowledge and software design. The tutors dealt skilfully with questions and provided the students with supportive feedback.

The teacher had attended a six-week twilight pre-planning in-service training session where she was able to learn skills relevant to the course and to engage in detailed planning with the tutors. She will train other teachers in the school based on her learning from Studio ON staff.

### **3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Studio ON has many strengths which include:**

- the continuing development of the centre in the advancement of the use of creative digital technology through a positive response to a range of recent government initiatives such as renewing communities and CYPFP;
- the developing management and team structures within the centre, which are reflected in the efficient organisation, the range of professional knowledge and the expertise of the facilitators;
- the appropriate opportunities provided for a wide range of young and adult participants to improve their skills and knowledge of creative digital technology, using a variety of enhanced facilities, suitable programs and hardware;
- the interest and enthusiasm displayed by most of the participants observed in the training sessions;
- the further development of the participants' confidence, self-esteem and creativity, in areas such as film making, musical composition and digital editing;
- the supportive working relationships between the facilitators and the course participants, resulting in the good level of achievement in just under half of the sessions observed;
- the examples of effective links between the work of the centre and the formal school curriculum, in developing young people's literacy; and

- the enjoyment and benefit of the sessions which the teachers and youth workers experience and the good support in building their capacity to develop further the digital skills of young people.

### **Case Study 2**

Through an imaginative literacy project children within a rural primary school had the opportunity to develop their skills through digital story telling. The project was linked directly to the literacy focus within the school development plan and brought together the arts, language and literacy, the world around us and the personal development aspects of the curriculum. The class teacher and creative learning centre facilitator worked closely in the planning and delivery of the project.

The adults worked adeptly with the children, providing opportunities to develop their creative ideas in a supportive environment, where their opinions were valued and contributed to the final presentation. The project supported and enhanced the work of the school and there were good opportunities for staff development with the facilitator utilising the digital hardware that was available to the school.

3.2 The areas for improvement include the need:

- to ensure that the objectives are compatible with, adjusted to and measured through the overarching aims of the various programmes;
- to develop further the strategies for delivering sessions through identifying clearly in the planning, both within the centre and with partner organisations, agreed responsibilities and learning outcomes which meet the needs of the differing levels within each group more effectively; and
- to develop more robust methods of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision to ensure that there is consistency of delivery and that the training sessions are meeting the needs of the participants adequately.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 The quality of the work in this organisation is satisfactory. It is demonstrating strengths in fulfilling the terms of its remit to develop the programmes in supporting the educational needs of the groups with which it works; the significant areas for improvement need to be addressed if the organisation is to meet as fully as possible the needs of those who use its programmes more effectively.

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