



*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**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**The Ógras Centre  
Coalisland**

**Inspected: October 2007**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Ógras Centre (Ógras) is a full-time voluntary youth centre in Coalisland, County Tyrone. It is based in the parochial centre, which has a large multi-purpose hall used by Ógras and other parish and community groups, including SureStart. The rooms dedicated to the youth provision are used for a mixture of recreational activities, individual youth programmes and special projects.

1.2 The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) provides a grant of approximately £63,000 towards the staffing and running costs. The staff and the Management Committee raise additional funding and they have applied for specific funding to refurbish the additional space at the rear of the building.

1.3 A full-time youth worker-in-charge is employed and at the time of the inspection there was a team of ten part-time paid staff and eight volunteers. The centre also employs a part-time administrator for nine hours each week. All of the staff members report to the Management Committee.

1.4 Ógras completes an annual service level agreement (SLA) for the SELB, which this year included six agreed key strategic aims. The SELB Area Youth Officer (AYO) provides external moderation at least twice a year, receives monthly reports from the worker-in-charge and attends some of the Management Committee meetings which are held five or six times a year. The worker-in-charge also submits an annual report on the work of the centre to the AYO and the Management Committee.

1.5 An after-schools club operates five afternoons each week and is registered with the Health and Social Care Trust. A team of three part-time staff and a part-time worker-in-charge are responsible for the operation of the programme. This club operates independently from the other youth centre activities and the part-time worker-in charge of the after-schools club is managed directly by the Ógras' Management Committee.

1.6 The youth centre's programme is divided between juniors, (aged 7-11), who meet two afternoons a week and seniors, (aged 12+), who meet four evenings a week. There is also a disco on one evening for the junior age group. The majority of members registered with Ógras are aged eleven and under. The centre provided 13 hours of direct youth work during the week of the inspection.

1.7 The membership details in the table below were supplied by Ógras and indicate the age and gender of the total number of members registered from September 2007.

**Membership table at the time of Inspection**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
4-9	56	35	91
10-15	36	33	69
16-18	1	1	2
19+	3	2	5
			<b>167</b>

The after-schools club has 34 registered members; the junior section has 86 members and the senior section has 47 members, including seven over the age of 16.

**Total Membership for the last three years (September to August)**

2004/05	476
2005/06	493
2006/07	417

The total figures include the after-schools and summer scheme membership as well as the afternoon and evening enrolment at the end of each year.

It is reported by the Management Committee and the SELB that the enrolment has been consistently low during the September-October period over the past few years. Approximately 20 different young people attended the three evening sessions observed; the average attendance over the three evening sessions was ten.

1.8 The inspection team observed two afternoon and three evening sessions, held discussions with the AYO, members of the Management Committee, almost all of the staff, and some parents. They held informal discussions with 26 young people in relation to their views on child protection, personal safety and the quality of the activities provided. There was a pre-inspection meeting with the worker-in-charge and a briefing on the first day of the inspection with staff and management representatives, including the AYO. The team also examined a range of documentation, including the SLA and the annual report.

1.9 As part of the arrangements for the inspection of child protection and pastoral care, policies and procedures were examined and discussions were held with two focus groups of six young people. The examination of the documentation identified a number of issues that require prompt action to ensure that the policies and procedures are fully in line with the guidance outlined in the relevant legislation.

In particular the centre needs to:

- ensure that there is a clear indication of the roles and responsibilities in child protection between the full-time worker-in-charge and the part-time worker-in-charge of the after-schools club;
- inform parents and young people about the arrangements for child protection; and
- ensure that there is additional training for the designated member of the Management Committee who has responsibility for child protection.

The District Inspector will return to the centre, within a six week period, to ensure that these important issues are addressed appropriately.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

2.1 In discussions, a small number of the senior members described the outcomes of their participation in several projects. For example, three of those who had participated in a young leaders' programme have now taken up voluntary leadership roles in Ógras. Six young mothers took part in an 'Under 25 Mums' project and completed a positive parenting programme. The worker-in-charge reported verbally on an international youth conference in the Basque country which two young people attended. It was clear from the discussions held with the few senior members who were available during the inspection that their involvement in these projects and special activities helped build self-esteem, improve their communication skills and added to their personal development.

2.2 The junior members participate well and show a good sense of enjoyment in both the after-schools club and the junior afternoon sessions. The workers-in-charge provide good guidance for their respective teams of part-time staff.

2.3 There is evidence in the junior section of planned and structured work with good outcomes for those attending. The observed arts and crafts session clearly linked younger members' self-awareness through the use of art and drama. The experience and skills of some of the key part-time staff in the afternoon sessions could be used to good effect in the evening through the sharing of good practice.

2.4 Ógras has responded to some incidents of poor behaviour by introducing a positive behaviour programme with support from the SELB. The programme has helped in the establishment of more consistently acceptable standards of behaviour for the young people. There is a need to communicate the purpose of this initiative to parents and to include it in a revision of the appropriate policies.

## **3. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

3.1 The worker-in-charge provides good support and motivation to the staff. There is a strong ethos of inclusion in the centre: the worker-in-charge and the staff have established and maintain links with minority groups.

3.2 The six strategic themes in the SLA are clearly laid out and relevant to the youth work curriculum. The assessment of the performance indicators and outputs relating to the six themes by the management and AYO is inadequate. It needs to record more systematically the effect of the youth work delivery and the outcomes for the young people.

3.3 The staff have developed good working relationships with the young people, particularly in the junior sections. There is a recognition that staff require additional training and support on the nature and purpose of youth work as outlined in the 'Model for Effective Practice'.

3.4 In the absence of an effective formal and systematic evaluation process, the information on the benefits for the young people accrued from the various programmes is not contributing sufficiently to the forward planning of the centre's work.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The staff is dedicated and committed to supporting the members of Ógras. Two of the part-time paid members of staff completed the Open College Network certificate in youth work, level 3, through the SELB.

4.2 The Management Committee and staff need to analyse why the evening provision is not well attended and to review the programme accordingly. As part of the review, the role of the worker-in-charge during the September-October period each year and the potential for outreach work should be explored. In particular there is a need to attract more young people in the 12+ age group. The worker-in-charge recognises the need for overall improvement to provide better support for an increased number of young people.

4.3 The annual report, SLA and reports to management are not sufficiently evaluative in assessing the progress made by the young people in areas such as their personal and social development, or in evaluating the methods or resources used.

4.4 Information included in the SELB 'Review of Youth Service Establishment' document indicates that at the time of inspection and at other times in the past 12 months Ógras is not meeting the SELB's guidelines in relation to the number of face-to-face hours of youth work and the average nightly attendances.

#### **5. STRENGTHS OF THE PROVISION**

5.1 The strengths of the provision include:

- the good participation and sense of enjoyment displayed by junior members in the afternoon sessions;
- the opportunities for a small number of young people in the senior section to progress to leadership and to work towards appropriate accreditation;
- the positive behaviour programme that has helped to establish more consistent standards of behaviour;
- the useful links with minority groups; and
- the dedication and commitment of the staff and volunteers.

#### **6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

6.1 The areas for improvement include the need for:

- better quality provision to meet the needs of an increased number of young people in the area and especially those in the 12 + age group;
- effective quality assurance arrangements to inform future planning; and
- a review of the policies and procedures to guide the work of Ógras, and in particular, to ensure compliance with child protection requirements.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

7.1 The Ógras Centre has a few strengths in its youth work provision. The inspection has identified important areas for improvement, which need to be addressed promptly if the centre is to meet effectively the needs of all the young people.

7.2 The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the centre's progress in addressing these areas for improvement.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- There is a need to ensure that access to the building is controlled effectively during youth work sessions.
- The lock on the snooker room door needs attention to ensure that the door cannot be locked from the outside.
- The carpet on the stairs down to the snooker room is worn and is a safety hazard.
- Staff need to review procedures for locking up in the evening and at other times.



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