

*eti*

*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**

**St Agnes' Youth Centre**  
**Belfast**

**Inspected: March 2007**

## CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page</b>
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
	APPENDIX	

## **1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

1.1 St Agnes' Youth Centre (the Centre) is a full-time statutory youth centre situated in Andersonstown under the direct management of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). The Centre is adjacent to Holy Child Primary School, which is taking part in the Extended Schools Initiative. The Centre was established in 1970 and the premises were extended in 1992 to include a small outdoor playing area that was resurfaced at the time of the inspection, having been out of use for the previous 18 months.

1.2 According to figures supplied by the Centre, they have a membership of 260 young people between the ages of five and 18 years of age, with an average nightly attendance of approximately 70 young people. The Centre operates five evenings each week, including Sunday, and two afternoons. The staff provide a range of activities and programmes reflecting the youth work curriculum that are well matched to the abilities and interests of the young people attending the Centre. The Link, a local community group, also uses the Centre one afternoon each week.

1.3 The current full-time youth worker has been in post for eight years and returned to the Centre in September 2006 after a two-year secondment to another post within the BELB. In addition 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. At the time of the inspection the caretaker was on long-term sick leave.

1.4 As part of the arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care members of the inspection team held discussions with several groups of young people and parents. 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, which they made.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 The inspection found strengths in particular aspects of the Centre's achievements and standards.

2.2 The main strengths of the achievements and standards include:

- the sense of enjoyment and challenge experienced by most of the young people;
- the good level of motivation demonstrated by most of the young people;
- the good level of participation of most of the young people in the range of accredited educational and recreational opportunities;
- the good opportunities for older young people to collaborate with staff, making a valuable contribution to the programme delivery. This was well illustrated by the group of young people who represent member's views and suggestions through the member's forum;
- the excellent level of behaviour of most of the children and young people;

- the opportunities for the young people to develop their self-esteem, confidence and social skills. This was observed during the inspection with some young people contributing to nightly tasks and duties, and highlighted in discussions with parents who considered this to be a significant benefit of attending the Centre;
- the opportunities for some of the young people to progress to leadership and enhance their employability within the Centre through completing Open College Network (OCN) accredited training courses; and
- the young people's progress and achievements being recorded and celebrated within the Centre and through annual events which are well supported by parents and other adults within the local community.

### 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 particular aspects of the quality of provision for learning.

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

- the clear objectives for each session which the young people also understand;
- the involvement of the young people in planning for the Centre's programme giving them a good sense of ownership and the expectation of assuming a leadership role within the Centre;
- the support and challenge provided for the young people to take responsibility for their own development;
- the well-organised recreational activities for the young people resulting in their acquisition of skills and competencies including aerobics, football, Irish dancing, arts and crafts;
- the integrated methods to collect feedback and suggestions from the young people in relation to the programme areas, planned activities and specific outcomes;
- a safe environment for the children and young people attending the Centre;
- the good quality of mutual respect evident between the staff and the young people and amongst the young people themselves;
- the overall programme which reflects the youth work curriculum and makes effective use of the programme development cycle;

- the strategic use of external links to maximise the range of services available to the young people within the wider community;
- the good communication with parents to inform them about the Centre's programme and to consult with them to resolve specific situations; and
- the parent's support group, which has formed recently to raise funds for the Centre and promote the positive image of the Centre within the local community.

3.3 Child protection policies and procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and trained in child protection matters and to promote the young people's self-esteem and self-confidence. Parents do not receive a copy of the child protection statement nor are they advised how to make a complaint in relation to child protection. This needs to be addressed in order to comply more fully with the current child protection legislation.

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

4.1 The full-time youth worker manages the Centre efficiently and is supported well by the staff and the Area Youth Officer (AYO) to ensure the smooth operation of the provision. The inspection found strengths in particular aspects of the leadership and management along with a few areas for improvement that need to be addressed.

4.2 The main strengths of the leadership and management include:

- the good level of strategic planning initiated by the full-time youth worker in co-operation with the AYO and the staff;
- the ongoing valuable support and direction for the operational aspects of the Centre, including sufficient governance, provided by the AYO;
- the good range of skills and expertise provided by the staff which benefits the young people attending the Centre;
- the highly motivated staff who are committed to excellence and continuous improvement;
- the good level of understanding and acceptance by the staff, including trainee leaders, in delivering the youth work curriculum;
- the deliberate involvement of the young people in the evaluation of specific opportunities and experiences;
- the excellent leadership, support, and challenge provided for the staff by the full-time youth worker;
- the training needs identified by the staff and the subsequent support provided by the BELB; and

- the valuable contribution of older young people as volunteers and as role-models to younger members who aspire to having a leadership role in the Centre.

4.3 The main areas for development include the need for:

- strategic planning to develop quality assurance arrangements utilising current structures implemented by the BELB Youth Services;
- measurement of the young people's achievements and progress;
- current procedures (for example, the Key Results Areas and the Annual Report) to be evaluative;
- continued collaboration with the local primary school to maximise the benefits of the Extended Schools Initiative for the children and young people attending the Centre;
- a written record of the supervision and support provided for the full-time youth worker by the AYO;
- a formal appraisal procedure to ensure the ongoing professional development of the full-time youth worker;
- suitable equipment for younger children; and
- refurbishment and repair of the building.

## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 St Agnes' Youth Centre has major strengths in delivering the core curriculum, ensuring the personal, social and educational development of the young people attending the Centre. The educational and pastoral needs of the young people are being well met. The parents and the local community can have confidence in the Centre's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-up inspection is required.

## **APPENDIX**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- There is a need for external lighting especially at the front of the premises.
- There is a need to ensure that all fire extinguishers are tested regularly and are always operational.
- There is a need to ensure that the pedestrian gate to the Centre can be opened.
- There is a need to prohibit cars, other than those of staff, from using the Centre's driveway.
- There is a need to remove debris, including broken glass, from the grounds.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2007

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.