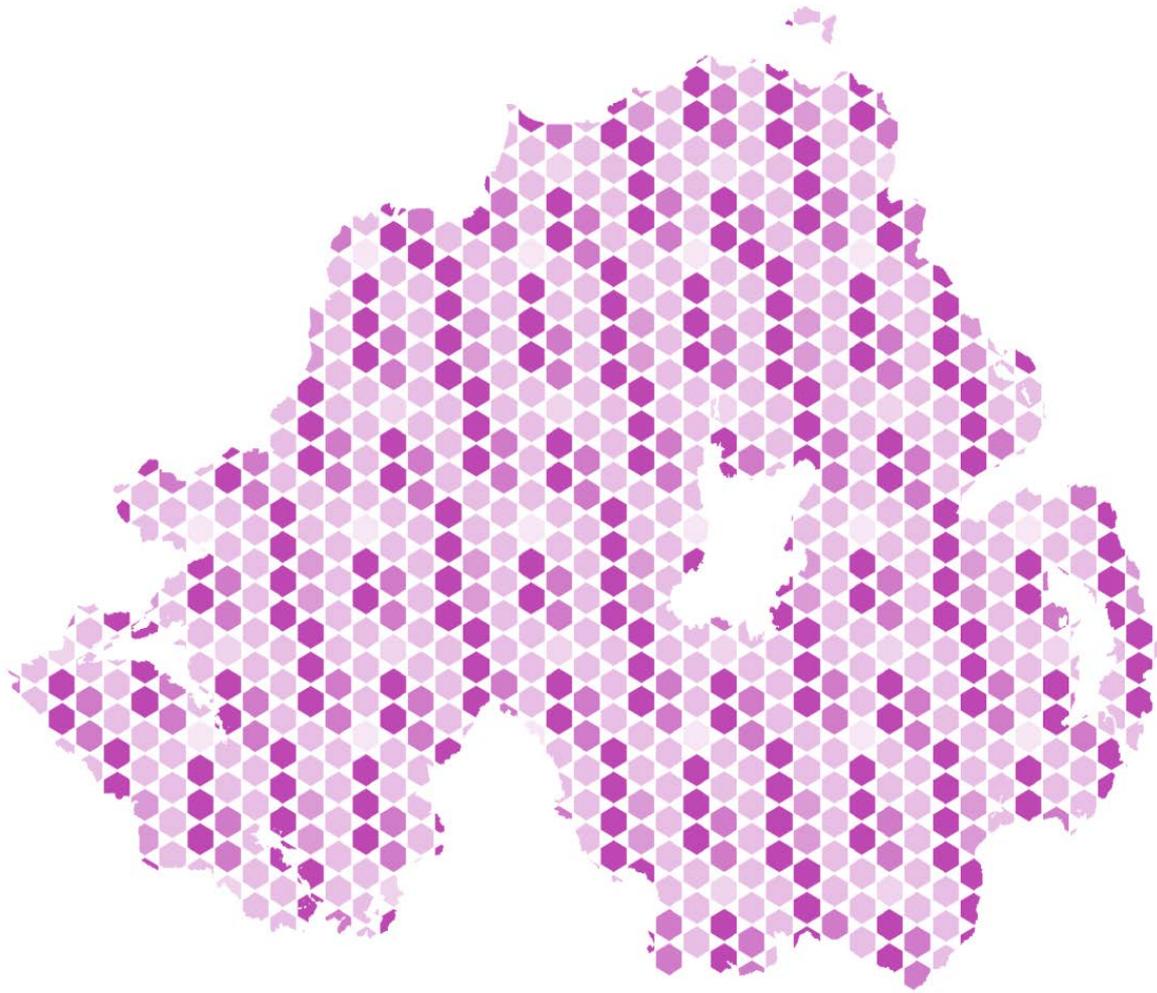


CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ulster-Scots Summer Schools

Report of an Inspection
in September 2012



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



Contents

Section		Page
1.	Context	1
2	Overall finding of the inspection	1
3.	Achievements and standards	1
4.	Provision for learning	2
5.	Leadership and management	2
6.	Conclusion	3

Focus and method of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the children's achievements and standards;
- the quality of provision for learning; and
- the quality of leadership and management including the organisation's processes for self-evaluation leading to improvement.

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) uses the following performance levels in reports:

Performance Level	Descriptor
Outstanding	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

1. Context

The Ulster-Scots Agency is a cross-border organisation jointly funded by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in Southern Ireland. Since 2007, the Ulster-Scots Agency has provided financial support to community and voluntary organisations to deliver summer schools. The groups who are successful in their applications receive funding from the Ulster-Scots Agency for 75% of their total eligible costs. In 2012, 25 programmes were funded; a total of £65,000 was allocated to groups.

The programmes last for one week and are targeted at children aged 7-16 years. According to data provided by the Ulster-Scots Agency, a total of 1200 children participated in the programmes. The key features of the programmes include: an Ulster-Scots language session; music workshops; drama; storytelling and cookery. The Education and Training Inspectorate inspected a sample of seven programmes in rural and urban locations across Northern Ireland, examined a range of documentation and spoke to staff and managers involved at all levels.

2. Overall finding of the inspection

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the Ulster-Scots Agency is good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the Ulster-Scots Agency has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the Ulster-Scots Agency's progress on the areas for improvement.

Summary of key findings

Overall performance level	good
Contributory performance levels:	
Achievements and standards	good
Provision for learning	good
Leadership and management	good

3. Achievements and standards

The children's achievements and standards are good.

- In most of the Ulster-Scots Agency's summer programmes, the children are developing well their interests, knowledge and understanding; the learning opportunities enhance their personal and social development. In particular, the children learn more about themselves, their past and their communities.
- In the best practice, the children engage positively in the activities and enjoy making new friendships. The children's interests are engaged well through the good variety of practical activities, including, drumming, archery and accordion playing.
- Most of the children are acquiring a basic vocabulary in Ulster-Scots; however, for a small number of the children their poor recall towards the end of the week demonstrated that the learning had not been sufficiently well developed and embedded. The tutors need to focus more strongly on the children's learning in the language sessions, in particular, their acquisition and progression in knowledge, skills and understanding.

4. Provision for learning

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

- The quality of the seven programmes observed ranged from satisfactory to very good; a majority of the sessions was good. In most of the programmes, the quality and the range of activity and group work programmes are good, and the staff use well a variety of approaches to encourage creativity and learning. In the best practice, the tutor involved all of the children, assessed very quickly the level of skill, and matched the activities to the children's abilities.
- The use of drama to promote learning, understanding and the development of creative skills was very good. The tutors prepared thoroughly and were highly skilled in their facilitation of the drama workshops.
- In almost all of the programmes, the provision for Ulster-Scots language development is led by staff from the Ulster-Scots Agency. In a small number of the programmes, the staff were unprepared for the very young age of children participating, and some of the children found it difficult to understand aspects of the history and language sessions. In a significant minority of the group work sessions, the planning needs to take greater account of the age range of those children involved.
- The children and the staff report that they enjoy participating in the project and that they acquire a greater knowledge and understanding of the Ulster-Scots language, history and culture. The staff who are not employed by the Ulster-Scots Agency, require further support and training to improve their knowledge and confidence in the use the language.
- In the majority of the groups visited, the staff discuss with each other how to improve the programmes for the children; they also complete a final evaluation report for the Ulster-Scots Agency. However, the children are not engaged sufficiently in processes of self, peer and group evaluation to contribute effectively to the development and evaluation of the programmes.

5. Leadership and management

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

- The Ulster-Scots Agency leads and manages the scheme well and has established effective, mutually beneficial partnerships with community organisations, youth centres and schools. These groups report high levels of satisfaction and state that they are supported well by the Ulster-Scots Agency. To improve further the range and the quality of the programmes, the funded groups recognise appropriately the benefits of sharing their best practice with one another.
- All of the groups delivering the programmes have established effective links with other organisations in their locality, and make very good use of their expertise and experience. For example, the summer drama school, established very good links with local historians, museums, and musicians.

- The Ulster-Scots Agency has a clear rationale for the summer schools, which is understood well by the funded groups. There are expected learning outcomes, which are clearly specified at the application stage, and reflect well the learning strategy promoted by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.
- The staff in the Ulster-Scots Agency are committed to a process of continuous improvement in respect of these programmes. However, they need to develop further the self-evaluation processes to review the provision more robustly to effect improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the organisation has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, but the following minor areas need to be addressed: all groups should give parents adequate information on how to raise concerns; and there is also a need for the Ulster-Scots Agency to produce a clear code of conduct and good practice guidelines for tutors.

6. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the Ulster-Scots Agency is good. The Ulster-Scots Agency has important strengths in most of its provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the Ulster-Scots Agency has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the organisation's progress on the areas for improvement.

The key areas for development are:

- to develop further the self-evaluation processes, to review the provision more robustly to effect improvement in the quality of the provision;
- to develop further the Ulster-Scots language capability of the staff working within the funded groups, and to produce good practice guidelines, including a code of conduct for tutors; and
- to focus more strongly on the children's learning in the language sessions , in particular, their acquisition and progression in knowledge, skills and understanding.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2012

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 ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

