Education and Training Inspectorate

Brownlow Area Youth Project

Report of an inspection in Month 2018

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The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CSE

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1. Context

Brownlow area youth project (project) is a statutory Education Authority (EA) youth provision with an administrative base in Brownlow youth resource centre in Craigavon. There are three separate youth centres, Tullygally, Drumgor and Brownlow which provide youth services to young people across the project area. There have been a number of management changes in the past few months. Currently, there is a senior youth officer (SYO) who has overall responsibility for the senior management of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area who is in a temporary short term appointment to lead the project. A recently appointed senior youth worker manages the full-time centre-based youth worker and an area youth worker. There are two part-time youth support workers-in-charge, nine assistant youth support workers and ten volunteers across the three centres. There are six extended provision youth workers who work in two of the three centres which provide additional programmes at the weekend.

According to figures supplied by the project there are 474 members registered with the project in 2017-18 which indicates an increase of around 25% in the last three years. At the time of the inspection there was an average of 17 young people who attended each of the sessions observed.

2. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for the young people;

- the quality of the provision; and

- the quality of leadership and management.

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

4. Outcomes for learners

The project has raised the attainment of young people through their achievement of appropriate accredited qualifications and participation in non-accredited training and experiences that are relevant to their identified needs. Over the last two years, 126 young people at Key Stage 4 from two neighbouring post-primary schools have achieved an accredited Level 2 personal success and wellbeing qualification, as part of the Learning Together Programme (LTP). In addition, 37 Key Stage 5 young people have completed an accredited Level 1 Peer Mentor programme with 100% successful completion rate. The young people involved in this programme are excellent role models for their peers, the young people report that they engage more positively in their school community and see their learning in a more holistic way. The year 8 young people report that the LTP supported their transition to post-primary education. Over the last 12 months 22 young people have also completed an accredited Level 2 qualification in understanding social media while attending the excellent Xtreme FM project[1]. Approximately 400 young people participated in a wide-range of

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[1]   Xtreme FM is a youth and community radio station produced by young people from all across Craigavon

non-accredited programmes over the last two years. For example, intergenerational projects, inclusion and positive mental health programmes which are relevant to their identified needs. Most of the accredited and non-accredited programmes have a high success rate and a high level of attendance.

The young people make good progress in the development of their communication skills which supports effectively their personal and social development. They take increasing responsibility for, and enjoy managing their own learning. While a small minority of the young people progress from participation in the project to taking on leadership roles, the information available to the young people about the pathways and progression routes to leadership need to be clearer. Almost all of the young people listen respectfully and moderate their views in response to the contributions of their peers. As they progress, they develop flexibility in their thinking and demonstrate inclusive values and behaviours, responding with enthusiasm to the learning opportunities provided for them.

The young people are articulate, motivated and well-rounded; they develop highly effective dispositions to learning and skills development including personal commitment, team-work, perseverance and respect for others. They have a strong sense of personal and social responsibility, and in advocating on behalf of others and demonstrate collaborative working which was evident during the discussions with young people from PRISM[2] and Xtreme FM.

5.   Quality of provision

The curriculum provision for the young people appropriately responds to a range of issues identified in an area wide consultation involving over 1000 young people in 2017; including programmes addressing positive mental health and well-being issues, bullying and risk taking behaviours. While there is a good variety of programmes on offer to the young people, there is need to increase the number of different participants enrolled in them, and to broaden the curriculum further by increasing the number of accredited programmes. The young people are encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their learning, including a review of their resources. For example, the good use of the 'Radio Wheel' during the Xtreme FM programme which has been appropriately adapted to create a more effective scaffold for the young people to plan their input together.

The quality of the youth work practice ranged from having important areas for improvement to outstanding, with almost all of the sessions evaluated as good or better. In the most effective practice, the young people are involved in the planning of their activities, facilitated well in groups by the youth workers who use skilful questioning to encourage them to share their views and opinions in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. As a result of the positive interventions by the youth workers the young people are learning and understand the outcomes they achieve. In the less effective practice, the learning is led mostly by the youth worker and the young people are not provided with clear enough guidance on their roles and responsibilities within the session. In a small minority of the sessions observed there is a lack of structure and challenge and the low level of activities allow for limited input from the young people to progress their learning.

Importantly, the young people are supported effectively by the staff, to plan, deliver and evaluate their programmes, confident that their contributions will support better their learning. For example, there is a good emphasis on equality and inclusion of young people, which is a key strength of the project, as demonstrated by the young people involved in the PRISM group. The staff have a good understanding of the young people's needs, their barriers to learning and use local knowledge to provide the necessary support and guidance. The project has

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[2]   PRISM is an EA Youth Service Project, dedicated to providing a youth group, information and support to LGBTQ+ young people and those around them.

also developed positive working relationships with young people who have special educational needs and the staff worked sensitively with the young people using appropriate intervention strategies. There are effective links developed with Action Mental Health, Action Deaf Youth and with newcomer children. The good promotion of this work supports well the personal and social development of the young people which is central to equality and inclusion. Going forward it is important that the project develops further, programmes that address community relations with young people who identify as Protestant in the Brownlow area.

While the youth worker's evidence files include some good evaluations, there remains a need to develop a more consistent approach to recording evidence, for example, identifying more opportunities to share good practice.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the project's approach to the care and welfare of the young people impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners. There are excellent working relationships throughout the project which reflect strongly the core and shared values, particularly the inclusion of all of the young people. The young people engage enthusiastically in the sessions and demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and motivation.

6.   Leadership and management

Due to the reorganisation of the management structure across the EA from September 2018, there have been a number of changes that has affected the strategic delivery in the Brownlow area. While there is a relatively new management team in place they have a good understanding of the key issues for the young people and they are focused on managing the delivery of a high quality service.

A detailed area plan appropriately guides the delivery of youth work across the area and provides a clear strategic vision for the future direction of the work with young people which reflects well the Department's 'Priorities for Youth' policy. While the project has identified key targets in the controlled delivery agreement they are not measurable enough. The baseline position of each of the targets need to be clearer so that the necessary actions to promote improvement can be measured more effectively. There is a need to develop a controlled delivery agreement for all of the full-time staff in the project so that they are clear about their current and future roles and responsibilities.

While the systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the project are understood by all of the staff, the process of self-evaluation leading to improvement is underdeveloped. The recently revised target monitor is not capturing effectively enough the necessary outcomes to inform future planning. The experienced staff team work collegially and have appropriately identified the need for further training on dealing with challenging behaviour. In addition, the staff team would benefit from the further development of critical reflection across their work.

The purposeful partnerships are adding value to the strategic youth work delivery across the area including, Brownlow Youth Providers Forum and Craigavon Travellers support group and a recently developing partnership with the community and adolescent mental health support team (CAMHS). The partnership with CAMHS is led by the young people from the PRISM project who identified the need to provide additional support for other young people from across the area who are struggling with problems as a result of mental ill health. The strategic partnerships with two local post-primary schools is very effective. The principals and link teachers spoke highly of the youth service involvement and the positive impact the youth workers are making with many of the young people who present with additional learning needs. The co-working model is benefitting both the teachers and youth workers through the sharing of teaching methodologies and by planning, delivering and evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes together.

7.   Safeguarding

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. However, the project needs to address the policy for signing visitors in and out of the Brownlow centre. The young people report that they feel safe in the organisation and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

8.   Overall effectiveness

Overall effectiveness

The Brownlow area youth project has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners.

The areas for improvement are the need to:

- increase the number of different participants enrolled in the various programmes;

- develop further the pathways and progression routes to leadership for the young people; and

- create sharper, more focused and measurable targets in the controlled delivery agreements for all of the staff, to inform future planning more effectively.

The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

Statistical data

Table 1: Total Membership

Age group	4-8		9-13		14-18		19-21		22-25		Outreach/ Detached		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2015/16	16	13	53	50	100	128	8	13	*	*			383
2016/17	19	14	83	79	80	77	6	9	*	*			373
2017/18	20	23	120	125	92	82	*	*	6	*			474
Current	20	23	62	88	67	103	*	6	*	6			383

Source: data as held by the organisation. * fewer than 5.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website at The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework (ISEF): Youth

Inspectors observed youth work sessions and also held focus group discussions with the young people. The inspectors held discussions with representatives of the EA management, staff, young people and other stakeholders. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised the youth workers' planning and the organisation's self-evaluation reports. The inspectors evaluated the organisation's arrangements for safeguarding young people.

Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievements and outcomes, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation.

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.