

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Lagmore Area Youth Project,
Belfast

Report of an inspection in
September 2016



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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 Achievement and standards, 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 the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	1
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	2
7. Leadership and management	3
8. Overall effectiveness	4
Appendix	

1. Inspection method and evidence base

A team of three Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspectors observed a total of 84 young people in nine youth work and school based sessions. The inspectors held discussions with Education Authority (EA) officers, full-time and part-time staff and young people. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised the youth workers' evidence files and the organisation's self-evaluation reports. They also observed one Learning Together Programme¹ (LTP) in a local post-primary school, and evaluated the organisation's arrangements for care, support and for safeguarding young people.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of youth organisations, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self-evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/together-towards-improvement-a-process-for-self-evaluation-youth-sector.pdf>

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all young people, the purpose of inspection is, through effective linking of internal and external approaches, to evaluate the:

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

3. Context

The Lagmore Area Youth Project (the project) is managed by the EA and is located within the Colin area of Belfast. The project, which has no permanent premises, makes use of the nearby Mount Eagles Community Centre and the Colin Youth Development Centre in Poleglass. The staff team also provides youth work programmes for the young people in outreach and detached settings in the Lagmore area on one evening each week.

According to figures supplied by the organisation, there is a current membership of 54 young people; during the week of the inspection, the average nightly attendance was 25. The project employs one full-time area youth worker, and a team of eight part-time paid youth support workers. There are no voluntary staff working within the project at present.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

¹ The *Learning Together Programme* is a collaborative working partnership between individual schools and the Youth Service at key stages 2-4.

5. Achievements and standards

The number of senior members attending the project is too low; the recruitment and retention strategies are not currently addressing the needs of the young people across the area. In addition, there is limited participation of senior members in purposeful and planned volunteering activities. While the young people are keen to re-establish the Lagmore Youth Forum, this has not been facilitated quickly enough by the leadership.

In discussion with the young people, they state that they would like to be involved in more community relations work and residential learning experiences to progress their learning further. Some of the young people who attended the Global Services Learning² (GSL) programme are very keen to continue this work in a more local context; for example, to look at the issue of homelessness in Belfast.

In the school-based sessions, the young people are achieving the relevant Open College Network Level 2 qualification; they are focused, attentive and readily seek clarification when tasks are unclear. To progress their learning further, they require greater opportunities for group discussions and more challenging activities matched better to their abilities.

The members have good communication skills and they engage effectively with the staff and their peers. Across all of the programmes, the young people are friendly, articulate and participate well in the good range of recreational and issue-based programmes, including the well-attended summer programme.

The junior members apply their creative skills in the arts and crafts sessions and they enjoy the wide-range of age appropriate activities available in the Colin Youth Development Centre. They are motivated and most are able to respond appropriately in a range of situations, using resilience, persistence and commitment.

There are opportunities for a small number of senior members to develop skills and receive appropriate accreditation which is helping them to influence change in their organisation and in their community. For example, in the GSL programme the young people talked with confidence about what they had learned and how they were developing their role as global citizens. Those involved in the Together: Building United Communities³ programme informed members on the inspection team about widening their understanding and increasing their knowledge of cultural difference.

6. Provision for learning

The quality of the youth work sessions observed ranged from very good to having significant areas for improvement.

In almost one-half (44%) of the sessions there were significant areas for improvement identified. These were characterised by insufficient planning for and evaluation of, the outcomes for the young people, and in the group work sessions, the pace was too slow, and there were many missed learning opportunities. In addition, the facilitation skills were underdeveloped, resulting in unclear exposition and ineffective use of questioning to extend learning.

Global Service Learning is a cross-cultural, experiential education programme, where young people and organisations collaborate with diverse community stakeholders to address social problems and issues in the community.²

³ Together: Building United Communities is a government funded strategy committed to improving community relations and building a united and shared society.

The school-based work requires significant improvement to ensure that the pupils are engaged fully in their learning through clear explanation of tasks, more effective use of questioning and activities to extend their learning. The teachers support the youth work staff and their pupils well throughout the lesson through effective interventions which enable learning to take place. It is important that the teachers and youth workers work together to plan the weekly programme and to evaluate the pupils' progress.

In the more effective practice observed, the staff engage the young people confidently and enthusiastically through a range of youth work strategies using effective facilitation skills. For example, in the anti-bullying session, the staff connected the young people's prior learning to the current programme; and in the outdoor education session, the young people were challenged to try new activities and work together developing both team work and leadership skills. The junior members programme, was well prepared, challenging and engaged all of the young people attending.

The cohesive, experienced part-time staff team motivate and encourage the young people's participation, irrespective of their background or ability. In the pre-session and post-session briefings, the staff understand clearly their roles and contribute insightfully. For example, all of the staff were able to reflect and give examples of how they had used the theme of friendship in their work to develop the relationships among the young people. However, the debriefing session is too long and requires a more focused, succinct discussion.

The quality of the care and support of the young people is good. The youth workers know the young people and their families well and deal swiftly and effectively with any incidences of challenging behaviour. There is mutual respect between the young people and the youth workers, with good humoured exchanges a key feature of the most effective engagements.

7. Leadership and management

While the current work is guided well by identified and agreed priorities in the EA Area Development Plan, the project's Curriculum Delivery Agreement does not focus clearly enough on the actions required to progress and improve the programme delivery. The Curriculum Delivery Agreement is not coherent and does not contain an appropriate evaluation of the previous year's action plan, or clear timescales for the targets set. Furthermore, there is insufficient detail on aspects such as the planned collaborative partnerships with schools and the re-establishment of the Lagmore Youth Forum.

The current methods of evaluation do not have a clear focus on what the young people are learning. There are monitoring systems in place, but there is limited evaluation of the effectiveness of the overall provision, in particular, the quality of the youth work practice and the quality of learning and outcomes achieved by the young people.

The process for self-evaluation leading to improvement is underdeveloped, with insufficient monitoring of the effectiveness of the group work and the impact of the programmes on the young people's development. Currently, the young people are not involved sufficiently in the planning and self-evaluation of the governance arrangements, and future development of the project.

The project plays an important part in the overall strategic youth development for the greater Colin area. There is a clear vision for the future development of the youth services across the area that has effective community engagement and collaboration.

There is a long-standing, positive working relationship with a local post-primary school, which is valued by both the school and the youth service. This collaboration has resulted in the development of shared education programmes between the schools and the youth service; for example, the GSL programme.

There is an effective system of support and supervision for the part-time staff to effect improvement in their training and development. The staff team have created an inclusive environment throughout the project which reflects the diverse needs of the young people.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the Lagmore Area Project has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. In discussions with the inspection team, the young people reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

The Lagmore Area Project needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. In particular there is a need:

- to evaluate more effectively the overall provision, including the quality of the youth work practice and the quality of learning and outcomes achieved by the young people;
- to make more effective use of facilitation skills to develop purposeful relationships with the young people consistently across all of the group work sessions; and
- to increase the participation of senior members in more meaningful and planned volunteering activities and to engage in the governance of the organisation.

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 in 12 to 18 months.

Table 1 - Total membership

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19 +		Numbers involved in outreach/detached	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2013/14	48	31	40	32	7	5				163
2014/15	31	42	50	45	22	6	*			197
2015/16	21	30	45	43	13	9			12	173
Current	5	11	13	6	*	0			18	54
Summer	16	13	21	23	5	*				79

* Denotes number fewer than 5

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