

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Londonderry YMCA

Report of an inspection in
October 2016

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 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.

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

A team of three inspectors observed a total of 92 young people in nine youth work sessions and also held three focus group discussions with the young people. The inspectors held discussions with a small number of parents, representatives of the management committee, the Education Authority, a local school principal, and the youth staff. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised the youth workers' planning and the organisation's self-evaluation reports. The inspectors evaluated the organisation's arrangements for care, guidance and 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: <https://www.eti.gov.uk/publications/together-towards-improvement-process-self-evaluation-youth-sector>.

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 Londonderry YMCA¹ is located in Drumahoe and is a full-time youth provision managed by a local management committee; it is funded primarily by the Education Authority. The centre, which is part of the national YMCA organisation, also provides extensive community and sports programmes, on a 20 acre site. The management committee employs two full-time youth workers, a team of eight part-time paid youth workers and two volunteers.

The centre is open five evenings each week and also has extended youth provision² in the nearby Tullyally area. The young people who attend the centre, or are engaged through outreach work, are aged 4 to 25 years. According to data provided by the organisation, the average nightly attendance of young people during the inspection was 41. The membership of the centre has increased substantially over the last three years, from 182 young people in 2013-2014, to 312 registered young people in 2015 to 2016.

¹ Young Men's Christian Association

² Extended Funding provided by the Department Of Education to the Education Authority, supports youth organisations within disadvantaged areas, through for example, additional and extended opening hours at the weekend and outreach/detached youth work.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

The young people were consistently focussed, attentive and engaged fully in all of the group work sessions. In their accredited and non accredited programmes, they are developing a range of skills, which they view as beneficial to their formal learning experiences and life skills. In discussions with the young people, they talked enthusiastically about their participation in several issue-based groups, where they recognised the impact on their learning and understanding. For example, they discussed their participation and learning through the summer programme 'Opening Young Eyes to Global Issues', which focussed on recycling and renewable energies.

In the relationships and sex education session, the young women worked best when in small groups and consequently were more at ease with one another exploring sensitive issues. In the bigger group, they were more reticent to speak out and less confident to ask questions and seek clarification. In their own chosen peer groups, they worked well together to debate and select pertinent questions relating to the topic, that would help them progress further in their understanding of issues around sexual health and relationships.

The junior leaders were highly involved in the organisation of the summer programme; in particular, they took responsibility for organising programmes for the younger members alongside the staff. In the junior leaders training, the young people demonstrate excellent levels of engagement in the activities, which are developing effectively their listening and social skills, including team-working.

Similarly, the young people engaged in the Buddy and Peer Mentoring programmes participate in a range of youth work roles, where they apply and develop further their leadership skills. These young leaders are developing well their self-confidence and self-esteem, and their ideas are valued by the staff.

The junior members enjoy an excellent programme, which develops their creative and team-work skills and is matched effectively to their needs and interests. Their engagement in the centre commences from the age of four and this early association is growing a long-standing membership of teenagers and adult leaders, who have a strong sense of ownership and belonging to the centre.

A majority of the junior leaders achieve an OCN³ Level 1 qualification in youth leadership. Almost all of the Job Club participants in the extended provision have progressed to employment, further education or training within the past year.

³ Open College Network

6. Provision for learning

The quality of the youth work sessions observed ranged from outstanding to having important areas for improvement; almost all of the youth work practice was of a good or better standard. The staff have a clear understanding of the purpose of youth work and use well their excellent facilitation skills to enthuse and motivate the young people to participate in new experiences.

The curriculum for the centre is broad and appropriately balanced, with a very good range of issue-based and recreational programmes. Across the programme of activities, the young people are involved in learning experiences which are purposeful with clear outcomes. The staff focus appropriately on the development of new skills and knowledge, working very effectively as a team to plan and evaluate the outcomes for the young people. The nightly staff debrief is particularly reflective, well facilitated and leads to improvement in the quality of the experiences for the young people.

The staff encourage the young people to develop their ideas for projects and work alongside them, modelling a strong sense of pride in their achievements. For example, through the creation of a recipe book, the young people are developing their cookery, budgeting and fundraising skills.

The staff have excellent links into their local community, which has improved relationships between the young people and adults. The involvement of the young people in a recent community safety event demonstrates positive community relationships among the young people, their local community and statutory services, such as the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The staff and management have developed productive links with the Tullyally Community Partnership and deliver a range of programmes within the Tullyally area for 12 to 25 year olds. The staff have engaged significant numbers of young people in the new, highly effective Empowerment Programme and they are keen to build further the capacity of this nearby community to respond more effectively to the needs of the young people.

While the participative structures for the junior membership are particularly well developed, the staff and management plan to develop further the involvement of the senior members in the management and governance of the centre. The recent development of a quality assurance committee of staff, young people and management is well conceived and motivating all involved to develop further the quality of the overall provision for the young people.

There is an inclusive and young person-centered ethos, which is reflected in the mutual respect between the staff and the young people. The parents, who spoke to the inspection team, endorsed the very good quality of pastoral care provided by the staff and highlighted the excellent support for those young people who have particular learning difficulties.

7. Leadership and management

The management committee has extensive professional experience and expertise, which is well used to support effectively the operational and strategic development of the centre. Most of the management committee have attended the centre as members and now have a strong commitment to make their own contribution to the future development of the young people and their local community. They report that they receive high levels of support, such as accredited staff training, from the National YMCA to develop further their work with young people.

The various community, sport and youth programmes based in the centre, collaborate well and support one another to promote improvement across all of the provision. In addition, the effective and mutually beneficial partnerships which the management has with other organisations has secured additional resources and funding to enhance and extend the provision for the young people. Similarly, the well-established partnership with a local post-primary school is valued by both the staff and the school and is supporting the young people to gain additional opportunities for accreditation through the Learning Together Programme.

The management and staff have an appropriate focus on delivering innovative programmes which are inclusive and promote good community relations through shared learning opportunities. Their vision for the centre has young people very clearly at the heart of all of the work: “to create a society for young people where they can develop physically, socially and academically, participating as co-creators in our shared society.”

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, Londonderry YMCA 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 in the centre and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

Londonderry YMCA has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

APPENDIX

Table 1 - Total membership

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19 +		Numbers involved in outreach/detached	Total
2013/14	44	22	30	61	16	8	*			182
2014/15	49	37	73	58	10	5			32	264
2015/16	60	51	82	72	10	7			30	312
Current	40	42	51	61	6	6		*	31	239

* Denotes number fewer than 5

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