

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Northern Ireland Scout Council
(Scouts NI)

Report of an inspection in
January 2017



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



Contents

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Overall findings of the inspection	1
4. Outcomes for learners	2
5. Quality of provision	2
6. Leadership and management	3
7. Overall effectiveness	4

Appendices

- A. Statistical data
- B. Inspection methodology and evidence base
- C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

1. Context

The Northern Ireland Scout Council (Scouts NI) is a uniformed organisation, founded in 1908 for young people aged from 6 to 25 years. The Scout Association, which is based in Gilwell in England, is the governing body for Scouts in the United Kingdom.

Scouts NI is based at the Ardnally Scout Centre, on the edge of Belvoir forest in Belfast. While Scouts NI is financially autonomous, the National Scout Association offers extensive support, including the management of safeguarding arrangements. The individual scout groups use a wide variety of church and community settings to meet, and a small number own their facilities. In Northern Ireland, the organisation covers seven scout counties within which there are twenty scout districts.

The main purpose of Scouting is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

In Northern Ireland, the membership has grown steadily over the last 13 years and currently has 9,257 young people registered, supported by 2133 leaders. There are five main sections and age groups:

- Beavers - age 6 to 8 years
- Cubs - age 8 to 10 years
- Scouts - age 10 to 14 years
- Explorers - age 14 to 18 years
- Network - age 18 to 25 years

2. Focus of inspection

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

- evaluate the outcomes for the young people;
- evaluate the quality of the provision;
- evaluate the organisation's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and outcomes; and
- inform the organisation's planning for improvement.

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

4. Outcomes for learners

The young people achieve highly across all of the age groups, through a wide range of accredited and non-accredited programmes. The badge work, which commences with the Beavers and progresses through to the Explorers, contributes effectively to the young people's personal, social and academic development. From a very young age, the young people understand and can articulate clearly how their learning through Scouting benefits them: in school; on training programmes; in applying for university; and in their future career pathways. Through the higher level programmes, such as the Queen's Scout Award, the young people continue to attain challenging, valued and highly regarded leadership courses. In the last 18 months, 219 young people aged 16 to 18 years completed successfully a Young Leader Training Programme. Additionally, 140 young people aged 12 to 14 years completed Patrol Leader Training. At the time of the inspection, an awards ceremony in Craigavon highlighted the achievements of 174 young people who received the Queen's Scout Award and the Chief Scout's awards¹. The awards ceremony is an important and affirming feature in building further the aspirations, motivation and confidence of the young people.

Throughout Scouting, there is a clear progression by young people into leadership roles, with young people engaging and supporting one another at all levels. Most of the young leaders who met with the inspection team have a long association with Scouting, many were involved from the age of six. They cite numerous examples of how their engagement in Scouting has helped them to grow in confidence and to improve their leadership skills; and how their experiences were often a key factor in their success at job interviews. The peer respect, example and support offered by the young leaders, encourages others to work towards similar opportunities to build their own leadership skills and to 'give back' to others what they see as very beneficial experiences.

The young people are resourceful, resilient and consistently give of their best. They develop a range of Scouting skills, for example, camp craft preparation and map reading. When working together, they use their initiative and demonstrate that they are resourceful and enterprising in overcoming challenges. In addition, through the young people's participation in international learning experiences, their understanding of others and differing cultures is significantly enhanced. From July 2015 to Sept 2016, 546 young people participated in international exchanges, including visits to China, Austria, Iceland and Ethiopia. The young people readily welcome adventurous experiences and through their active engagement they develop increasing levels of independence and self-confidence. The Youth Commissioners spoke of their pride in advocating on behalf of the other young people and how their progression through the organisation prepares them very well for the next stage of their lives and for wider civic participation.

5. Quality of provision

Across all of the Scouting provision, the curriculum is well planned with an excellent range of progressive, age appropriate and interesting activities. The purposeful partnerships which Scouts NI has with other organisations support the development and delivery of an effective curriculum. The leaders create purposeful programmes which equip the young people to deal effectively with current and future challenges in their lives.

¹ The Queen's Scout Award is achieved by young people aged 16 to 24 years and the Chief Scout's Award is achieved by young people aged 10 to 14 years.

The planned and structured pathways for the young people's personal development and leadership skills are key strengths of the organisation. The training for young people and the adult leaders is reflective of the organisation's values and is well informed by the needs and interests of the young people. The quality of the training is regularly reviewed and evaluated, with participants' feedback used well to inform future training programmes.

The quality of the provision was good or better in all of the sessions observed; with a majority of 70% very good or outstanding. Young people are involved fully in the planning and delivery of the programmes. The leaders and young people set high expectations for their achievements and are continually focused on developing innovative and adventurous activities. In particular, through the 'Youth Shaped Scouting' programme, the young people shape their own adventures, take on responsibility, develop skills, make decisions and influence their own Scouting programmes.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the approach by Scouts NI to the care and welfare of the young people impacts positively on their learning outcomes. The leaders consistently provide excellent guidance and support to bring about high quality individual and group learning experiences. The young person centered ethos is evident in all of the interactions between the young people and leaders. The relationships between the young people and their leaders are respectful and focused on hearing the young people's views and acting upon them. In discussions with parents, they spoke highly of the skills their children were learning and the exciting range of adventure activities which their children enjoy.

6. Leadership and management

The leadership and management of Scouts NI have a coherent and strategic vision for the future development of Scouting in Northern Ireland. The strategic plan has clear, measurable targets which are reviewed and updated regularly at all levels; furthermore, there is a well-embedded focus on continuous improvement. While the leadership collates data on the higher level awards, badge work and other achievements at a local level are not collated centrally. The collation of information held at a local and district level would be useful to inform further the overall achievements of the young people across the organisation. The resources and accommodation, which Scouts NI works hard to secure and maintain, are of a high quality and support well the youth work provision and activities.

The highly experienced, well-informed volunteers who lead the organisation have a sound understanding of the young people with whom they work and are very committed to the empowerment of young people through Scouting. They meet regularly to review, and promote effective working practices. These volunteer leaders willingly assume a breadth of roles and responsibilities through their various commissioning roles, for example, as County Commissioners. They are a collegial and cohesive team who work together successfully to inform the strategic direction of Scouting.

Young people are highly involved in all levels of governance and are well engaged in decision making, including the recruitment of senior staff and volunteers, for example, the UK Chief Commissioner. Succession planning and sustainability is a key focus of Scouts NI; the readiness of the leaders to listen, to learn from the young people and to continuously try new ideas is a key strength of this organisation.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children and young people reflects broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. However, the following area needs to be addressed: the information about how young people and their parents raise a concern needs to be consistently and clearly displayed in all of the groups. The young people report that they feel safe in the organisation and that they are aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

7. Overall effectiveness

The Northern Ireland Scouts Council 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 A

Scouts NI Census 2016 to 2017 (*denotes numbers fewer than 5)

County\District	Total Young People and Adults 2016	Total Young People and Adults 2017	2016 Total Young People	2017 Total Young People
Northern Ireland	46	13	0	0
Crawfordsburn	0	20	0	0
Co Antrim	6	5	0	0
Antrim Dist	428	435	347	326
Lisburn Dist	864	977	713	763
Mid Antrim Dist	427	393	338	290
S E Antrim Dist	925	998	775	795
	2650	2808	2173	2174
Co Armagh	*	*	0	0
Armagh Dist	192	192	154	132
Lurgan Dist	285	267	221	219
Portadown Dist	421	380	359	322
	901	842	734	673
Belfast Co	26	7	0	0
East Belfast Dist	879	921	723	749
North Belfast Dist	392	443	332	315
South Belfast Dist	341	406	277	320
S E Belfast Dist	722	748	592	566
West Belfast Dist	280	366	213	240
	2640	2891	2137	2190
Co Down	*	*	0	0
South Down	501	507	400	371
North Down	1119	1195	942	923
Strangford	1259	1312	1016	1037
	2882	3016	2358	2331
Fermanagh	536	575	431	437
Co Londonderry	*	8	0	0
Mid Ulster Dist	386	413	319	316
Coleraine Dist	443	540	365	413
Londonderry Dist	227	239	184	190
	1060	1200	868	919
County Tyrone	675	756	556	564
TOTAL	11390	12121	9257	9288

Inspection method and evidence base

A team of 5 Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspectors and an associate assessor observed a total of 406 young people in 27 youth work sessions. The inspectors held discussions with volunteer leaders, Youth Commissioners, County and District Commissioners and members of the Board of Management, full-time and part-time staff and young people. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised the organisation's evidence files and the organisation's self-evaluation reports. They also evaluated the organisation's arrangements for care, welfare and for the arrangements for the safeguarding of 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 Outcomes for learners, on Quality of provision 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2017

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.eti.gov.uk