

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Malachy's Youth Centre,
Belfast

Report of an inspection in
February 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Context

St Malachy's Youth Centre is located in the Markets area of Belfast and is a full-time voluntary youth provision which was opened in 1965. The provision was reduced to part-time in 1999 and was re-established as a new full-time centre in 2013 on the current site. The youth centre is managed by a local management committee and is funded primarily by the Education Authority. The management committee employs one full-time youth worker, a team of eight part-time paid youth workers and six volunteers.

The youth centre is open seven days, including six evenings each week and also has an outreach youth provision on one evening in the local community. The young people who attend the youth centre, or are engaged through outreach work, are aged 6 to 25 years. According to data provided by the organisation, the average nightly attendance of young people during the inspection was 55. Over the last three years, the membership has increased steadily from 136 in 2013-14 to 219 young people registered currently.

2. Views of parents

In discussions with a small number of parents no issues were raised and they emphasised how they valued the work of the staff and the range of support that their children received.

3. Focus of inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for the young people;
- the quality of the provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

5. Outcomes for learners

The young people are involved in a range of accredited and non-accredited courses that are meeting effectively their identified needs. They are developing well their team work and interpersonal skills and are keen to engage in further learning experiences within the youth centre. A small number of the young people have completed successfully Community Relations Equity and Diversity training and 25 young people achieved basic first aid training. In addition, 11 of the senior members completed the bronze level of the Millennium Volunteers Award¹ successfully, which is enabling them to work more confidently with other young people in the centre.

¹ The Millennium Volunteer Award is a national programme that recognises volunteering by providing a certificate after the first 50, 100 and 200 hours of volunteering for participants aged 14 to 25 years.

The young people are involved in making decisions about the programmes facilitated in the centre. Through the senior members committee, they debate and discuss issues confidently and are aware of how to take action appropriately to affect and influence change. In particular, the senior members spoke appreciatively about how they benefitted personally and socially through the range of local and international residential experiences.

The young people, who are confident, articulate and converse easily with adults, participate enthusiastically in international work, community relations groups and creative activities, which widen their experiences and enable them to develop further their personal and social skills. Consequently, they enjoy working with and have respect for young people from different communities and cultural backgrounds. Those young people involved in group work are developing effective coping strategies and across the membership, the young people are building good resilience and interpersonal skills. In a small number of sessions, the young people are too easily distracted and need to be more swiftly re-engaged in their tasks or discussions.

6. Quality of provision

The curriculum is broad, balanced and well matched to the needs and interests of the young people; it is based on consultation with the young people and their parents, and takes into consideration other providers within the local community. The young people have appropriate opportunities to engage in the planning of the group work sessions and there is flexibility for staff to adapt the content of sessions to address the needs of the young people.

The staff provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for the young people to come together to socialise, make friends, be part of a team and to learn. There is an appropriate focus on making connections with the young people's formal learning, such as the book sharing library, the homework club and the Irish language group for junior members; all of which support the young people's learning in school. Similarly, the programmes for the senior members support them to build further their self-esteem, display respect for others and develop appropriated coping strategies to deal with the challenges that they face.

The quality of the youth work sessions observed ranged from very good to having important areas for improvement; most of the sessions observed were good or very good. In the best practice, the planning for the sessions guides well the activities and includes the intended learning outcomes. The youth workers make very good use of their interactions with the young people to support the development of their personal and social skills. There is an appropriate focus on learning in the plenary discussions and opportunities for the young people to identify what they want to learn in the next session. Going forward, it will be important that the staff record and use more effectively the session evaluations to inform further the future planning. In addition, there is a need to develop further the daytime provision.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the organisation's approach to the care and welfare of the young people impacts positively on their learning and outcomes. The staff and management provide a safe space for the young people who have a strong sense of belonging to the centre and to the wider community.

7. Leadership and management

The voluntary management committee has a range of appropriate experience and expertise to oversee the leadership of the centre. They are supportive of the staff and know well the issues facing the young people and this inner city community. They have a strong sense of ownership and are resourceful and committed to continuous improvement of the provision for the young people and their families. At present, the young people are not involved in the governance of the centre; however, the leadership are developing the young people's participation through their active and enthusiastic senior members' committee.

The leadership of the centre deploys well the staff team, who have a range of youth work experience and skills. In addition, the leadership has well-developed and beneficial partnerships, which support the range of programmes for the young people. The leadership has a well-informed understanding of the needs of the young people. They identify appropriately that they require additional training to develop further their quality assurance of the centre, in particular, the planning and evaluation of the young people's learning. In order to build further the capacity of all of the staff going forward, it is important that the staff share the best practice across the provision.

The action plan includes targets which focus appropriately on improving the health and well-being of the young people, their leadership skills and the capacity of the youth workers. The formative evaluation of this action plan requires improvement to affirm what is working well in the centre and to capture more fully the impact and outcomes of the programme on the young people.

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 organisation needs to ensure that the designated worker and the designated member of the management committee receive their training update as soon as possible. The young people report that they feel safe in the youth centre and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

8. Overall effectiveness

St Malachy's Youth Centre demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation sustains improvement. In particular, the need to develop further the quality assurance of the provision by the staff and the management.

APPENDIX A

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19-25*		Individual young people involved in outreach/detached	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2013/14	20	30	24	34	8	16	*	0	N/A	136
2014/15	32	53	47	24	14	11	0	0	N/A	181
2015/16	26	34	53	43	22	20	0	*	641	202
Current	29	41	57	49	24	19	0	0	1,054	219

Source: data as held by the organisation.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

Inspection method and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework which guides inspection and self-evaluation within youth settings is available on the ETI website [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Youth](#)

Inspectors observed 10 youth work sessions and also held focus group discussions with the young people. The inspectors held discussions with a small number of parents, representatives of the management committee, staff 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.

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