

YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Peter's Immaculata Youth
Centre, Belfast

Report of an inspection in
April 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
Department for Communities



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.

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1. Inspection method and evidence base

A team of two inspectors observed a total of 136 young people in 10 youth work sessions and also held a focus group discussion with the young people. The inspectors held discussions with representatives of the management committee, the Education Authority, the staff and parents. 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 Education and Training Inspectorate (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

St Peter's Immaculata Youth Centre is located in the Divis area of Belfast and is a full-time voluntary youth provision. The centre is managed by a local management committee and is funded primarily by the Education Authority. The management committee employs one senior youth worker, a team of 12 part-time paid youth workers and 6 volunteers.

The centre is open six evenings each week and also has outreach youth provision on four evenings in the local community. The young people who attend the centre, or are engaged through outreach work, are aged 8 to 25 years. According to data provided by the organisation, the average nightly attendance of young people is 33; since May 2015, the membership of the centre has increased substantially, from 67 to 178 registered young people.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	good
Provision for learning	good
Leadership and management	good

5. Achievements and standards

The numbers of young people attending the centre is growing steadily, following a period of significant staff changes and closure due to refurbishment. The young people are welcoming and easy to engage in conversations. Throughout the inspection, they were keen to inform the inspectors of their pride in their centre and the improvements they have enjoyed, particularly over the last year.

The young people talk openly about the complex social and personal issues which they have to overcome. They and the staff recognise the challenges which they face working and living within an area of such high social deprivation, characterised by low academic achievement and poor standards of health, including drug and alcohol issues. Within the centre, the young people feel safe and well supported to discuss and to reflect on how they can develop the necessary skills and dispositions to address their issues, and contribute positively to the improvement of their youth centre and local community.

During the inspection, the young people engaged in a range of informal and formal group discussions; for example, exploring their values, principles and the characteristics of effective leadership. Their debates were honest, thoughtful and challenging of one another. Current topics such as: the American elections; social issues in the nearby Falls Park; and sexual exploitation feature in their debates.

The young people are engaging increasingly in appropriate level 1 and 2 accredited courses with the Open College Network; in the last 12 months, they have completed successfully a total of 78 qualifications. They are proud of their achievements and also of their participation in the Millennium Volunteer Award¹, where 20 young people have achieved certificates for 50 to 200 hours of volunteering. The young people value and recognise the contribution which this makes to their current and future educational profiles. Through the development of their leadership and organisational skills, while participating in the courses, a small number of the young people have decided take on additional responsibilities as young leaders in their youth centre.

The young people also participate in programmes which enhance their entrepreneurial and employability skills. The collaborative partnership with the Apple Store in Belfast and Workforce Training Services (Workforce) is progressing well. The young people on the Workforce programme are learning new skills in mechanics and joinery, which benefit their future training and employment pathways.

In discussions with the senior members, they stated that they value highly the support, respect and care which they receive from their youth workers. While the junior members are lively and engage well with adults, they need further support to develop their social skills with one another; for example, through the staff encouraging them to listen, share and work more effectively in small groups to achieve their tasks.

The staff are working hard to establish a members forum; however, the young people need to be more actively involved in determining the function, structure and recruitment of their peers in this process. Similarly, in a small number of the group work sessions, the young people could have participated more effectively in the planning and evaluation of their discussions and projects.

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.

6. Provision for learning

The quality of the youth work sessions observed ranged from outstanding to having important area for improvement; almost all of the youth work practice was of a good or better standard.

In the best practice, the staff use their understanding and knowledge of the young people to tailor the discussions and learning; the programmes are well matched to the different needs, interests and abilities of the young people. Most of the staff team are relatively new to the centre and they work very well together. They prepare well for the sessions and follow through individually with the young people when very difficult situations arise.

In the less effective practice, the staff need to plan their work better to reflect the needs of the young people, with less focus on the achievement of tasks. They need to focus on how they plan to progress the young people's learning during each session, and to use this knowledge to plan and to inform their future sessions. Closer attention by the staff to reflect on their practice, involving young people in the discussions about their experiences, will help to inform the overall self-evaluation of the centre's work.

The staff have clear roles and responsibilities and deliver an engaging curriculum of group work programmes and recreational activities. In a short period of time, they have become a cohesive staff team with a clear understanding of the purpose of youth work. At the end of each evening, they discuss and critique the issues which have occurred, the intervention strategies and their future actions. The staff are appropriately challenged by the leadership to ensure that their work is consistently focussed on the needs of the young people.

In discussions with the staff and management, they are aware of the need to develop further the afternoon provision for the young people; following the recent closure for refurbishment, the afternoon programme has not yet recommenced. The team of staff engaged in outreach youth work on the streets nearby provides an important service to very vulnerable young people. In addition, they connect well to other community youth providers and the parents of the young people.

The curriculum reflects accurately the assessed needs detailed in the centre's annual planning document. The staff have a very good focus on helping to address the mental health needs of the young people and deliver a range of relevant programmes on health, sexual exploitation and drug issues. Furthermore, the centre provides local and international residential opportunities of which the young people speak highly. These experiences to travel and to learn about communities outside of their area contribute to the personal and social development of the young people and widen their understanding of other young people, cultures and communities.

The quality of the care and support of the young people is good. The staff and the young people enjoy the recently refurbished centre, which provides a welcoming, comfortable and stimulating learning environment. The young people and staff have mutually respectful, trusting and positive relationships at all levels. The staff are very good advocates and role models for the many vulnerable young people with whom they work; they give appropriate advice and support, and when required, refer the young people to specialist help and external agencies. The leadership of the centre has identified appropriately the need to keep the critical incident policy under review, so that each time the policy is implemented, it is reviewed, evaluated and updated where necessary. The parents, who spoke to the inspection team, value the range of opportunities which their children have and the support which the staff provide to both them and their children.

7. Leadership and management

The management committee and the staff are dedicated and committed to the future improvement of the centre, in order that it meets effectively the needs of the all of young people in the area, including those who attend the centre, and those who are engaged through outreach youth provision. The members of the management committee have relevant career experiences and community knowledge to support and manage the work of the centre. They understand the challenges which the staff and young people face and are keen to continue to support the young people and their community to address the many social issues which prevail.

The leadership have an appropriate focus on continuing professional development, which is developing well the programme delivery and increasing the skills and confidence of the youth work team. In the last year, there has been a willing engagement and significant investment by the staff in training to progress their professional development. While the staff training is very well facilitated and developing effectively the youth work skills of the staff, it is not accredited and therefore has limited value in contributing towards the participants continuing professional development profile.

The staff have established effective partnerships across the local community, which they use well to attract additional resources to benefit the young people. According to the staff and management, other statutory agencies report that the centre's interventions are contributing to lowering the rates of young people offending in the local area. While there is an inclusive ethos throughout all of the work of the centre, the staff are keen to develop further their work with young people who require additional support and to reach out to young people from ethnic and minority communities.

The Education Authority has supported the centre well through the provision of additional resources to enhance the programme development. The Extended Funding,² administered by the Education Authority, supports effectively the needs of the young people through the employment of additional staff to extend the centre opening hours and through the provision for outreach youth work in the local area. A thorough evaluation of this year's unit action plan by the centre management and the Education Authority is required to inform and progress the priorities for next year. To continue to improve the quality of provision, the management committee and the staff need to develop further and embed the processes of self-evaluation and the actions to promote sustained improvement.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the youth centre has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education; however, there is a need to review further the arrangements for the management of safeguarding records and address the use of mobile phones by members in the centre's internet policy. 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 and well-being.

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.

8. Overall effectiveness

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.

Table 1 - Total membership

Age group	4-9		10-15		16-18		19 +		Total young people registered in centre	Numbers involved in outreach/detached
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
2012/13	21	13	27	35	9	17	0	0	122	
2013/14	4	7	19	9	4	4	0	0	47	
2014/15	6	6	20	14	9	9	0	0	64	
Current	18	18	35	60	20	19	4	4	178	151

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