

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Lurgan Youth Annexe

Report of an inspection in  
December 2014

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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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% |

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

| PERFORMANCE LEVEL |
|-------------------|
| Outstanding       |
| Very Good         |
| Good              |
| Satisfactory      |
| Inadequate        |
| Unsatisfactory    |

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## 1. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

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

## 2. Context

Lurgan Youth Annexe is a full-time youth centre, located in the grounds of Lurgan Junior High School and is part of the Southern Education and Library Board's (SELB) youth service. The youth worker-in-charge is employed by the school and is jointly supervised by the principal of the school and the area youth officer. The centre has a staff team of 12 part-time staff and volunteers.

The membership of the centre has increased steadily over the last four years and currently 249 young people attend, aged from 7 to 21 years. The provision is open six evenings each week and receives extended funding from the Department of Education to increase the provision for young people not engaged in existing youth services.

## 3. Overall findings of the inspection

|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>      | <b>Very good</b> |
| <b>Achievements and standards</b> | <b>Very good</b> |
| <b>Provision</b>                  | <b>Very good</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>  | <b>Very good</b> |

## 4. Achievements and standards

- The young people are well involved in the planning and evaluation of the programmes. They avail of opportunities to assume leadership roles and many of the existing staff team have progressed through the centre. The young people enjoy and achieve well through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which requires extensive commitment at weekends.
- The junior members, who attend two evenings each week, enjoy the activities which they help to organise. During the inspection, these young people were observed organising their own programmes and enthusiastically engaging their peers in activities such as art and group games. A significant number of the young people aspire to become future leaders and are keen to develop further their leadership skills.

- The young people involved in community relations work have a sound understanding of their cultural backgrounds, and how their values influence their relationships with others. They value the friendships they have established with young people from different community backgrounds, and are keen to make a positive contribution to improving community relations in their communities. The young people are empowered for personal and social change through their engagement with their peers from other communities.
- Although a significant number of the young people are dealing with a range of complex issues, they are developing their personal and social skills to meet their own needs. The young people engage fully in group work and can articulate their learning. They develop a range of life-skills, including; planning, research, and organisational skills, as well as participating in programmes to support their physical and emotional development. Behaviours across the age groups are mostly well managed by the young people. They are positively influenced by their youth workers to become respected role models for other young people.
- The young people describe clearly the benefits of what they learn in the youth centre and how it supports and compliments their formal education. Through the school-based 'Learning Together' programme, the young people are able to articulate and identify their needs and strengths and are developing their self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience. They are fully aware of the support structures available to them internally and through external organisations.

## **5. Provision**

- The quality of the provision for learning was evaluated as very good. The staff agree with the young people a curriculum that is varied, engaging and relevant to their needs. They are fully aware of what they want to achieve with the young people, and are well prepared for the activities each evening. While the staff team meet nightly to review the programme, these meetings would benefit from a stronger focus on the young people's learning.
- In the junior section, the staff are highly organised and deliver an energetic curriculum matched to the interests and needs of the young people. In addition, there is very good support for the young people's personal development needs through the school based programme, facilitated by the youth worker.
- The provision has an appropriate focus on community relations work, which involves a mix of recreational, residential and group work programmes. These programmes are well facilitated by the staff, who have developed excellent working relationships with other youth workers from different communities. The programmes are challenging, progressive and matched to the young people's needs. In all aspects of the work, the youth workers model mutual understanding and trust.
- The young people and staff have developed an inclusive ethos across the provision. Young people who have moved to the area from other countries are accepted, well integrated and supported by the other young people.

- The young people have high levels of respect for the staff. They recognise the commitment, care and interest which the staff have in their welfare and enjoyment. The parents are supportive of the work of the youth centre staff, and report an improvement in their children's personal and social skills. The young people reported that they feel safe in the project, and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

## **6. Leadership and management**

- The staff and management of the SELB have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the local community and across the town of Lurgan. The project's Service Level Agreement analyses accurately the needs of the young people and is an effective document, which captures the keys priorities for the young people. The SELB monitors and evaluates the youth provision thoroughly; evaluations are incisive and highlight where practice is most effective.
- The curricular leadership of the centre is highly effective, with an appropriate focus on continuous improvement. The staff team are collegial and have a shared understanding of the purpose of youth work. They reflect on their successes and support one another well when challenging situations with young people develop. The well-managed environment develops young leaders, who respect, and are motivated by, the more experienced long-standing members of staff.
- The staff have established an excellent range of effective working partnerships with statutory agencies and community organisations, which are used well to benefit the young people. The staff advocate very well on behalf of the young people and show effective leadership in external committees, such as the Lurgan Town Project, where the worker-in-charge has a key leadership role. From discussions with the external partners, the staff are highly regarded and make a valuable contribution to improving the life experiences of local young people.
- The youth centre is an integral part of the adjacent post-primary school and has long-established positive working relationships. The school benefits from the youth work approaches used by the youth staff to engage, support and assist young people in addressing their barriers to learning.
- The youth centre has recognised the need to develop further the extended provision. Staff need additional professional development on planning and evaluating learning outcomes and the progress of the young people.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the organisation has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education, however, there is a need to update the safeguarding training for the designated staff.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the areas inspected, the quality of the overall provision for the young people is very good. Lurgan Youth Annexe is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the young people; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

**Table 1: Total Membership**

| Age     | 4-9  |        | 10-15 |        | 16-18 |        | 19-25 |        | Total |
|---------|------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
|         | Male | Female | Male  | Female | Male  | Female | Male  | Female |       |
| 2011/12 | 15   | 7      | 38    | 26     | 2     | 1      |       |        | 89    |
| 2012/13 | 35   | 17     | 83    | 63     | 21    | 5      |       |        | 224   |
| 2013/14 | 39   | 29     | 90    | 50     | 24    | 8      |       |        | 240   |
| current | 56   | 46     | 92    | 48     | 6     | 1      |       |        | 249   |

Total local population of young people aged 4-25 years [1530]

Percentage of local youth population attending youth centre/project: [16%]

**Health and safety**

- There is a need for the school and youth service to review the external lighting, and the parking area, at the Mourneview entrance to the youth annexe.



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