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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**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**St Michael's Youth Centre
Belfast**

March 2013

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF ST MICHAEL'S YOUTH CENTRE, BELFAST, BT11 9EH

The inspection in January 2011 highlighted the following strengths:

- the wide variety of programmes, which meet well the interests of the young people;
- the caring and supportive environment, which is reflected in the positive engagement and good behaviour of the young people;
- the good working relationships among the young people, and between the young people and the youth workers; and
- the dedication and commitment of the full-time youth worker, and his good understanding of the young people and their community.

The inspection identified the need for the improvement in the following key areas:

- the full-time youth worker to agree the planning for the centre programmes with the staff team and the young people, focusing clearly on developing the knowledge, skills and understanding expected of the young people;
- the full-time youth worker and the Area Youth Officer to carry out more robust monitoring and evaluation of the programmes, in order to assess and improve the quality of provision; and
- the management of the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) youth services to support further the professional development of the full-time youth worker and the staff team, with a particular focus on programme planning and group work skills.

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the centre has taken place:

- the full-time youth worker is on secondment;
- a part-time youth support worker-in-charge has been appointed from the staff team;
- staff training has been provided by the BELB Curriculum Support Unit; and
- repairs and refurbishment of the premises are ongoing, reducing access to the building and impacting on the nightly attendance.

The following are the most important improvements since the inspection:

- the increase in residential work including international travel and the number of young people achieving accreditation;
- the more regular emphasis by the staff on focused group work; and
- the opening hours have been extended.

The staff have shown commitment to continue to operate the centre in challenging circumstances and to sustain the strengths identified in the original inspection. The staff have begun to address some of the key areas for improvement.

The following key areas still need to be improved:

- the unit plan requires development based on more clearly identified outcomes, the assessed needs of the young people, and robust evaluation processes;
- greater opportunity should be provided for the young people to influence the planning of provision; and
- staff training to be implemented further to support both the development of programme planning and group work skills.

The quality of youth provision provided by St Michael's Youth Centre remains satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which need to be addressed if the needs of all the young people are to be met more effectively.

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