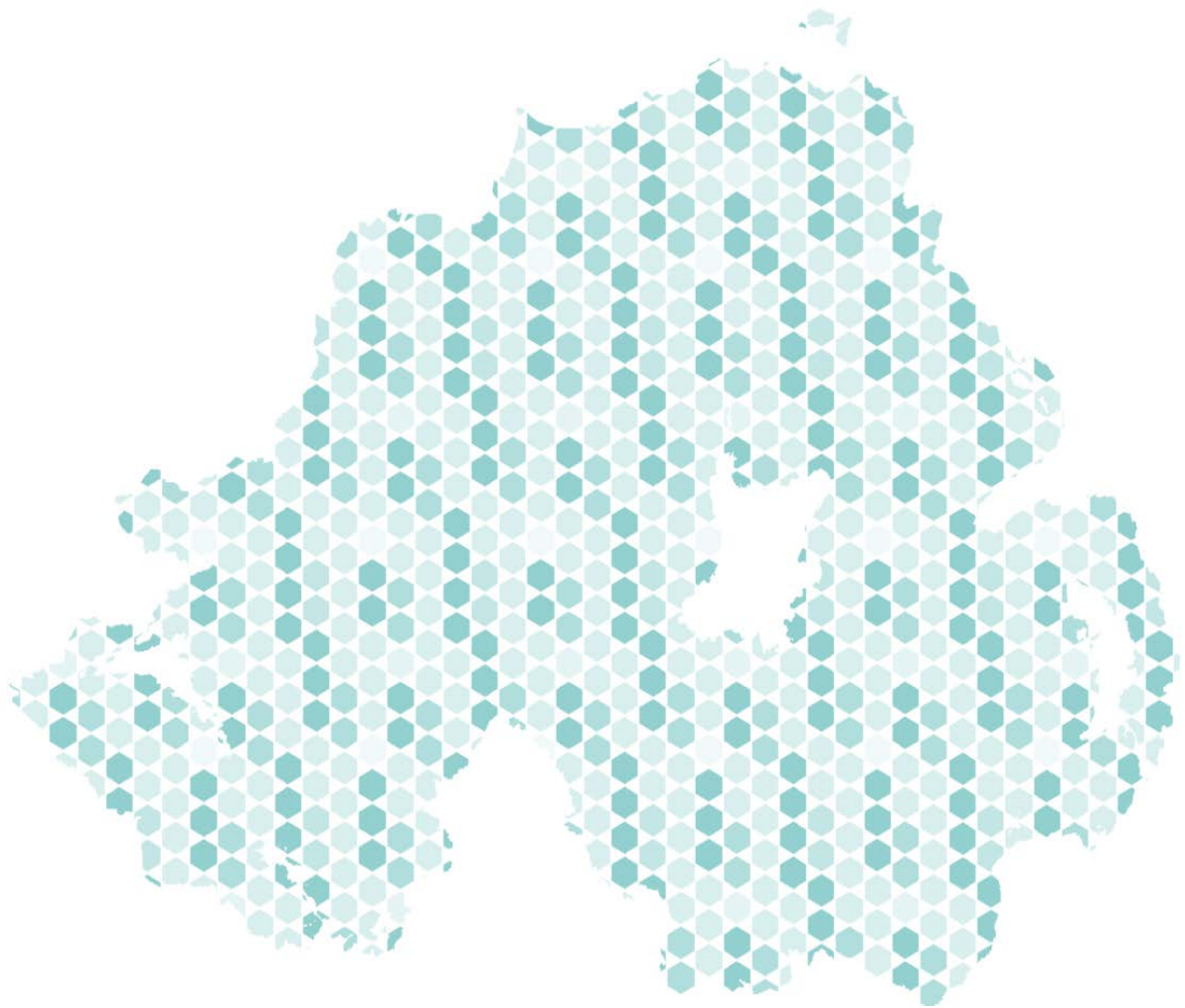


YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Laurelhill Youth Centre,
Lisburn

Report of an inspection
in January 2015

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 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

Laurelhill Youth Centre is located in the grounds of Laurelhill Community College in Lisburn and is a full-time youth provision managed by the South Eastern Education and Library Board. A senior youth worker, who has been in post for five months, manages the centre and staff; there are seven part-time youth support workers and four volunteers. The majority of young people are pupils of Laurelhill College; a small number of young people also attend from other surrounding schools and the South Eastern Regional College.

The centre is open on four evenings each week, including one evening for a small minority group of young people from the surrounding area. According to figures supplied by the organisation, the centre has a weekly attendance of 161 young people aged between 8 and 18 years, and has a total current membership of 247; these figures include young people supported in their school settings.

3. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Very good
Achievements and standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good

4. Achievements and standards

- The young people engage enthusiastically in the diverse range of programmes and activities in the youth centre; they value the very good opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of others. In particular, they are very involved in programmes which develop their creative thinking skills and encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles. In the mountain biking programme, the young people were observed extending their skills and eight young people achieved successfully a level one accreditation. The HEADZ¹ health programme demonstrated the young people's learning around mental health issues and the resilience exercises help them cope with life beyond the youth centre.

¹ HEADZ is a 30 hour health programme accredited through Open College Network

- As they progress through the centre, the young people become more aware of their learning. They develop self-confidence and self-esteem and are beginning to manage appropriately their own behaviour. The recent improvements made in the positive behaviour programme, including consultation evenings with the young people and a more consistent approach to dealing with poor behaviour, are impacting positively in the centre.
- The senior members come from a range of backgrounds and interests and display a willingness to engage with adults and to hold mature conversations. In the intermediate section, the young people demonstrate very good creative skills and good use is made of photography, arts and crafts, and information technology to stimulate and engage their interests.
- Through the school based Learning Together programme, the young people are achieving the OCNNI² level 2 qualifications which support their personal and social development. In the sessions observed, the young people spoke of their ability to learn key life skills more effectively in the non-formal situations, including coping strategies to help them overcome barriers to their learning.

5. Provision

- The quality of all of the youth work sessions observed was evaluated as good or very good. The very good quality of the session planning takes account of the individual needs and aspirations of the young people. The staff have a collegial understanding of their roles and responsibilities, there is a shared understanding of the rationale and purpose of youth work.
- The school-based youth work was of a consistently high quality, the youth worker engages well with the young people. There is a focus on learning and the style of teaching used motivates the young people. The youth worker makes effective use of her expertise and experience to work alongside the teaching staff to improve the learning outcomes for the young people.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is well matched to the identified needs of the young people; the complex needs of vulnerable and marginalised young people are well catered for. The staff consult formally and informally about the content of the programme with the young people. This on-going negotiation about the programmes results in an appropriate mix of recreational and issue-based provision. In addition, a range of specialist staff are used effectively to enhance the sporting and creative activities included in the curriculum provision.
- The quality of the pastoral care is very good. The young people enjoy good relationships with one another and the centre provides a safe and welcoming place for them to attend. The staff interventions and conversations with the young people were sensitive and appropriate, especially when dealing with challenging situations. A key feature of the pastoral care of the staff in this centre is their empathy and understanding for the issues facing young people. In discussions with the parents, they reported that the young people are well supported and looked after. 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.

² OCNNI – Open College Network Northern Ireland

6. Leadership and management

- The quality of the strategic and curricular leadership of the centre is highly effective. The leadership has assessed accurately and is meeting well the diverse needs of the young people. The planning at all levels is strategic and coherent, the area-based planning takes appropriate account of the curriculum and the leadership of the centre provides a clear strategic vision for the future direction of the work in consultation with the young people.
- The annual action planning process has recently been improved to include a more effective system of monitoring and evaluation, which is monitored appropriately by the senior youth worker on a quarterly basis. The South Eastern Education and Library Board's youth worker toolkit is used well to plan and evaluate all of the programmes. The leadership recognises the need for further analysis of the data to help scrutinise the pattern of attendance and increase the nightly membership.
- The staff are well deployed and the regular support and supervision gives them important feedback on their performance. For example, the pre- and post-session briefings are used well to help the staff plan and evaluate the outcomes for the young people and evaluate the overall effectiveness of their work.
- Through the well-conceived and long-standing partnerships with the post-primary schools, the leadership of the centre have developed mutually beneficial programmes to meet the needs of the young people. In addition, there is a relevant range of other partnerships which add value to the experiences of the young people.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the centre has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

7. Conclusion

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

APPENDIX

Table 1: Total Membership

Age	4-9		10-15		16-18		19-25		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2011/12	26	25	38	60	*	*	*	*	150
2012/13	66	81	42	56	*	*	*	*	247
2013/14	39	36	79	90	15	16	*	*	275
current	23	22	80	112	8	*	*	*	247

* Denotes numbers fewer than 5

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