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**Department of Education**  
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**Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **Education and Training Inspectorate**

### **Report of an Inspection**

**Ledley Hall Boys' and Girls' Club**  
**Belfast**

**Inspected: February 2009**

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## **1. CONTEXT**

1.1 Ledley Hall Boys' and Girls' Club (The Ledley) is a full-time voluntary youth centre situated in East Belfast within the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). The centre was founded in 1942, primarily as a Boys' Club, which promoted football and boxing for local boys and young men.

1.2 According to figures supplied by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the centre is in one of the most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland. The centre is situated in the Mount ward, one of the top 10% most deprived wards. In terms of educational attainment, 76.5% of school leavers within the area leave school with low levels of qualifications, compared to the averages of 56.5% in both Belfast and East Belfast. The young people of the area have, therefore, very particular needs, which should inform the provision made by the centre.

1.3 The centre is staffed by a full-time worker (FTW), a 20-hour worker and five part-time youth workers. The FTW has been successful in securing a range of funding to enhance the physical resources and appearance of the centre. In 2008, after consultation with the members, the name 'Ledley Hall Boys' and Girls' Club' was replaced with 'The Ledley'.

1.4 The FTW secured funding through the National Heritage Lottery Fund to employ a Heritage Project youth worker for 20 hours each week until November 2010. The young people are proud of the history of their club, in particular the sporting achievements. The Heritage Project youth worker is collating historical information, and is helping the young people to create a resource that will be displayed in the centre and on the Internet.

1.5 The centre aims to provide activities and programmes for children and young people between the ages of five to 23 years. There is no effective registration system and, consequently, accurate membership figures are not available. During the inspection there was an average nightly attendance of 61 young people, representing 7% of the local youth population.

1.6 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, and held discussions with representatives of the management committee and two groups of young people. Seventy questionnaires were issued to parents; 20 were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and four contained written comments. The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that the majority of parents value the work of the centre. The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported the main issues emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions to the FTW and representatives of the management committee. The young people enjoy the activities provided by the centre and from the discussions there is evidence that they are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

## **2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

2.1 The programmes observed were largely recreational including snooker, football, table tennis and dance. A small number of members benefit from coaching and skills development provided by a local football club, which uses the centre's outdoor facilities for weekly training.

2.2 During the inspection, two young men delivered short peer information sessions about the rules of football and confidence-building. They recognised the improvement in their own communication skills and their self-confidence. The young people with whom they worked engaged well with their peers and reported that their knowledge had improved as a result of the information sessions.

2.3 Eight young people from the centre are currently participating in a community relations programme facilitated by the Northern Ireland Children's Holiday Scheme (NICHHS). The NICHHS worker reports that these young people participate well in the programme. The participants spoke enthusiastically about their involvement in the range of group work activities, covering topics such as the Reformation, and the friendships they have developed with other young people from the nearby Doyle Youth Centre.

2.4 There is little evidence of opportunities for young people to achieve appropriate accreditation. During the inspection four young men were taking part in an Open College Network Level 1 youth work course.

2.5 A member of the management committee is in the process of establishing a members' committee to involve young people in the running of the centre. However, there is a general lack of opportunities for the young people to accept responsibility and to participate actively in making decisions about the work of the centre.

2.6 Although there were a few examples cited of the young people's involvement in other local youth groups, there is little evidence of the centre's involvement with the wider community.

2.7 While there are a few individual instances of young people making progress within selected tasks, there is negligible evidence of systematic planning for achievement or record of progress.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

3.1 Overall, the quality of planning for the work of the centre is poor. The planning for progression in the members' personal and social development, and in other important aspects of the youth curriculum, lacks rigour. The planning needs to identify more specific outcomes in the Strategic Plan and Key Results Areas for the centre, and to include the means of measuring the progress made by the young people. The FTW needs to plan more effectively with the staff for programmes and activities which will meet the needs and interests of the members.

3.2 The FTW spends the majority of his time on administrative and management tasks, to the detriment of developing an adequate programme for the young people attending the centre. There is a lack of age-appropriate programmes and activities, including suitable equipment and resources for younger children. It is inappropriate that mixed age groups, spanning a broad age range of six to 23 years, attend the centre at the same time. The centre needs to plan for more dedicated age-specific sessions.

3.3 The quality of youth work observed ranged from satisfactory to inadequate. Most of it is inadequate. Too often the staff supervise activities for the young people, rather than providing a planned and structured programme. A broader range of activities is required in

the sports hall; during the inspection the only activity observed was football. There is an inappropriate lack of supervision of the computer suite, allowing children and young people access to the Internet, including their own Bebo sites. The video room is also unsupervised and during the inspection children were observed playing video games which were not appropriate to their age.

3.4 The Heritage Project provides good opportunities for eight young people to research and record significant events within the centre's history. The young people are developing interviewing and research skills. The FTW reports that there is a minimal use of group work in the centre. During the inspection the Inspectorate observed some examples of recently initiated group work; the young people's behaviour was poor and it was evident that they were not accustomed to group work experiences.

3.5 There is little evidence of effective links with relevant partners and stakeholders including the East Belfast Area Project, the local schools and the local community groups which might benefit the young people attending the centre.

## QUALITY OF PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION

3.6 The working relationships between the workers and the young people are generally positive. The standards of behaviour and discipline observed were on a few occasions unacceptable. The centre does not have effective procedures to address difficult and challenging behaviour and the staff are inconsistent in their response to it. The centre does not implement its own policies in relation to the use of the Internet and the registration of young people. The provision for pastoral care in the organisation is inadequate and in urgent need of improvement.

3.7 The centre's arrangements for safeguarding children and young people are unsatisfactory and do not adequately reflect the guidance issued by DE. In particular, the centre needs:

- to review and fully implement its child protection policy and procedures, including the policies on the use of the Internet and registration;
- to inform parents about the arrangements for child protection;
- to provide child protection training for all staff including the designated member of the management committee; and
- to ensure that all staff and volunteers are vetted.

The Inspectorate will return within six weeks from the end of the inspection to ensure that these important matters have been addressed.

## 4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The leadership and management of the centre are inadequate. Strategic planning is poor and does not effectively demonstrate how standards may be raised and the quality of provision improved. The management committee, in conjunction with the BELB, needs to urgently review the poor provision for the young people attending the centre.

4.2 The management committee needs to review the roles and responsibilities at all levels of management to ensure the efficient deployment of staff, including that of the FTW, and to provide opportunities for the development of the staff.

4.3 The procedures for the monitoring of the provision by the BELB and the management committee are inadequate; they lack rigour, are not well documented or recorded, and have had a minimal effect on improving the provision for the young people of this area. Their needs are not being met effectively.

4.4 The strengths of the provision include:

- the effective fund-raising by the FTW; and
- the recent improvements to the sports and meeting facilities in the centre.

4.5 The key areas for improvement include the need:

- to address the inadequacies in the pastoral care and child protection policies and procedures;
- to provide a more relevant and appropriate programme that is planned with the young people, staff and management; and
- to review the roles and responsibilities of the management committee and the FTW.

## 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of youth provision in this organisation is unsatisfactory; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in planning and youth delivery, and in strategic management, which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the young people.

The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

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