



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Evaluation of Youthreach Provision Report

REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Crumlin Youthreach
andSeoladh na scoile/School address	Armagh Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	40479J
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	06-11-2023

What is an evaluation of Youthreach provision?

Evaluations of Youthreach provision are conducted in Centres for education and community training centres. The evaluations examine the extent to which the Centre is identifying and meeting the needs of the young people who attend it and the quality of the governance, leadership and management of the Centre. The Inspectorate provides advice and support to teaching staffs, resource persons, centre coordinators and centre management

How to read this report

During these inspection, the inspectors evaluate provision under the following headings:

1. Identifying and meeting the needs of the young people
2. The governance, leadership and management of the centre

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is included on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the Centre's provision in each area.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Actions of the centre to safeguard young people

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the child safeguarding statement are prominently displayed near the main door of the Centre / in the reception area.
2. The Centre's child safeguarding statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All learning practitioners visited have reported that they have read the Centre's child safeguarding statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as a mandated person.
4. The Centre's child safeguarding statement meets the requirements of Children First 2015.
5. The minutes of the last three board of management meetings contain a child protection oversight report.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all Centre personnel on child protection procedures in line with Children First 2015.
7. Centre planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, RSE).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The Centre met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.



Evaluation of Youthreach provision

Date of inspection	06-11-2023
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation and engagement in learning settings• Interaction with young people and review of their work• Meetings with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre and ETB management• staff• young people• parents/guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of documents and assessment data:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centre improvement plans• Plans for training and skill development, teaching and learning• Minutes of meetings• Individual learner files• Relevant policies and procedures• Feedback to centre coordinator, ETB management and learning practitioners• Discussion at the conclusion of the evaluation with ETB management, co-ordinator and learning practitioners of the draft outcomes

Centre context

Crumlin Youthreach operates under the auspices of City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CoDETb). At the time of the evaluation the centre provided Quality and Qualification Ireland (QQI) courses at level four and a summer programme for learners. There were forty-five learners enrolled in the centre. The centre was staffed by a co-ordinator and a team of nine learning practitioners and were supported by a part-time guidance advocate.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The centre was staffed by a dedicated and highly committed co-ordinator and staff that have created a caring, supportive and welcoming environment for learners.
- The quality of the learners' experiences and outcomes was good, however, there was scope for further development in the initial and on-going assessment and in responding and monitoring of learners' needs.
- The quality of teaching and learning observed was good with examples of very good practice evident in a number of instances; there was room for improvement in some lessons.
- The quality of governance, leadership and management of the centre by the ETB and co-ordinator was very good.
- The centre co-ordinator and staff were reflective and open to new ideas and demonstrated a clear willingness to work towards improvement; overall the centre had very good capacity for improvement and development.

Recommendations

- There was a need for a more focused approach to the assessment of learners at the point of entry and subsequently. The induction programme should be further developed and a learning and support plan for each learner be devised as detailed in the body of this report and be accessible to all staff.
- In the past mentors were assigned to learners but this practice had ceased. Learning practitioners, acting as mentors, should be reinstated and additional support for learners in social personal, educational and career guidance should be sought by the centre.

- There was room for improvement in some lessons. Learning practitioners should explain to learners what they will be learning during lessons and incorporate co-operative learning methodologies.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Identifying and meeting the needs of young people

The dedicated and highly committed co-ordinator and staff have created a caring, inclusive, supportive and welcoming environment for learners in Crumlin Youthreach. Learners and their parents were very positive about their experiences in the Centre. The quality of the learners' experience and outcomes was good overall, however, there was scope for further development in the initial and on-going assessment, monitoring and responding to learners' needs.

Meeting learner needs through effective learner experiences

Learners expressed how much they enjoyed coming to the centre to learn and meet other young people. This enjoyment and positive attitude to learning was evident in the lessons observed as learners worked purposefully and assumed responsibility for their learning.

The small number of learners in lessons facilitated the very good one-to-one support given by learning practitioners. The very positive relationship between learning practitioners and learners was built upon mutual respect and affirmation.

The one hour lessons provided learners with appropriate time to engage in meaningful learning activities. Learners made good connections to real life experiences and shared their knowledge and ideas with confidence. Learners demonstrated very high levels of digital skills.

The majority of the learners were engaged successfully with level 4 QQI modules, with most learners aspiring to achieve a full QQI award. Where necessary, the centre had provided additional short courses and QQI modules, some at level 5. Appropriate subject-specific supports for learners had been provided when required. An appropriate Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) programme was provided for all learners led by a highly-skilled and trained learning practitioner.

Supporting learners to develop their life skills was a fundamental aspect of the work of the centre and a whole-centre approach was very evident. The curriculum supported learners in developing practical life skills, such as, catering, woodwork, digital, and health and safety. Development of learner wellbeing and creativity skills was provided through modules such as health-related fitness, personal effectiveness, Science, Technology Engineering, Art and Mathematics. Programmes to assist with career preparation and work experience were also provided. Learners in the focus group expressed a desire to develop their financial literacy skills and centre management should explore the possibility of providing provision for learners.

The varied summer programme included opportunities for work experience, outings and local community involvement. The summer programme also facilitated learners to gain additional certification such as digital certificates, e-college micro credentials and Safe Food. Learners' involvement in community projects such as the design and production of planter boxes for the local area was commended. In the previous academic year learners assumed responsibility for the design and creation of the décor on the internal walls of the centre.

Meeting learner needs through effective teaching

The quality of teaching and learning observed was good with examples of very good practice evident in a number of instances; there was room for improvement in a small minority of lessons.

The most effective lessons reflected high quality planning by learning practitioners. In a majority of lessons the intended learning was not clear in terms of what learners would know, be able to do or understand by the end of the lesson. It is recommended that planned learning be shared

with learners at the outset of lessons and that attainment be reviewed at the conclusion of the lesson so as to consolidate the learning achieved.

In almost all lessons, a variety of learning activities and appropriate changes in teaching approaches, encouraged and enabled students to maintain concentration over the length of the lesson. In some lessons a teaching approach that enabled learners to think and make sense of content would have enhanced their learning.

In most lessons, opportunities were provided for learners to work together. In a small number of lessons, the group activity was not planned to elicit deep learning from the learners. Further opportunities for learners to collaborate and work with their peers should be included with particular emphasis on ensuring a better balance in favour of learner inputs.

In almost all lessons, good questioning strategies enabled learners to share viewpoints and make valuable contributions, and were used skilfully to make links with prior learning and assess learner knowledge. In some lessons, higher-order questioning strategies were used effectively to develop students' critical thinking skills.

Learners' work was stored online which enabled learning practitioners to monitor and review work completed by them. Digital technology was used effectively in lessons; the use of interactive whiteboards was particularly good facilitating instant access to audio, visual and content resources.

Responses to learners' individual needs in lessons

As part of the induction process a digital assessment tool is used to gauge learners' literacy, numeracy and digital competencies. The outcomes of the assessment process was available on the centre's intranet thus providing learning practitioners with a useful baseline of individual learners' competences. A differentiated literacy and numeracy support programme was provided to learners who required additional support through an e-Learning platform and in one-to-one settings. After initial assessment, learners' progress should be more regularly reviewed by learning practitioners and revised targets set.

Differentiated practices were evident in the individual support provided by the learning practitioners and expectations were communicated on the quality of work to be completed by learners. In some lessons there were instances where the level of challenge was not appropriate for some learners. Learning practitioners should be more informed of learner's individual strengths so that improved differentiation strategies would be possible.

There was clear evidence of ongoing monitoring and formative feedback from learning practitioners of learners' work. This feedback was substantially oral in nature and it is recommended that written supportive and informative feedback on the quality of learners' work should also be provided and maintained by learners. Learners' progress was recorded by learning practitioners for their own files.

Supporting transition

The centre operated a rolling intake policy which meant that learners can join the programme at any point in the year. The challenges and opportunities that the rolling intake policy poses for learners and staff merits discussion within the centre.

On registration, the co-ordinator worked with individual learners to support them to settle into the centre. The centre's induction programme provided information for learners and facilitated tasters of the curriculum.

There was a need for a more focused approach to the assessment of learners at the point of entry and subsequently. It is recommended that a more structured induction programme be developed, which includes a comprehensive exploration of learners' education and career interests, social personal needs and individual strengths. Following this process areas for development should be identified and an individual learning and support plan for each learner be devised. In addition, an action plan that charts the learner's educational aspirations and progress should be maintained.

Supporting progression

The social, emotional and academic needs of some individual learners are discussed at staff meetings and care meetings. The outcomes of these discussions should be documented in learners' learning and support files to facilitate tracking of individual learners' progress.

The welcoming environment in the centre facilitates and encourages attendance and retention. In general, learner attendance and punctuality trends were satisfactory. However, absenteeism was an issue for a minority of learners. The centre should develop strategies to promote and improve attendance for these learners. The tracking of individual learner attendance and punctuality should be included in learners learning and support files.

Learning practitioners monitored, assessed and recorded the progress of learners on an ongoing basis across many subject areas and formally met once a year to discuss and profile learners' academic progress. It is advised that these meetings occur more regularly and learning outcomes be included in learners' learning and support files to support their academic progress.

In the past, mentors were assigned to learners but this practice had ceased. It is recommended that learning practitioners, acting as mentors, are reinstated to facilitate learners in setting their own academic, career and personal goals and to engage them in related action planning. This process should be directly linked to the maintenance of information in learners' learning and support files to enable regular monitoring and tracking of learners' progress.

Progression links

Centre management worked hard to develop positive links with the local community, employers and agencies in relation to progression routes and appropriate work placement opportunities for learners, however, the centre did not have access to a trained guidance counsellor.

The centre had access to an Advocate who visited the centre once per fortnight, for a half day, to advise learners about progression pathways. To further support learners, learning and support files should be updated by the Advocate with the outcomes from these meetings. A stronger link needs to be developed between the Advocate and the work experience coordinator to align work experience opportunities with the career interests of the learners. Both students and parents expressed a desire for more career inputs and guidance about future progression pathways in education and training. It is recommended that the centre approaches the ETB to explore additional support for learners in social personal, educational and career guidance.

Many of the learners who have completed their time in the centre progressed to further education and employment. A significant minority of students had not completed their programme due to individual and personal circumstances, and, as a result, progression levels overall are satisfactory.

2. The governance, leadership and management of the centre

The co-ordinator provided high quality leadership and management of the centre and demonstrated a deep and sustained commitment to the academic, social and personal well-being of the learners.

Governance

The ETB actively supported the centre by providing resources and continuing professional development (CPD) for staff. The ETB created a network between the nine Youthreach centres under its auspices and this supported communication and enhanced provision for learners. A wide range of centre policies that contributed to the smooth operation of the centre were devised in consultation with the ETB and staff.

A central board of management effectively oversaw the work of nine Youthreach centres in the CoDETB region. The board of management was kept well informed of centre activities through coordinator meetings and reports.

Communication

Communication between the centre and the ETB was very good with clear guidelines provided to the centre about mandatory requirements and reporting. Internal communication between centre staff was facilitated by the online digital sharing platform and other messaging applications. Staff meetings had been infrequent and staff recognised the need for regular scheduled formal meetings to collaborate on centre development and curriculum. The centre coordinator should schedule staff meetings at more regular intervals and provide opportunities for staff to share and discuss teaching and wellbeing practices.

Relationships and communication with parents was observed to be positive with an open door policy in place in the centre. Parents expressed an interest in becoming more connected and involved in learners' education and in receiving more information about their progress. Centre staff should explore ways to amplify parental engagement, both informally and formally.

Centre organisation and leadership to support wellbeing

There was a very positive atmosphere in the centre during the evaluation. Learners and staff expressed a sense of belonging, safety, and connection. High expectations for learners were promoted by all staff and acknowledged by the board. Much time and effort was spent by the coordinator meeting with individual learners and providing high levels of support.

Staff worked diligently to promote learners' wellbeing and to increase their self-esteem and confidence through their interactions and provision of activities such as carol singing and visits to heritage and interesting places. There was firm and sensitive management of behavioural issues and standards of behaviour and social interaction amongst learners were observed to be good.

Learners were encouraged to eat together at all meal times and healthy meals were prepared by learners as part of their curriculum. Catering facilities were impressive and the preparation of food provided valuable nutrition and life skills. Promotion of a healthy lifestyle was advanced through curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as the new health-related fitness module, the very well-equipped gym, guest speakers on health related issues, outdoor pursuits and swimming.

Previously, learners had access to counselling support provided by the ETB. However, more recently this counselling support had not been available. Learners instead accessed counselling in the local area. The ETB psychological support service had visited the centre to advise the staff how to support learners, but no longer provided a direct service to learners.

The value of learner voice and participation was recognised by the establishment of a learner council. The council had met a number of times and learners had made a number of valuable suggestions. As part of the previous year's summer programme, learners very effectively led a project to design and decorate the centre. Learners were commended on the high quality and professional artistic outputs they created.

Leading Centre development

The co-ordinator, staff and learners had a sense of pride in the centre which was maintained to a very high standard. A recent move to an almost paperless centre to support sustainability was commendable. The centre was very well resourced in digital learning facilities all learners had their own digital devices and access to an online learning platform.

The centre staff have had good access to broader ETB supports including CPD in areas such as feedback in assessment, English for Speakers of Other Languages, youth mental health, equality and inclusion. The centre was piloting a programme to devise assessments and provide formative feedback for learners online. Staff were commended in their willingness to engage in CPD to enhance learner outcomes and experiences.

Learning practitioners used a good template to document their plans for teaching, learning and assessment in their respective subject areas. Very good practice was observed in some planning documentation wherein reflective comments were provided, on the success or otherwise, of the delivery of the curriculum and notes were made to signal changes that could enhance future practice.

The centre had built a good network of support within the wider community and with education and training providers and some voluntary bodies. There was scope to strengthen links with employers and other voluntary bodies.

The centre co-ordinator and staff were reflective and open to new ideas and demonstrated a clear willingness to work towards improvement. Review processes such as the centre evaluation improvement planning process, were well-developed. The centre's improvement plan with identified actions is regularly monitored and reviewed. Overall the centre had good capacity for improvement and development.

The Inspectorate's Quality Continuum

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the centre using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the centre's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	<i>Very good</i> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some centres in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <i>outstanding</i> and provides an example for other centres of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	<i>Good</i> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The centre needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	<i>Satisfactory</i> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	<i>Fair</i> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The centre will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	<i>Weak</i> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-centre action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;