



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Evaluation of Youthreach Provision Report

REPORT

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Centre name | Kerry Horizon Centre Tralee Community Training Centre |
| Centre address | Monavalley Industrial Estate, Monavalley, Tralee. |
| Roll number | 42828S |
| Date of evaluation | 23-10-2023 |

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. They provide advice and support to teaching staffs, resource persons, centre coordinators and centre management

How to read this report

During these inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated provision under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

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 shown 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 school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Actions of the centre to safeguard young people

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the centre'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. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location

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

Youthreach Centres are co-funded by the Government of Ireland, the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020

Evaluation of Youthreach provision

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of inspection | 23, 24 and 25-10-2023 |
| 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 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• Individual support plans• Relevant policies and procedures• Feedback to the general manager, chairperson of the board of directors and staff |

Centre context

Tralee CTC, recently rebranded as Kerry Horizon Centre, was established in 1983 to serve the training needs of early school leavers, between the ages of sixteen and twenty one. The centre operates under the management of a board of directors, guided by the Irish Association of Community Training Organisations (IACTO), and in partnership with Kerry Education and Training Board (KETB). The centre had capacity for forty learners and twenty nine learners were enrolled at the time of the evaluation, three of whom were under the age of sixteen. A general manager, an administrative officer, four full-time and two part-time practitioners delivered the programmes. Major Awards in Construction (Employability Skills) QQI three, Technology (General Learning) QQI four, and the Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VCTC) Diploma in Hairdressing QQI four equivalent, were offered to learners.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching observed was good with the practice in individual learning and training settings ranging from very good to fair.
- The approaches to induction and transition into the centre, assessment of individual needs, and provision of supports to meet learners' individual needs were very effective.
- An active, hardworking chairperson maintained strong lines of communication and collaboration with the general manager.
- The general manager provided exceptionally high quality leadership and management to the centre and had overseen a significant level of recent change.
- Centre staff demonstrated collective responsibility for the effective operation of the centre and mutual respect was promoted through staff modelling positive interactions and demonstrating high levels of care for the young people.
- KETB had very recently appointed an adult education officer (AEO) to provide oversight of the governance, monitoring and quality assurance of the centre's work. There was a need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

Recommendations

- Practitioners should share the plan and purpose of lessons with learners, and lesson planning should provide opportunities for more co-operative learning in all learning spaces.
- As learners are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, reliable base-line English language proficiency data should be gathered for the initial and ongoing assessment of

learners with English as additional language (EAL) needs. A formal whole-centre approach to support language acquisition for these learners should be established.

- There is scope to ensure the needs of learners are central to decision making in the centre. The board of directors and KETB should facilitate the option to extend individual learners' time in the centre. A review of the curriculum offered should also be undertaken.
- There was a number of issues in relation to the centre and learners accessing technical supports such as the Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH) and the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS). These issues should be rectified by KETB as a matter of priority.
- The board of directors, the general manager, KETB and the AEO should clearly identify their individual roles and responsibilities, and communicate them to all stakeholders, including staff, parents and learners.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Identifying and meeting the needs of young people

Supporting learner wellbeing through effective and positive learner experiences and outcomes

Safe, calm and secure learning environments, were a key strength of the centre. Learning practitioners demonstrated high levels of care for the young people and the young people responded very favourably. Mutual respect was promoted by centre management and staff through the explicit modelling of positive interactions.

Parents/guardians were appreciative of learners' overall sense of wellbeing, reporting that learners felt welcome and understood, which in turn contributed significantly to their desire to learn and achieve.

In training lessons, high levels of learner participation and concentration were noted. In these lessons in particular, there was ample evidence of learning, together with a related sense of progress and achievement. Learners demonstrated pride in their work and communicated a clear appreciation for the support and guidance they received from the learning practitioners.

Demonstrations were used to very good effect, at times, to support instruction, with the inclusion of learners in this aspect of the lesson also observed. This approach reinforced learning and developed learners' confidence.

Well-chosen audio-visual resources were utilised on occasion but learner review of such materials should be supported by a question-set or observation worksheet. This would better support learners' purposeful participation in their learning.

There was a natural inclination amongst learners in most lessons to seek the assistance and opinions of their peers. It was observed that they liked to support one another, and they also communicated this during the focus group, noting it as one of the best things about the centre. This indicated learners' sense of ease with one another and their sense of belonging and connectedness to the centre.

Meeting learner needs through effective teaching

The overall quality of teaching observed was good with the practice in individual learning and training settings ranging from very good to fair.

In most lessons learners benefitted from good preparation for lessons, highly informed, well-paced practitioner instruction, an obvious practitioner passion for the areas being taught, on-going guidance and monitoring, and resources, which had been carefully sourced by practitioners. Learners supporting learners was also noted in all learning and training settings.

A key areas for development in lessons was in sharing the plan or purpose for what the young people would learn. Practitioners should plan lesson inputs and activities around this

approach. Practitioners' planning should place the emphasis on the young people's learning and participation.

In some lessons there was scope for practitioners to draw on more varied learner skill sets and capacities. Care should be taken to ensure that all learning activities are purposeful and relevant to planned and new learning

Opportunities should be provided for more co-operative and collaborative learning. Discussion, as a key methodology, should be used to develop communication and oral literacy skills, managing information, thinking and decision making skills, working with others, and personal wellbeing.

Meeting learner needs through effective induction

Individualised approaches to induction and transition into the centre were very effective. The manager discussed concerns and hopes with each individual learner, as well as with their parents/guardians, to ensure they settled in well. In all cases, the manager established the learners' suitability and in many instances was supported through KETB's mentoring programme, where other options and progression routes were also explored.

Identifying and meeting needs of learners

A dedicated literacy and numeracy support practitioner, supported the identified needs of almost all learners through the provision of one-to-one interventions. Learners reported that other areas of individual need were also supported. For example, learners described how they were supported to complete the driver theory test. They spoke very positively of this type and level of support.

A range of assessment tools were in use but these were most suited to the assessment required in adult education settings. It is advised that standardised assessment tools more suited to the age profile of the learners in the setting be used instead.

Learners were from diverse cultures and backgrounds and included a number of young people with EAL needs. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Integrate Ireland Language and Training assessment toolkit for post-primary schools should be used to establish these learners' language proficiency levels. This information should be used to plan targeted learning interventions both in the support classroom and in all other learning settings. A formal whole-centre approach to supporting language acquisition should be explored and established. This approach is particularly relevant as learners' progression to further education settings can be potentially curtailed as they need B2 proficiency levels to access, for example, Kerry College.

Meeting learner needs through individualised planning and target setting

It is very positive that a formal key-worker approach had been established and that individual learning plans (ILPs) were being prepared in collaboration with the young person. It was observed that these plans should be informed by learners' own perceptions of their strengths and needs and be based on their expressed personal, educational and vocational goals. The plan should also describe the actions to be taken in pursuit of these goals.

In line with the operating guidelines of the CTC, it is positive that it was a long-established practice for practitioners to track learners' progression from the centre, for a period of six months, as a further support to individual learners.

Support learners through the effective use of resources

In general, although learning spaces were well-organised and resourced, some practical training spaces were in need of significant upgrading. It is positive to note that this had already been identified as an area for development and a plan was being prepared.

There was scope for greater use of digital technologies in lesson delivery and as a support for learner engagement, participation and learning. Linked to this was the need to resource all learning spaces with appropriate digital technologies for both practitioner and learner use.

Meeting learner needs through curricular planning

The centre provided high quality QQI level three and four training programmes, designed to prepare learners for further training, apprenticeships and/or employment opportunities.

There was an expectation that learners would complete their training within twelve months. This approach was contrary to a learner-centred approach which was the current centre vision. The option to extend individual learners' time in the centre to at least two years should be facilitated by the board of directors and KETB. Many learners were under the age of eighteen and some are under sixteen, with gaps in their schooling, also many individual learners had significant learning needs, including EAL, and would benefit from the extra year. The scope QQI programmes offer in terms of personal development, meaningful learning, skill development, and readiness for progression, and the need to include modules designed to support the holistic development of young people would also be better supported by a longer programme of study.

The curriculum in the centre met the needs of almost all learners and had been recently enhanced by the provision of a timetable and the reintroduction of a QQI level four programme. A review of the curriculum offered should be undertaken to ensure that it meets the learning and training needs of the young people enrolled.

Supporting learners' needs through staff continuing professional development (CPD)

Staff had been encouraged by the centre manager to identify relevant individual CPD. However, this had been challenging for CTC staff to access. Opportunities to avail of central CPD offered through the ETB is an option that merits further exploration by the general manager and the AEO.

Processes to facilitate access and tracking of learner outcomes

Learners who expressed interest via the Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH) in applying to the centre for a place were being directed to a different centre and to personnel not associated with the centre. This issue must be rectified by KETB as a matter of priority. Furthermore, the general manager of the centre should be provided with appropriate access to the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) as this is essential to the secure management of learner records and reporting on FET outputs and outcomes.

2. The governance, leadership and management of the centre

Managing the centre through effective governance; The board of directors

Tralee CTC is owned and managed by a voluntary board of directors. The work of the board is guided and informed by IACTO, the employer representative body for the independent community boards governing all CTCs.

The board of directors was in place since January 2022. It had been closely involved in the regeneration of the centre. An active, hardworking and committed chairperson maintained strong lines of communication and collaboration with the general manager, and provided very valuable hands-on support to the manager and to the centre.

It was reported to the inspection team that not all board members had accessed and completed necessary training provided by IACTO on the roles and responsibilities of a CTC board of directors and that achieving a quorum for meetings was challenging. Training should be prioritised by all board members and measures designed to support regular attendance at meetings should be explored at board level.

Attendance at meetings, training for board members and informed and collaborative decision-making should be routine practice to ensure effective and proactive oversight, and the provision of support to the general manager in the published areas of responsibility as identified in the Operating Standards for CTCs.

Meeting learner needs through effective leadership and management

The general manager provided exceptionally high quality leadership and management. All of those met as part of the evaluation spoke very highly of the general manager's leadership of the centre.

The general manager had led much development, including the establishment of organisational structures for learners and staff, implementation of processes and procedures to support learner attendance and participation, and reintroduction of modules to support retention and progression which included the introduction of the Summer Programme. There was positive promotion of the centre which contributed to an increase in enrolment. Valuable partnerships with key organisations in the community, to support learners and the overall work of the centre, had been forged.

Working together to improve learning

The staff were open to learner-centred developments for improvement. They demonstrated collective responsibility for the effective operation of the centre through the distribution of responsibilities and opportunities to lead in relation to, for example, key working, the development and monitoring of individual learning plans (ILPs), and the quality assurance of modules through an internal verification and validation of locally designed assessments (LDAs).

Collaboration and communication between the centre and Kerry ETB

In the interest of developing a positive partnership between KETB and Kerry Horizon Centre, an AEO was very recently appointed to provide oversight of the governance, monitoring and quality assurance of the centre's work.

The AEO's expressed vision for a learner-centred approach to meeting the identified training and educational needs, as well as the holistic development of the young people, correlates well with the expressed vision of the general manager and staff.

KETB provided additional resources in response to learners' support and care needs identified by the general manager, including mentoring and counselling. A further indication of KETB's commitment to the future of the centre was the agreement, in principle, to provide capital funding for the very necessary redesign, renovation, and resourcing of the centre building and facilities. These planned works were noted as essential to enhance the training and learning environment, improve health and safety for learners and staff, and to enrich the overall learner experience.

In line with the principle of partnership and collaboration set out in the Operating Standards, there should be an agreed understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board of directors, the general manager, KETB and the AEO. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly identified and defined, and then communicated to all stakeholders, including staff, parents and learners.

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; |