



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Evaluation of Youthreach Provision Report

## REPORT

School name	Kingscourt Youthreach Centre
School address	Old Railway Building, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan. A82 H9H6
Roll number	41085Q
Date of evaluation	06-12-2023

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# 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 co-ordinators 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## 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. 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.



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*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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	4,5,6 December 2023
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation and engagement in learning settings</li><li>• Interaction with young people and review of their work</li><li>• Meetings with:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• centre management</li><li>• staff</li><li>• young people</li><li>• parents/guardians</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of documents and assessment data:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Centre improvement plans</li><li>• Plans for training and skill development, teaching and learning</li><li>• Individual support plans</li><li>• Relevant policies and procedures</li></ul></li><li>• Feedback to centre co-ordinator, ETB management and teachers</li></ul>

## Centre context

Kingscourt Youthreach Centre operates under the management of Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB). At the time of the evaluation, the centre had an enrolment of thirty-three learners. The curriculum comprised mainly of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) courses at Level 3 and Level 4. The centre had been relocated to the Old Railway Station, Kingscourt and renovations were underway on the site.

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The centre was a caring and encouraging learning community and all staff members demonstrated a genuine commitment to supporting learners to achieve their potential.
- Parents met during the evaluation confirmed the positive effect the centre has had on their children.
- A very suitable curricular programme was in place that included many valuable additional learning opportunities.
- The quality of governance, leadership and management in the centre was good and a high level of support was provided by CMETB.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good and learners engaged very well with learning tasks and demonstrated enjoyment of learning.
- Attendance levels were high and there was a commendable level of retention of young people in the level 3 and 4 courses: progression to education, training and employment was very good.

### Recommendations

- The whole-centre priorities, identified as areas for development in the Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plan (CEIP), should be more specific in relation to the actions to be undertaken, and the persons responsible for the action. A system of monitoring and review should be put in place.
- Practitioners should plan for and incorporate differentiated learning opportunities in lessons to ensure that all learners are supported in their learning. Professional development in this area should be accessed.
- To promote deeper learning, practitioners should provide learners with more detailed feedback on how they can improve their work. The implementation of the new assessment policy should support this process.

- To strengthen the open-door policy of the centre, parent-teacher meetings should be resumed and parents should be involved in policy review where appropriate.
- A centre-wide systematic approach to improve literacy and numeracy provision should be developed and implemented.

## Detailed findings and recommendations

### 1. Identifying and meeting the needs of young people

The quality of identifying and meeting the needs of young people was good. Some areas for development were identified in teaching, learning and assessment.

#### **Understanding students' learning strengths and needs**

Effective practice was in evidence in identifying and meeting learners' needs. An induction process was in place which included a tour of the centre and an interview. An initial assessment with a focus on literacy and numeracy skills was used to provide details of individual learner's strengths and identifying areas requiring support. Individualised learning plans (ILPs) were in place. A sample of ILPs were observed and the format of these plans was under review. It was commendable that a number of staff were to avail of training in administration of the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) to support them in the identification of the young persons' needs and implementation of tailored ILPs.

As part of the induction programme, the young people were provided with a comprehensive handbook which provided an overview of practice, procedures and programmes in the centre. This handbook was reviewed recently by the staff team.

#### **Designing tailored learning programmes**

The range of subjects, at QQI levels 3 and 4 was broad given the limited space and facilities available at the centre. CMETB provided significant support by facilitating the sharing of learning practitioners across the Youthreach centres in the ETB.

All young people in the centre studied five QQI core modules as well as a good range of elective modules. The young people and their parents/guardians, in focus group meetings with the inspectors, were satisfied with the learning programme offered. The centre's commitment to improving provision was evidenced in the recent installation of a kitchen and development of a woodwork room. Valuable additional learning opportunities were a strong positive aspect of the centre's curriculum, for example, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) workshops, Driving Theory and Foróige-Cavan 365 project. An engaging summer programme was organised and provided to the young people in the centre which contained a mix of outdoor and indoor activities.

#### **Positive learner outcomes**

Interactions between the young people and between practitioners and young people were characterised by a high level of care and support.

Literacy and Numeracy policies were in place, adapted from the policies supplied by CMETB. Numeracy posters included formulae, number lines, and mathematical key words. Literacy was supported through displays of key words on classroom walls and some subject specific definitions. However there was a need to further develop the literacy and numeracy policies into centre-wide literacy and numeracy systematic approaches which targeted specific and routine elements of literacy and numeracy on an ongoing basis. These strategies should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they meet the targeted needs of the learners. Additionally, for students with high levels of literacy, further opportunities to be challenged by completing extended writing pieces should be provided.

The young persons' achievements in the QQI assessments were of a high standard. The QQI External Assessor's report on the quality of the QQI course material submitted for accreditation

was very positive. Achievements in the QQI process were celebrated in a graduation ceremony each year which the young people were instrumental in organising. It was very commendable that there was a high level of representation from the ETB at the ceremony. There was scope to share and celebrate the young persons' successes and achievements through displays throughout the centre.

### ***Enhancing classroom teaching and learning***

The quality of teaching and learning was good overall. A number of very good practices were in evidence where the young people engaged very well with the learning tasks and demonstrated enjoyment of learning. Lessons were well planned and included resources that supported active learning experiences.

All lessons were characterised by positive interactions. All practitioners' explanations and instructions were clear and accessible. Best practice was in evidence where the lessons were delivered dynamically, capturing the interest of the young persons. Lessons that embraced a variety of methodologies and encouraged collaboration in small groups or pairs promoted engagement and enjoyment. In a minority of lessons there was an over-reliance on practitioner talk, suggesting the need for more opportunities for active learning.

Highly effective lessons were tailored to the strengths and needs of the young person, fostering purposeful work and deeper learning engagement. The integration of real-life contexts into lessons further enhanced the engagement of the learners. In a few instances, opportunities to challenge the learners were missed, hindering the promotion of deeper learning. While differentiated teaching practices were observed, they were largely reactive. There is a need for practitioners to plan for differentiated activities and learning opportunities to ensure all learners are appropriately challenged by the learning task. Professional development in the area of differentiation would be of benefit to practitioners to enhance teaching and learning.

Learners progressed individual projects, portfolios and tasks, with monitoring and advice for improvement and support from the practitioner. The folders and notebooks observed were checked regularly. While some folders contained directional feedback, overall there was a need to provide the learner with information on how they can improve their work. In developing the new assessment policy, the practitioners should discuss how best feedback can be used to promote deeper learning.

In some lessons there was very effective use of digital technology. Scenarios were depicted through the use of short video clips, for example work placement interviews, which helped the young person recall their work placement and good and bad interview practices which promoted discussion around interview preparation. Digital technology was also effective in assessment through the use of quizzes. The young people demonstrated familiarity with the use of technology to research new topics. The centre used an online platform for practitioners and young people to store, collaborate and share their learning.

### ***Involving parents and managing attendance***

The centre had a number of measures for tracking and encouraging attendance and attendance rates were high. Attendance was tracked weekly and parents were alerted when their child did not attend.

The parents expressed much appreciation for the work of the centre. The centre had an open-door policy in relation to communication with parents/guardians. At the time of the evaluation, there were no regular formal meetings between parents/guardians and the learning practitioners. In order to enable parents/guardians to keep track of their child's progress and hear about their achievements and goals, it is now an opportune time to resume the meetings.

### ***Fostering respectful relationships and retention***

The code of behaviour was based on respect for all members of the centre community. The co-ordinator outlined expectations for appropriate behaviour when the young person enrolled and

the reasons for these expectations. More recent amendments to the code included reference to mobile phones, vapes and dress code. The planned review of these changes would benefit from input from the young people, parents and the recently established student council.

Highly effective practice was observed where the practitioners knew the young people very well and were attuned to their current and emerging learning, emotional, and social needs. This promoted wellbeing in the classroom and contributed to the positive and respectful atmosphere.

The young people benefitted from access to guidance, counselling and psychological services provided by the centre and CMETB, where necessary. The centre was involved in a pilot Learner Mentoring Initiative (LMI) with another Centre for Education in the ETB where all young people avail of a weekly meeting with a designated resource person.

Retention rates were high in the centre. Almost all learners who began a programme in the centre completed their courses and attained their qualification. Every effort was made to ensure that the young people went on to achieve accreditation at the highest level possible.

### ***Supporting wellbeing***

The centre was commended for its focus on supporting and promoting the young persons' wellbeing. It was good to note that a staff member held a qualification in Youth Mental Health Promotion and the centre was working towards achieving the Amber Flag for wellbeing. Fitness and healthy options were included in the curriculum. The centre benefitted from its proximity to Dun an Ri wood and the young people and practitioners availed of the amenity for walks as weather permitted. The centre had a wellbeing champion who organised events such as Wellbeing Wednesday during which young people engaged in exercise and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

The young people were encouraged to take part in cooking meals and maintaining the centre's physical environment by keeping it clean and tidy. Meal times provided opportunities for all members of the centre's community to connect and engage with each other and to socialise. Plans were in place to develop a sensory room to meet the needs of learners.

## **2. The governance, leadership and management of the centre**

The governance, leadership and management of the centre was good with some areas for further development, including the centre's review and evaluation processes, to promote high quality teaching and learning provision.

### **Support and oversight**

The centre was very well supported by CMETB and the Board of Management. The Board exercised oversight of the six Centres For Education and Community Training Centres under the remit of CMETB. The Adult Education Officer (AEO) demonstrated a high level of oversight and an understanding of the work, challenges and achievements of the centre in Kingscourt and placed high importance on the service it provided. Supports provided by the ETB included significant access to professional learning and development as needs arose, most recently in the areas of Autism, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the use of Artificial Intelligence in teaching and learning.

### ***Centre organisation and leadership***

The centre presented as a warm and welcoming space. The timetable was well designed to meet the needs of the young person with good provision for SPHE and wellbeing. The curriculum was broad and well balanced. Counselling was available and an external counsellor visited the centre on a weekly basis. This was highly utilised by the young people.

Leadership for learning was effective in the centre. Practitioners availed of professional development opportunities and were supported to avail of individual learning and development specific to their subject areas. The centre was in the process of developing an assessment policy and this should include the use of detailed and directional feedback to young people on how they can improve. A number of centre policies were recently reviewed including the Child Protection and Anti-bullying policies. An access programme had been very successful in supporting young people to progress to further education.

### ***Continuous improvement and self-evaluation***

The centre engaged in a process of self-evaluation and review and the Centre Evaluation and Improvement Planning (CEIP) process was undertaken on an annual basis. A number of areas were selected for review this year in line with the needs of the centre. All centre priorities identified as areas for development in the CEIP should be more specific in relation to the actions to be undertaken, include the persons responsible for the action, and a system of monitoring and review should be put in place.

### ***Supporting learning through effective planning***

There was a very good level of informal collaboration amongst the practitioner team and the curriculum plans observed were of a high quality. However, lesson planning was done on an individual basis. There was considerable crossover in the learning practitioners' work and it would be highly beneficial if they could plan lessons together. Scheduled planning opportunities would enhance the planning systems already in place. This planning would facilitate the sharing of the young persons' experiences and further promote differentiation in learning.

Staff meetings were held termly to reflect on the operation of the centre, the learning needs of the practitioners and of the young people. However there is scope for more formal meetings as outlined in the CEIP. It was highly commendable that communities of practice were in place where practitioners from the six Centres for Education and Community Training Centres met to share knowledge and upskill in their subject area. This is a very good example of the highly supportive nature of the CMETB.



# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report**

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## **Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

CMETB has six Youthreach Centres - 3 in Monaghan and 3 in Cavan (CMETB does not have any CTCs). The staff team at Kingscourt Youthreach have read through the report and are happy with the positive comments across all areas examined in this report. To address the five recommendations made by the inspectorate, the centre has taken / planned the following actions.

1. Discussions have taken place with the CEIP facilitator ahead of the CEIP process, which will take place in May 2024, to address the need for more specific actions relating to the areas examined during the evaluation process. Specific staff members will be assigned to oversee the completion of any actions arising out of the CEIP. Monitoring of actions will be on the agenda for discussion at monthly staff meetings.
2. Co-ordinator's meetings have taken place with the Adult Education Officer (AEO), discussions at this meeting have led to the AEO engaging the services of the FET Professional Learning & Development officer to seek suitable training in the area of differentiated teaching and learning. All staff at Kingscourt Youthreach will be able to avail of this training.
3. While Kingscourt Youthreach has received very positive comments, from External Authenticators, relating to feedback to learners, there is always room to improve this for the benefit of our learners. CMETB are currently working on improving feedback to learners across all services within CMETB. Kingscourt Youthreach will continue to provide formal feedback to learners on completion of assessments, and informally during class work. In addition, formal feedback will be provided to learners during progress meetings with teachers and management staff. General feedback will also form part of the weekly one-to-one meetings that take place with the learner mentor.
4. While parents will be able to continue the practice of dropping in for meetings with members of staff, without appointment, formal Parent/Teacher meetings will resume in March 2024. Parents will be alerted by letter, followed by text messaging regarding dates and times for all future formal meetings.
5. To complement the work in literacy and numeracy that takes place in the centre, a detailed centre literacy and numeracy plan has been developed. The plan is laid out monthly, with each month having theme-based strategies. Teachers will adapt their programme plans to include the strategies in the literacy and numeracy plan. Ongoing monitoring will take place through sampling of learner's portfolio work, teacher observations during class, discussions with learners during mentoring sessions and at monthly staff meetings.

## 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;