

OFFICE
FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION



Inspecting Youth Work: a revised framework for inspection

June 2001

A report from the Office of Her Majesty's
Chief Inspector of Schools

© Crown Copyright 2001

Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone: 020 7421 6800

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and data thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are available, while stocks last, from:

The OFSTED publications centre
Tel: 070 0263 7833
Fax: 070 0269 3274
Email: freepublications@ofsted.gov.uk

This report may also be downloaded from the OFSTED website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Reference number: HMI 268

Introduction

1. This is the third revision of the framework for the inspection of youth work published by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). It builds on the frameworks of 1994 and 1997, and has refined a number of sections in order to give a sharper focus to the central concern: the effectiveness and the efficiency of the provision in meeting the needs and raising the achievement of young people.
2. As with the earlier frameworks, the primary focus of inspection remains the standards, quality and efficiency of local authority youth services. In addition, this revised framework incorporates the evaluation requirements of Best Value. OFSTED, as the specialist inspectorate for youth work, is responsible for carrying out the external assessment of a local authority's Best Value review of its youth service within a year of its completion. Wherever feasible, this assessment will be timed to coincide with a full inspection of the youth service.
3. In addition to its primary function, the framework is equally applicable to an evaluation of youth work provided in a variety of other contexts: by voluntary organisations, by individual units or projects and most particularly, with its emphasis on the identification of what constitutes youth work of good quality, by collaborative activity with other agencies to whose overall purpose the specialist skills of youth workers have direct contributions to make. It will therefore relate, in part, to inspections of the Connexions Service and of the effects of the Government's 'inclusion strategy', such as Education Action Zones (EAZ) or Excellence in Cities (EiC). It will also inform the methodology for OFSTED's monitoring and evaluation of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) grants to National Voluntary Youth Organisations.
4. The reference within the text to 'service', which for convenience is used throughout, would need to be replaced if another description of the provision being inspected would be more appropriate.

Purposes of inspection

5. The purposes of inspection are to:
 - give an independent public account of the standards achieved, the quality of education provided and the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources are managed by youth services;
 - help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and weaknesses and proposing key issues for action;
 - keep the Secretary of State informed of the standards, quality and efficiency of youth services and whether they provide value for money.

Code of conduct

6. Inspectors must:
 - evaluate the work of the service objectively, be impartial and have no previous connection with the service which could undermine their objectivity;
 - report honestly and fairly, ensuring that judgements accurately and reliably reflect what the service achieves and does;
 - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity;
 - do all they can to minimise stress, in particular by ensuring that no individual is over-inspected;
 - act with the best interests and well-being of staff and young people as priorities;
 - maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with staff and communicate judgements of the work of the service clearly, frankly and respectfully;
 - guarantee, where legally permissible, the confidentiality of information about young people and staff and of judgements made about the work of individuals.

What is evaluated and reported on

7. All inspections will focus on the experience of learners, both as individuals and as members of a group, and will evaluate and report on:
 - the educational standards achieved;
 - the quality of youth work practice;

- whether other aspects of provision, such as the programmes and activities, the resources and the work in partnership with agencies involved in complementary activity, contribute to the standards achieved;
- the effectiveness and efficiency with which the provision is managed and its quality assured and improved;
- the value for money provided.

Quality of judgements and communication

8. Inspectors must ensure that:

- evidence gathered is sufficient to sustain secure judgements;
- judgements are consistent with the inspection evidence and represent the collective view of the inspection team;
- communication of findings, orally and in writing, is clear, well argued and based convincingly on evidence gathered before and during the inspection.

How inspections are carried out

9. The services to be inspected within a given year are chosen by OFSTED in collaboration with the DfEE. They are selected to give a geographical and organisational balance. In the case of local authority youth services, the programming of future inspections will also take the cycle of Best Value reviews into account.
10. Inspections are led by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by additional inspectors (AI) attached to OFSTED for an extended period. Team inspectors are generally AIs employed for a particular inspection. All inspectors have been trained in the use of the framework.

Initial contact

11. Not less than two months in advance of the inspection, the reporting inspector (RI) contacts the authority in writing to announce the inspection. Shortly after this, the RI visits the authority to explain the requirements for the pre-inspection visit. In particular, the self-assessment schedule to be completed by the authority before the pre-inspection visit is explained in detail.

Pre-inspection visit

12. Other than in exceptional circumstances, not less than three weeks in advance of the inspection, the RI and the assistant RI spend up to three days in the authority, examining documentation gathered by the authority in accordance with the self-assessment schedule and discussing with the officers responsible the inspection programme and team deployment. Following this visit, the RI completes a pre-inspection commentary for the inspection team.

Inspection

13. The inspection generally takes place in a single week. The focus of activity in the inspection week is direct observation of work, including discussions with young people and youth workers. Each inspector will offer oral feedback to staff involved following an observation.
14. At the end of the inspection the RI holds a final meeting of the inspection team to agree and record the corporate team judgements about the service.

Following the inspection

15. Meetings are held to discuss the inspection findings with the appropriate authority and the senior managers of the service.
16. A report is written, the final draft of which is presented to the service to check for accuracy in advance of publication.
17. When requested to do so by the DfEE, the authority produces an action plan in response to the issues for attention identified in the report. If the service has been judged to be less than satisfactory, OFSTED reserves the option to reinspect the service after a year, to report on progress in carrying out the action plan and to ascertain whether sustainable improvement has occurred.
18. All services have recourse to OFSTED's published complaints procedure in cases where there is dissatisfaction with an inspection.

The Evaluation Schedule

Part A: Summary

1. Basic information about the service and the area served

2. Relevant data

2.1 Performance indicators

(See appendices A and B of the self-assessment schedule for details on how to calculate these indicators)

Financial details

- a) Net expenditure on the youth service
- b) As % of the 'other education' Standard Spending Assessment (SSA)
- c) As % of the total education budget
- d) % on the assisted sector
- e) % on other external partnerships
- f) Income from external sources
- g) Expenditure per head of the total population aged 13-19

Unit costs of provision

- h) Of a youth worker contact hour
- i) Of each different young person reached aged 13-19
- j) Of each registered attendance by a young person aged 13-19

Participation

- k) Proportion
 - i. of different young people reached in the 13-19 age-range
 - ii. of males
 - iii. of females
 - iv. of young people of minority ethnic origin
- l) Average number of attendances per young person per annum

Staffing: deployment and support

- m) Contact ratio for young people aged 13-19
- n) Ratio of full-time to part-time hours
- o) Ratio of paid hours to unpaid hours
- p) % of net budget on INSET

Quality

- q) % of sessions where young people's achievement is satisfactory or better
- r) % of sessions where the quality of youth work practice is satisfactory or better

2.2 Evidence base for the inspection:

- i. number of inspectors
- ii. number of sessions observed
- iii. time spent on direct observation of work
- iv. types of work inspected
- v. meetings and discussions held
- vi. written evidence

3. Strengths and weaknesses of the service

3.1 Main findings

3.2 Key issues for action

Part B: Commentary

The following key questions, set out under four broad headings, will guide the inspection:

Access and participation

1. With which groups of young people does the service work and why?

Achievement and standards

2. How high are standards?

The quality of education provided

3. How effective is youth work practice?
4. How well does provision meet the needs and interests of young people?
5. How do the availability and quality of resources affect learning and development?
6. How effectively do partnerships and liaison with other agencies enhance the opportunities for learning and development?

Leadership and management

7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting young people in their personal and social development?

Access and Participation

I. With which groups of young people does the service work and why?

'Access and participation' relate to assessment of need, the identification of priority groups, the inclusiveness of strategies for encouraging participation and the existing support structures for young people within the service.

To answer this question, evaluate and report on:

- the service's response to the needs of young people in its community;
- whether the young people involved with the service reflect those groups identified in its policy priorities;
- the effectiveness and appropriateness of support structures for young people using the service.

In making judgements consider, where applicable, the extent to which the service:

- ◆ assesses need in conjunction with young people, the local community and other relevant services and agencies;
- ◆ identifies the groups of young people to whom priority is given;
- ◆ collects participation data about such groups in order to evaluate its effectiveness in reaching them;
- ◆ has developed a range of appropriate strategies to encourage such groups to take part, including outreach and detached work, collaborative work with specialist agencies and the provision of a variety of programmes relevant to young people's interests;
- ◆ ensures that there are no barriers to access to the full range of provision;
- ◆ has established effective support structures for all young people with whom it works.

Possible sources of evidence

- community profiles, including demographic and socio-economic data and key trends;
- user surveys;
- discussions with young people, stakeholders and other local agencies;
- attendance and participation data collected by the service;
- observations and/or minutes of youth councils;
- evidence forms from direct observations of sessions.

The report should include an evaluation of the service's procedures for assessing local need, consulting with the community and other stakeholders, and planning programmes accordingly; of the service's success in working with priority groups and of the quality of its analysis of the data on participation which it collects; of the accessibility of programmes for all young people; and of whether there are appropriate support structures within the service for those who need them.

Achievement and Standards

2. How high are standards?

To answer this question, evaluate and report on:

- young people's success in achieving challenging targets set for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and levels of understanding;
- the extent of young people's active engagement in local decision-making structures;
- young people's personal development, attitudes, values and self-awareness;
- the rate of progress made by young people towards meeting their targets.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which young people:

- ◆ *acquire new skills and interests and gain in knowledge, understanding and awareness;*
- ◆ *communicate clearly, discuss issues effectively and, where necessary, defend their case logically and objectively;*
- ◆ *demonstrate the ability to seek out and make use of relevant information to solve problems and to make choices;*
- ◆ *apply what they have learned to new and different contexts;*
- ◆ *participate actively in decision-making, both within their club or project and in the wider community;*
- ◆ *contribute to the evaluation of their achievements and assess both their own and the group's progress;*
- ◆ *are responsive to the opportunities available to them;*
- ◆ *demonstrate a growth in confidence and self-esteem;*
- ◆ *display tolerance and are sensitive to the rights and feelings of others;*
- ◆ *are willing to take on responsibility and to work collaboratively with their peers;*
- ◆ *enjoy good relationships with one another and with youth workers, and are able to handle conflict and confrontation with maturity.*
- ◆ *attend regularly and are well motivated.*

Possible sources of evidence

- evidence forms from direct observation of sessions, including youth councils;
- discussions with young people and youth workers;
- surveys of young people;
- records of achievement or accreditation;
- numbers of young people attending and frequency of attendance.

The report should include judgements on the standards reached by young people in terms of personal and social development, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding and participation in local decision-making structures. Reports should also note the opportunities that young people have to receive accreditation for their achievements.

Quality of Education Provided

3. How effective is youth work practice?

'Youth work practice' relates to the professional skills used by youth workers to engage young people in personal and social education and development.

To answer the question, evaluate and report on:

- how well youth work practice meets individual and group needs and to what extent it reflects the policies and priorities established by the service;
- how well youth workers exercise leadership in supporting, guiding and challenging young people;
- the extent to which standards are measured with reference to clear, appropriate criteria;
- how well young people learn, respond and make progress as a result of the work undertaken by youth workers.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which youth workers:

- ◆ *understand and implement the educational principles of youth work;*
- ◆ *know well the area in which they work and have identified the needs of the young people who use the service, or who are potential users of the service;*
- ◆ *agree limits for acceptable behaviour with young people, establish and sustain positive relationships with them and provide stimulating and challenging experiences;*
- ◆ *give young people appropriate advice and, when required, personal support, and know when to refer them to specialist help;*
- ◆ *plan sessions thoroughly and focus explicitly on what is to be learned by young people;*
- ◆ *use approaches which are well matched to young people's different abilities and interests;*
- ◆ *encourage young people to participate actively in the planning and execution of the work;*
- ◆ *enable young people to make their views heard in local, and where applicable, national contexts;*
- ◆ *evaluate and record regularly, in conjunction with young people, what has been learned and achieved;*
- ◆ *use evaluations and records to contribute to planning for young people's personal and social development.*

And the extent to which young people:

- ◆ *become self-confident and acquire new knowledge or skills;*
- ◆ *understand the aims of the activities in which they are engaged and are encouraged to improve their performance;*
- ◆ *make effective use of their time, work well as individuals or in groups, and take part in the planning, execution and evaluation of the work.*

Possible sources of evidence

- evidence forms from observation of sessions;
- written and visual records and diaries;
- observation of young people's involvement in planning, carrying out and evaluating the work;
- discussion with youth workers and young people;
- sessional, medium and long-term planning documents;
- user surveys, statistical reviews, service reports.

The report should include an evaluation of the ways in which youth workers exercise leadership and demonstrate their youth work skills and specialist knowledge. It should comment on the ways in which the personal and social education they undertake with young people contributes to the achievement of clearly defined aims. It should refer to the quality of the relationships existing among young people and between youth workers and young people.

4. How well does provision meet the needs and interests of young people?

To answer this question, evaluate and report on:

- the extent to which provision is sufficient to meet the needs identified;
- how well programmes are differentiated and accessible in relation to timing, context and location;
- the quality of curricular leadership and co-ordination.

In making judgements consider, where applicable, the extent to which the curriculum:

- ◆ *provides a broad and relevant range of educational activities and opportunities for learning and development, including information and advice services and an effective referral system to specialist help where required;*
- ◆ *has been developed according to assessment of need, to meet the service's priorities and in conjunction with the young people themselves;*
- ◆ *provides an effective basis for young people's personal and social education, motivating them and enabling them to make progress;*
- ◆ *offers opportunities for young people to engage actively in local democratic structures;*
- ◆ *is co-ordinated and well led;*
- ◆ *is responsive to the needs of young people by being provided at times, in locations and in contexts which are accessible to them and which reflect their interests and preferences;*
- ◆ *recognises and makes appropriately differentiated provision for young people according to age, sex, ethnic origin, interests, abilities, social circumstances and sexual orientation;*
- ◆ *contributes and adds value to the programmes of learning offered by other providers, such as schools and colleges.*

Possible sources of evidence

- curriculum documents;
- patterns of use of different types of provision;
- evidence forms from direct observation of sessions;
- discussions with managers, workers and young people;
- user surveys;
- case studies of good practice.

The report should include an evaluation of the how well the programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of the particular young people with whom the service works, whether the opportunities offered are accessible and inclusive and how effectively they contribute to raising achievement and fostering learning, and enhancing young people's personal and social development.

5. How do the availability and quality of resources affect learning and development?

'Resources' relate to staff, buildings, materials and equipment.

To answer this question, evaluate and report on:

- the qualifications and experience of youth workers;
- the effectiveness of the deployment of staff, including administrative staff and volunteers;
- the adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, resources for learning and accommodation.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- ◆ *there are enough qualified and experienced youth workers to match the demands of the programmes on offer and meet the needs of the young people involved in them;*
- ◆ *all staff are deployed to ensure effective use of their expertise and to meet the service's priorities;*
- ◆ *accommodation, including mobile and residential provision, is fit for its intended purpose, is in good condition, and is used flexibly and imaginatively;*
- ◆ *accommodation is accessible to all young people, is well distributed across the area and reflects the culture of those who use it;*
- ◆ *young people have access to the resources and specialist equipment necessary to provide them with rich and varied learning opportunities;*
- ◆ *accommodation, learning resources and specialist equipment conform to health and safety requirements.*

Possible sources of evidence

- analysis of full-time, part-time, administrative and volunteer staff deployment;
- job and role descriptions;
- discussions with youth workers, administrative staff and volunteers;
- evidence forms from direct observation of sessions;
- map of overall provision, including dedicated or other accommodation, and areas covered by detached youth work projects;
- observation of the condition, appearance, accessibility and use of buildings, equipment and materials.

The report should include *an evaluation of the extent to which all staff are efficiently and effectively deployed; how the accommodation and learning resources are managed; how they reflect local needs and interests and contribute to the quality of youth work; and how they contribute to the achievement of the service's objectives and priorities.*

6. How effectively do partnerships and liaison with other agencies enhance the opportunities for learning and development?

To answer this question, evaluate and report on:

- the extent and quality of the service's partnerships with different groups and agencies and the degree to which they involve young people and help to raise their standards of achievement;
- the extent to which young people develop a growing awareness of local issues and have the opportunity of contributing to decisions affecting them and their community.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- ◆ *the service has developed a wide range of partnerships and liaison activities with agencies engaged in complementary work;*
- ◆ *partnerships enhance opportunities for young people already using the service and encourage young people not already being reached by the service to take advantage of what is available;*
- ◆ *young people have regular opportunities to become involved in decision-making as a result of the service's links with other parts of the local authority, external agencies and community groups;*
- ◆ *collaborative working is of mutual benefit, with each partner clear about their particular contribution to the overall purpose;*
- ◆ *the relationship between collaborative activity and the service's core business is regularly reviewed and the quality of work deriving from such activity is thoroughly assessed.*

Possible sources of evidence

- discussion with young people and community groups;
- analysis of patterns of participation in community activities and of volunteering;
- discussion with key partners in the provision of youth work and community development;
- analysis of sources and extent of financial and practical support for partnerships and community development work;
- evidence forms from direct observation of sessions.

The report should include judgements about the range, quality and appropriateness of partnerships and liaison with the community and with other providers of both formal and informal education. It should comment on the effect of activities and links on young people's learning, confidence and standards of achievement, and on their involvement with the community, particularly in relation to decision-making bodies.

Leadership and Management

7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting young people in their personal and social development?

To answer this question, evaluate and report on:

- the extent to which policy-makers and managers establish a clear strategy for the work which is fully understood and implemented by all staff;
- how regularly and effectively performance is monitored and evaluated and whether steps are taken to secure improvement;
- how effectively the management of resources contributes to the raising of achievement and the attainment of the service's objectives;
- how successfully the service satisfies the requirements of the principles of Best Value;
- whether, in the light of the standards achieved by young people, the quality of youth work practice and the resources available, the service provides value for money.

In making judgements consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- ◆ *service policy and priorities, underpinned by a commitment to equality of opportunity and the promotion of racial justice, have been agreed following consultation with the community served and key partners, including young people themselves (Best Value: Consult);*
- ◆ *managers set a clear sense of direction, through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by all staff (Best Value: Challenge);*
- ◆ *there are clear roles and responsibilities, backed by effective communication, to achieve a common purpose and teamwork across the service;*
- ◆ *performance at all levels is regularly monitored and evaluated against agreed performance indicators and quality standards, in conjunction with young people (Best Value: Compare) and including direct observation of work;*
- ◆ *the findings of evaluation are used to adapt programmes, if required, plan for future work and secure improvement;*
- ◆ *professional training, updating, appraisal and supervision of staff are effective in improving the quality of provision;*
- ◆ *resources, including accommodation, are managed efficiently to match priorities and attain agreed outcomes;*
- ◆ *the service measures its cost-effectiveness and value for money within both the local and national contexts, using its own methods and taking full account of the principles of Best Value (Best Value: Compete and Compare).*

Possible sources of evidence

- service development or strategic plan;
- development plans for individual units;
- discussions with a range of stakeholders, including young people and elected representatives;
- monitoring records;
- evidence forms from direct observation of sessions;
- quality standards and performance indicators used in evaluation;
- internal reviews, including the Best Value review if available;
- surveys of user satisfaction;
- budget papers, including information about the allocation of funds to cost centres and partnerships.

The report should include an evaluation of the quality of the leadership of the service, including an assessment of the appropriateness of its policy priorities and of its quality assurance strategies; of how well staff are managed to raise achievement and support young people in their personal and social development; and how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed and value for money achieved.

