

Roots and Shoots Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 54175

Name of lead inspector: Anthony Ward HMI

Last day of inspection: 1 December 2011

Type of provider: Voluntary organisation

Address: The Vauxhall Centre,
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Information about the provider

1. Roots and Shoots Ltd (R&S) was set up in 1982 to help disadvantaged young people from Lambeth and Southwark prepare for the world of work. It is situated in Lambeth, South London, and became an independent charity in 1997. Up to 33 learners aged 16 to 24, who have had difficulty coping in the traditional education system, spend 40 weeks in a full-time training programme which helps develop their skills and confidence, and equips them for work. The site provides training facilities for horticulture and retail studies, and incorporates a wildlife garden used as an environmental resource. The wildlife garden and study centre also provide environmental education for schools and the local community. R&S employs 10 staff including the director and 2 office-based employees.

2. The Young People's Learning Agency funds Foundation Learning, leading to qualifications in literacy and numeracy and vocational subjects. Other sources of funding include charities and trusts, some commercial use of the facilities and the sale of horticultural produce.

3. Recent figures suggest that unemployment in London is now at nearly 10%, with 15% of 16- to 24-year-olds recorded as not in employment, education or training (NEET). The boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark have higher unemployment rates than London as a whole.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Foundation Learning	25 full-time learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	1
Subject Area	
Preparation for life and work	1

Overall effectiveness

4. Roots and Shoots Ltd (R&S) makes outstandingly effective provision for young people who start with significant disadvantages. Learners enjoy their programmes and the great majority progress into education, training or employment. Current learners are making good progress in both the retail and horticultural programmes. They develop good employability and personal skills, as well as self-confidence, and improve their life chances particularly well. Teachers are very flexible in response to the learners' circumstances and their particular needs. Staff offer learners exceptionally high levels of support. Most teaching is good. Programmes meet the needs of learners very well and they greatly appreciate the service and support offered. Highly effective partnerships in the local community generate excellent opportunities for learners. The board and the director provide outstanding leadership. Management of the provision is very good and has continued to provide outstanding outcomes for the learners. Learners feel very safe and are treated with respect in a very supportive environment. Staff ensure that learners are safe and promote equality and diversity particularly well. R&S manages quality improvement effectively and understands clearly what is required to improve its provision further. R&S offers outstanding value for money.

Main findings

- A high percentage of learners progress into education, training or employment. Learners greatly improve their communication, team-working skills and self-confidence. Learners develop good skills for employment, overcome significant barriers and enjoy their programmes.
- Learners feel very safe and develop great trust in their personal tutors, which motivates them to attend and enables them to thrive. R&S establishes an ethos of respect and a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour. It has very effective arrangements to improve attendance, punctuality and the learners' behaviour.
- R&S effectively encourages learners to make informed decisions about healthy lifestyles, employing external agencies very well to raise their awareness. Learners also have excellent opportunities to engage with, and contribute to, the local community.
- Teaching and learning are good, with highly committed and experienced staff. The excellent rapport between staff and learners and the inclusive environment strongly support learning and development. However, a few aspects of teaching require further improvement.
- The provision closely matches learners' needs. R&S provides a rich and varied range of additional activities which add to learners' enjoyment and increase their self-confidence. The organisation collaborates particularly well with other agencies to meet learners' individual needs. Specific additional learning support is not yet sufficiently available to all learners, although additional resources are planned.
- R&S has forged highly effective partnerships with a wide range of local and community organisations to generate excellent opportunities for learners to increase their independent living skills, develop employability skills and contribute to the community.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Learners develop trust in R&S and they feel valued. Pastoral needs are met particularly well and this enables good progress in both skills and personal development. R&S also gives excellent support to learners transferring to more appropriate provision.
- Leadership is outstanding. R&S offers a welcoming and safe environment in which learners can thrive. Managers run the centre very well and provide an outstanding resource for learners and the local community.
- Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are particularly good. Learners who are very vulnerable are nurtured and encouraged successfully in a very inclusive environment.
- R&S engages particularly well with a wide range of partners who see it as very responsive and supportive. It listens to the views of learners and other users and responds well; however, it recognises that the collection and analysis of feedback are insufficiently thorough.

- Arrangements to improve the quality of provision are effective. However R&S recognises that a few aspects, including the development of teaching, the use of data and the utilisation of users' feedback, need to be improved further.

What does Roots and Shoots need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the system for observing sessions, in order to help teachers to improve their practice continuously.
- Develop and refine data management and the use of learners' and partners' feedback, in order to inform further improvements.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the opportunities to learn new skills
- the open days when the public visit the centre
- their increased confidence as a result of coming to Roots and Shoots
- excellent staff who put in time and effort to help them
- working outside
- the chance to turn their lives around
- an opportunity to progress which no one else has offered.

What learners would like to see improved:

- nothing identified.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

5. R&S has good capacity to make and sustain improvement. High progression rates into education, training or employment have been achieved for the past three years. Leadership is very strong and R&S has developed a clear strategy for the future. The self-assessment process is broadly reliable and staff have a clear understanding of the areas which require improvement. The views of users have a direct impact on the quality of provision, although further work is required on their collation and analysis. Staff are very experienced and competent and systems are in place to develop further the quality of teaching and learning. All staff are committed and contribute well to the continued improvement of provision in order to enhance the life chances of learners. Trustees fulfil their duties well, offer good governance and give highly effective support to the organisation, enabling it to survive and grow under challenging circumstances.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

6. Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Over the last three years a high proportion of learners has progressed into education, training or employment. According to the provider's own data, the high rate of progression has been maintained during 2010/11, with well over 80% of learners progressing to positive destinations. Learners progress well while on programme, particularly in developing skills to support independent living, with many overcoming significant barriers and developing good employment skills and self-confidence in the process. Most learners gain a good range of additional qualifications in numeracy and literacy and pass rates are high. A wide range of well-planned enrichment activities encourages learners' ambitions and ensures that learners enjoy their programmes.
7. Learners greatly increase their employability, particularly through an improved work ethic, which is demonstrated through improving communication and teamwork. Staff use highly effective methods to manage learners' punctuality and attendance. They tackle problems at an early stage, resulting in very good attendance and improving punctuality. Increased self-confidence enables learners to apply their improved skills in their social and family life. Staff manage learners' behaviour very effectively, leading to significant improvements during the programme.
8. Safe working practices are evident in all aspects of the programme and learners feel very safe in this environment, which motivates them to attend and enables them to thrive. Each learner has a personal tutor and this builds a relationship of trust where learners know how to raise concerns and are confident that these will be addressed. Staff provide effective induction for learners, which establishes an ethos of respect and effectively sets expectations of acceptable behaviour.

9. R&S provides a good range of relevant activities to learners to allow them to make informed decisions about a healthy lifestyle. Specialist agencies provide information about health-related matters and, where appropriate, learners are referred to specialist agencies for counselling and other support.
10. Learners have excellent opportunities to contribute to the local community. Through open days, their work placements and working with local residents, they come to understand how they can contribute to their community. Learners enjoy these activities and recognise the benefits they bring, which enable them to increase their self-confidence and to develop and apply skills that improve their employability in practical situations.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

11. The quality of the provision is good. Highly committed and experienced staff provide effective teaching, training and assessment. The excellent rapport between staff and learners and the inclusive environment create a setting that is very conducive to learning. Staff provide constructive feedback to learners on their progress and clearly identify the improvements they need to make. Staff carry out assessment regularly and to the required standard on vocational courses. Staff use learning technology well in many sessions to support learning, but insufficiently well in others. Learners' written skills are often weak and staff do not always tackle this sufficiently well within vocational subjects.
12. The structure of the provision responds flexibly to the diverse needs of learners, and meets their needs and interests to a very high degree. Learners develop skills and knowledge that are relevant to their aims and aspirations. Staff meet learners' pastoral needs particularly well, and this enables them to progress in their skills development. Very good enrichment opportunities add to learners' enjoyment and increase their self-confidence, enabling them to develop and apply a range of skills. R&S provides good additional learning support to the majority of learners, allowing individuals to develop skills at a pace suited to their needs and to achieve over time; plans are in place to make this available to all learners. Teachers do not assess learners' functional skills routinely in order to inform the effective planning of all vocational provision.
13. Highly effective partnerships with a wide range of local and community organisations offer work placements and other excellent opportunities for learners' personal development. These enable them to increase their independent living skills, develop and apply employability skills and contribute to the community. Multi-agency approaches are utilised particularly well to meet learners' pastoral needs.
14. Outstanding support for learners enables them to make very good progress towards their aims. Staff provide induction at a pace to suit learners' needs, giving them good information on the overall programme and setting expectations for safety and behaviour. R&S meets learners' pastoral needs

particularly well, working very effectively with specialist support agencies. When necessary, R&S also provides learners with very good support for transition from the programme to other organisations where more appropriate support is available. R&S prepares learners very well for their future and offers good continuing support after learners leave.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

15. Leadership and management are outstanding. R&S is highly regarded in the local community, as it raises the aspirations and achievements of very disadvantaged young people. Its ambition for its learners is consistently demonstrated through high progression rates, and the contribution it makes to the lives of local people. R&S has significantly improved the quality of its facilities and its offer to the learners. It makes an important contribution to the wider community through ecological and horticultural work.
16. The trustees offer very strong support through good governance, clear strategic direction and their personal commitment to its success. This has significantly improved the systems and processes used to manage the facility and the planning required to sustain its future.
17. Arrangements for keeping learners safe are good. The organisation has clear lines of accountability, with the director responsible for the safety and welfare of learners. The company carries out the necessary checks on staff. Staff are appropriately trained through local authority programmes. R&S has good links with a wide range of external agencies which support the safeguarding of learners. Procedures to monitor health and safety, including risk assessments, are comprehensive. Learners are involved in risk assessment, although there is scope to extend this. Staff manage learners' safety in using electronic media in the centre; however, they provide insufficient training to learners about the use of electronic communication in their personal lives.
18. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. R&S offers excellent support and often a final opportunity to young people with significant barriers to learning. R&S works closely with a wide range of support agencies to match learners' particular needs carefully to the most appropriate provision. Staff have regular local authority training to ensure a good understanding of wider diversity issues. R&S works very effectively to help learners feel included in the centre, and also to be accepted into their communities. Learners have a clear understanding of their own roles and responsibilities and R&S has very effective arrangements in place to eliminate inappropriate behaviour. R&S celebrates learners' success at a wide range of high profile events which recognise their worth and encourage them to progress.
19. R&S engages particularly well with a wide range of local organisations which see it as a very responsive and supportive partner. These relationships are fundamental to the quality of the provision. R&S listens and acts on the

feedback from learners and other users; however, it recognises that these are not collected or analysed sufficiently well to drive improvement.

20. Staff make good use of effective systems to ensure the continuing quality of provision. For example, they internally verify assessments well and ensure that the required standards are maintained. Senior staff manage the organisation's performance effectively, so that outcomes continue to be very good. R&S implements a satisfactory system for the observation of teaching and training sessions; however, it recognises that processes to improve the quality of teaching require further development. Senior staff also recognise that their use of data needs further refining to support quality development and marketing Better.
21. R&S provides outstanding value for money. It uses the combined resources of a very strong volunteer support network and significant fundraising to provide a secure and caring environment for very vulnerable young people. The great majority of these young people progress to the benefit of themselves and the wider community. The programme offers a centre which successfully promotes healthy and environmentally sound lifestyles.

Information about the inspection

22. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Young People's Learning Agency, the previous inspection report and data on learners.
23. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners, staff, trustees and partners. They also looked at questionnaires learners had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Roots and Shoots Ltd
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	21	16	5
Part-time learners			
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1
Capacity to improve	2		
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1		
How safe do learners feel?	1		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1		
Quality of provision	2		
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1		
Leadership and management	1		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	1		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	1		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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