

# Roots and Shoots Ltd.

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		24–27 November 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- all learners make good progress from their initial starting points, with most successfully completing useful qualifications in horticulture and retail
- Roots and Shoots is particularly successful at engaging learners with significant barriers to learning, encouraging them to develop appropriate skills and promoting good progression into employment, so meeting the needs of both learners and local employers
- particularly good support helps learners develop confidence, self-esteem and pride in their attainment
- enthusiastic teachers creatively plan and use a good range of interesting activities to enhance learning
- managers and staff have very high aspirations for the attainment of learners' personal and employability skills
- highly effective partnerships with voluntary agencies and employers provide real work experiences that enrich learning and employment options
- the arrangements for safeguarding learners and promoting their understanding of equality and diversity are good.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- outcomes for learners have declined from high levels in 2012/13 and are now in line with comparable learners nationally
- information and data are not used sufficiently well to inform staff and managers about the impact of actions designed to improve the quality of the provision
- self-assessment is not sufficiently effective at identifying areas for improvement.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates, in particular those in English to be in line with those for mathematics.
- Plan learning activities more closely to match the needs of individual learners to ensure that all are engaged, supported and make appropriate progress.
- Improve the quality of written feedback on learners' work so that learners are clear on what is expected and how their work can be improved.
- Further strengthen the observation of learning and teaching to focus on the strategies teachers use to promote and reinforce learning.
- Make more effective use of data to inform improvement actions more readily, and quantify clearly targets for managers and staff.
- Broaden the range of issues covered during self-assessment to include all aspects of learning, rather than restricting the issues to those identified in the previous inspections.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. The progress that learners make from their starting points is also good, with many overcoming significant barriers and developing good employment skills and self-confidence. They greatly enjoy practical tasks in horticulture, floristry and retail, often producing products that exceed the requirements of their vocational awards.
- Learners' success rates and attainment of their learning aims are in line with similar groups nationally, with success in mathematics better than for comparable groups. Many learners also achieve awards in more than one vocational area. However, for a small number of learners, some targets and tasks are insufficiently challenging, particularly in extending their skills and understanding of English.
- Learner numbers are low, so any gaps in the performance of identifiable groups are not meaningful. However, although detailed information about learners is known to managers and staff, little analysis is attempted to explain identifiable fluctuations in performance; for example, why success rates peaked in 2012/13 and have subsequently returned to a national average, or why learners' attainment is better in mathematics than it is in English.
- Learners acquire high levels of personal and social skills. They engage in a wide range of activities, including working in local community and residential gardens, trips and visits to vocationally relevant organisations, together with taking part in competitions and shows. For example, they entered a show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show, where in 2014 they won a silver gilt award for their garden demonstrating the impact of the First World War on gardeners and gardening. They speak confidently and enthusiastically about these experiences, taking pride in their achievements and the trust they develop in themselves and the staff at Roots and Shoots.
- Progression into employment and/or further education is good. Most learners progress to a higher level of study either at Roots and Shoots or in local further education colleges. A significant number also progress to employment and apprenticeships, meeting local employment needs. There are good examples of learners progressing to apprenticeships with prestigious employers, such as the Royal Parks and the City of London Corporation. These learners often make return visits to Roots and Shoots, acting as good role models for current learners.

**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Good

- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic trainers creatively plan a range of practical activities designed to engage and motivate learners. They use a wide variety of locations and excellent resources to develop learners' skills and knowledge and, as a result, all learners make good progress, reflecting the good outcomes. For example, horticulture learners work in public spaces and gardens where they improve their confidence and communication skills when dealing with clients. Similarly, retail learners gain experience in a retail outlet selling products they have produced themselves.
- Staff have high expectations of all learners and use their vocational expertise and detailed information about the learners to plan sessions that are stimulating and engaging. For example, in one observed session, a well-known seasonal poem was used as the creative stimulus for floristry table displays to be used to decorate a room used for external events. Tutors add variety and interest to sessions using small group activities, visual displays and video clips particularly well to explain clearly what learners need to do. Tutors are skilled and use questioning techniques and further discussion particularly well to check and consolidate learners' understanding.
- The learning needs of a few learners are not wholly met by the way tutors plan lessons. Tutors plan the sessions around tasks and activities rather than individual targets, frequently focusing more on examination requirements than individual needs. Consequently, some learners, particularly the more able, have insufficiently challenging additional tasks to enable them to progress at a faster rate.
- Learners are well supported and encouraged in the development of their written work and receive constructive verbal feedback on corrections, including grammar and spelling. However, the written work of many learners remains weak, and the written feedback they receive is often cursory and does not always provide sufficient guidance nor exemplars of what is expected or how the work could have been improved.
- Trainers successfully plan the inclusion of English and mathematics into practical activities; for example, key words are identified and their spellings reinforced in horticulture and floristry sessions. Where learners are preparing picture frames and furniture for the retail shop, tutors focus attention on numeracy and dimensions. However, the strategies to reinforce these skills for some learners are insufficiently purposeful. The tasks are not always broken down for learners to be able to tackle them effectively. For example, they are not always given examples of what they need to produce, such as what an address in a letter or on an envelope should look like.
- Roots and Shoots is particularly successful at motivating and engaging learners, most of whom have complex barriers to learning. Roots and Shoots works well with other agencies to help learners gain employability and social skills and, as a consequence, learners make good progress on their chosen course and into employment. High expectations of learners, together with good individual support, encourage them to attend well, gain in confidence and enjoy learning, with many achieving qualifications in more than one vocational area in addition to English and mathematics.
- The resources used to support learning are very good, and are greatly valued by learners, providing a pleasant rural environment within the local urban area. There are gardens, a plant nursery and a retail outlet for the products of the horticultural and floristry tasks. In addition, horticulture learners frequently work in local community parks and gardens, as well as local senior care environments. There is a strong focus on sustainability and the 'green agenda', and, as a consequence, learners gain a broader understanding of the environment and the associated pressures of modern life.
- Initial advice, guidance and support are good. Staff interview learners and place them on courses that will enable them to progress to further education and employment. They have a helpful and informative induction that is constructive and which motivates them to realise the

benefits of the programmes to their progression, clearly explaining what is expected from them, and also how the programmes will provide work experience opportunities.

- Staff pay particular good attention to health and safety and safe working practices. For example, they rigorously emphasise the safe use of tools and equipment in horticulture, and knives and scissors in floristry. Staff enhance learners' understanding by good discussions in the classroom on how learners should keep themselves safe, particularly when working in public spaces.
- Staff and learners have high levels of respect for each other, with equality and diversity and learners' behaviour promoted well. Learners value each other and help each other when they can, readily helping new learners to settle quickly into their studies. Many equality and diversity issues are debated and discussed in sessions, often arising from current articles in newspapers; trainers handle these sessions well, encouraging learners to be sensitive to the language they use. Staff always challenge effectively any use of inappropriate language and behaviour. .

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The director, managers and trustees have an ambitious vision of excellence for Roots and Shoots, being highly regarded within the local and city communities. Trustees are fully committed and knowledgeable about the day-to-day running of the site and its learners. They are focused on the main mission to make a positive difference to the future prospects of the frequently disadvantaged young people participating in their study programmes. They provide effective challenge and support for the director and have a diverse and useful skill set which secures the organisation's viability, helping to raise funds for capital projects, securing ongoing funding for learners, raising the profile locally and in the city of London. However, they do not focus in sufficient detail on the planning and management of learning.
- Roots and Shoots is actively involved in green projects and uses these to engage learners and to help raise their appreciation of the wider world and their place and responsibilities within it. Many community projects are undertaken, such as maintenance of community gardens and the project to re-establish the English elm. Cuttings brought in from resistant stock in the East of England are grown by learners into young trees and then sold to charities and not-for-profit organisations in South and East London. Learners gain specific vocational skills, both growing and selling the plants, and also an appreciation of wider conservation and wildlife issues.
- High quality work placements across London are used to help raise learners' aspirations and skills. Roots and Shoots fully meets the requirements of the new study programmes. All learners receive vocational training and a qualification in functional skills, an enrichment qualification and useful work experience both on and off site. Excellent, themed open events are held at Roots and Shoots, such as the apple festival which serves to support the development of learners' relevant skills and understanding.
- Roots and Shoots works particularly hard to give learners a stimulating and diverse programme, including experience of working face to face with customers, clients, or members of the local community to help raise their confidence and skills. Staff provide excellent support for learners' personal and social needs, helping the majority to be successful in their programme and progress to further study or employment.
- Trainers are appropriately experienced in their vocational areas and all have at least initial teacher training qualifications in addition to units for assessment. All functional skills staff hold relevant teacher qualifications. A supportive observation of each trainer is conducted at least annually and results in an action plan for further development. A programme of professional development takes place and this includes important topics such as safeguarding and understanding of specific learner characteristics, such as autism and Asperger's syndrome. However, this training has relatively little focus on learning, or on identifying and improving how well individuals and groups of learners make progress within the lesson, or on the quality of lesson planning to ensure all learners make good progress.

- Appraisals are conducted annually and focus on self-reflection, both on past work and on the coming year. However, it does not utilise evidence of work performance, for example from observations of teaching sessions. The importance and characteristics of high quality teaching, learning and assessment do not have sufficient emphasis in the appraisals of teachers, trainers and relevant managers.
- Self-assessment is conducted annually and an improvement plan created containing helpful actions to support further development. Views of learners, employers and the local community are frequently considered and ongoing improvements made. However, the self-assessment mainly addresses previous inspection reports, and certain aspects of current practice, such as teaching methods and how well learners learn and make progress, are not sufficiently considered.
- As a small provider, with only 26 learners, data analysis is informal and depends on knowing each learner individually. This provides an excellent understanding of learners' personal development but insufficient insight into trends, comparative attainment or emerging issues. Inspectors identified data management during the previous inspection as an area for development, and the need for further work remains.
- Learners value highly their opportunity to learn at Roots and Shoots, talking confidently about the progress they make and how much they enjoy their studies; excellent relationships are maintained between staff and learners. The diverse programme of visits, on- and off-site work and enrichment activities help learners value their experiences and the people they share them with, promoting positive relationships.
- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. The site is carefully managed, both to allow public access and to keep learners safely supervised. Particularly good support is provided for learners to help them manage their, sometimes challenging, previous life history and to help them develop self-safeguarding skills for the future.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Roots and Shoots Ltd.

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	<b>2</b>	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>2</b>	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>2</b>	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Employability training</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	26							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mrs Linda Phillips							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2011							
<b>Website address</b>	www.rootsandshoots.com							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	20	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>								
<b>Full-time</b>	-							
<b>Part-time</b>	8							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	-							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	-							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

Roots and Shoots was established in 1982 to help disadvantaged young people from Lambeth and Southwark to prepare for the world of work. It became an independent charity in 1997. Training is provided in horticulture, floristry and retail, supporting the development of English and mathematics together with personal and social skills. The site incorporates a garden, plant nursery and retail outlet, and a wildlife garden which also acts as a study centre for environmental studies for local schools and the local community. The Education Funding Agency funds the learning, leading to qualifications in English and mathematics and vocational subjects. Other sources of funding include charities and trusts, some commercial use of the facilities and the sale of produce.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Barry Barrett-Mold

Three additional inspectors, assisted by the CEO as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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