

Roots and Shoots

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

7–9 March 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Senior leaders have high aspirations for young people and provide them with the support they need to achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of their lives.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff ensure that there is a positive and caring culture where learning takes place in a respectful, safe and purposeful environment.
- Staff provide very good support to young people that meets their learning and personal needs well.
- The majority of young people make good progress and staff help them to overcome the significant barriers to learning that they face.
- Tutors set high expectations for young people, know them well and use their expertise to teach consistently good learning sessions.
- All learners benefit from good opportunities to extend the skills and knowledge needed for employment through a good range of work-experience placements.
- Learners increase their confidence in garden maintenance and in working with customers.
- Senior leaders and managers have developed an excellent range of activities that enrich the programme and help learners improve many aspects of their lives, including their health and understanding of the wider world.
- Managers are taking effective action to address areas for improvement.
- Trustees do not receive a broad enough range of information on the effectiveness of the programme and this inhibits their ability to challenge the director and managers to do better.
- Although increasing, not enough young people achieve qualifications in their vocational subjects or in basic skills such as English and mathematics.
- In a minority of cases, teachers set targets for learners that do not provide them with enough information on how to improve their work.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Roots and Shoots was established in 1982 to help disadvantaged young people from Lambeth and Southwark to prepare for the world of work. The study programme is aimed at young people aged 16 to 19 who have mild or moderate learning difficulties, are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have low prior educational attainment. Vocational training is delivered in horticulture, retail, floristry and employability alongside functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, together with the development of young people's personal and social skills. All but one current learner at Roots and Shoots has an education, health and care plan.
- A new management team has been in place since the summer of 2016. The site incorporates a garden, plant nursery and retail outlet, a wildlife garden, a new centre for environmental studies and an allotment. Other sources of funding support the wider work of Roots and Shoots, including money raised from charities, trusts, commercial use of the facilities and the sale of produce.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the information that trustees receive on the performance of the study programme so that they are better placed to hold managers to account and oversee improvements.
- Increase the proportion of young people who achieve their vocational and functional skills qualifications.
- Ensure that targets set for learners help them understand what it is they need to do to make further progress in their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have a strong mission to provide training for young people that is holistic and takes into account their often complex education, welfare and personal and social development needs. Managers and staff share this mission and have high aspirations for young people. As a result of the good all-round support that they receive, the large majority of learners make good progress.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff have developed a positive and caring culture where learning takes place in a respectful and purposeful environment. Young people enjoy attending the centre and develop well the skills they need to play an active role in society.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff ensure that through an extensive range of partnerships, there is an excellent range of opportunities that promotes learners' well-being, broadens their experience of the world of work and helps them develop the skills that they need to progress.
- Senior leaders and managers are developing the curriculum well. They ensure that learners take full advantage of the outstanding range of enrichment activities available. Regular visits, for example to prestigious, internationally known flower shows, museums and historic sites, help broaden learners' horizons, promote British values well and provide a good, well-rounded experience for learners.
- Managers use a good range of information about learners to help plan study programmes that meet learners' individual needs. Managers liaise effectively with external agencies such as mental health services, schools and parents so that they understand fully the specific needs of individual learners and plan learning and support in response to these. Managers keep a close eye on the progress that learners make and ensure that everything is done to support young people should their progress falter.
- Senior leaders took appropriate action when the performance of the study programme declined in 2015/16. New managers have quickly gained a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and are taking effective action that is improving the experience of young people and the outcomes that they achieve.
- As a result of changes in management and staffing personnel, progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection has been slow in a few areas. However, senior leaders and managers have maintained the strengths identified at the 2014 inspection, such as the number of learners who move on successfully to further training.
- Senior leaders are building the capacity of the organisation well to ensure greater rigour in the day-to-day operation of the study programme, for example, by subcontracting specialist support in human resources and data management. This is helping managers to use data more effectively to identify where they need to make improvements.
- Senior leaders successfully secure funding from outside agencies to maintain and develop good-quality facilities and resources. Learners benefit from excellent resources at the centre and allotment.
- Managers accurately assess the strengths and areas for improvement of the study

programme and are taking effective action to address weaknesses. They have implemented an improved programme of staff development and training based on the findings of observations of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, staff are using a wide range of strategies to engage learners that supports well the progress that learners make. However, managers recognise the need to improve the recording of observations so that they better capture the learning taking place and the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.

The governance of the provider

- The board of trustees has a diverse range of relevant experience and expertise and meets regularly to review how well Roots and Shoots is developing. However, trustees do not receive a broad enough range of data and information on the quality and performance of the study programme. This inhibits them from providing effective challenge to the director and managers to do better.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers and staff share concerns that they have about learners' safety or welfare regularly. On the rare occasion where there are immediate safeguarding risks to learners, managers and staff act quickly to ensure their welfare.
- Managers have implemented the 'Prevent' duty well. Managers, staff and trustees have completed relevant training in, and have a good awareness of, the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They have assessed the risks to learners of radicalisation and extremism and put in place measures to minimise these, such as vetting procedures for external speakers and visitors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors know learners well and tailor teaching to meet their individual needs. They make good use of the information they have about learners' abilities to set interesting tasks and activities that ensure that all learners participate well in sessions and make good progress.
- Tutors set high expectations for learners to produce good-quality work and have good standards of behaviour. Learners respond well and are keen to succeed. They produce high standards of work. For example, floristry learners produce excellent table displays in a short space of time.
- Tutors are well qualified and experienced in their subject area. They use their experience well to help learners develop their knowledge. In horticulture, for example, young people learn practical skills such as how to prepare land so that it is level, and lay paving slabs to form an even seating area. They learn key garden maintenance skills well, such as how to identify and control common pests and diseases and how to weed and plant correctly.
- Tutors regularly and accurately assess learners' progress, check and correct their work and give positive encouragement to learners to work hard and progress. They provide positive feedback to learners when they produce particularly high standards of work.

- When learners are struggling with their studies or their attendance dips, staff intervene promptly and liaise effectively with learners and their parents or carers to get them back on track.
- Tutors help learners develop their understanding of equality well. For example, floristry learners had a fruitful discussion about the development of gender equality over the last century, covering the right to vote and the suffragette movement.
- In functional skills classes, tutors help learners to develop their skills in English and mathematics well. For example, tutors use quizzes to help learners to improve the spelling of difficult botanical names and improve their vocational vocabulary. In mathematics, the most able learners are able to calculate distances between different locations on a map.
- Tutors and specialist staff provide effective support for learners who need extra help to achieve, particularly those learners with more acute needs. Learners benefit from small class sizes and the additional support provided by learning support assistants.
- Tutors maintain comprehensive individual learning plans which they use to regularly review young people's progress. Learners contribute well to their own reviews by completing assessments of their own progress. However, the targets that tutors set for learners are often too general and do not help learners understand what they need to do to improve further, and this inhibits their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners develop well the skills that help them in their personal life and in building their readiness for employment. For example, they attend the programme regularly and are punctual. They grow in confidence in travelling to new destinations independently.
- Learners take pride in their work and enjoy preparing their clearly laid out portfolios that demonstrate well their learning. They enthusiastically help run open days at the centre and are pleased to show their work in the gardens.
- Learners participate in an excellent and varied range of activities through which they develop their social skills. For example, all the learners are involved in a drama project which improves their confidence in, for example, speaking out in large groups and presenting their views to others who are unfamiliar to them.
- An outstanding range of enrichment activities promotes healthy living and helps build learners' confidence very effectively. Learning support assistants help learners make healthy lunches each day. Learners, many of whom did no physical activity before they joined the programme, take part in regular exercise classes such as those for yoga, boxercise and off-road cycling.
- Learners regularly volunteer and help at local community events such as Apple Day, when around 1,000 visitors attend the centre to celebrate the apple harvest. In the recent past, learners helped construct an award-winning creative garden at the country's most prestigious flower show.
- All learners undertake work experience, the large majority with local employers. Staff support learners well through their induction to their placement. Staff thoroughly assess potential work-experience placements to ensure that they are safe for learners to attend. Staff accompany learners to work-experience placements where necessary until they are

confident enough to attend independently.

- Learners value highly work-experience placements that help them consolidate and gain skills that are crucial to their future employment prospects. These include using mathematics in the workplace to price flowers, calculate value added tax, take payments and calculate the change needed when serving customers.
- Tutors and a specialist job coach provide learners with good information, advice and guidance on their next steps. Learners meet with employers to broaden their understanding of what is expected in the workplace and of potential careers. Corporate partners contribute well to young people's learning and deliver workshops for learners on, for example, managing money and producing a good-quality curriculum vitae.
- Learners feel safe at the centre. Managers and staff respond quickly to the few incidents of bullying that occasionally take place. Tutors promote British values effectively, such as tolerance, the rule of law and democracy. While some learners struggle to understand the threat of radicalisation and extremism, all know someone at the centre they would turn to should they have concerns about their safety or that of other learners.
- Learners who have a history of being looked after by the local authority receive good support from managers and staff who share information well with other agencies, carers and local authority staff. As a result, young people are provided with the support that they need to succeed.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of learners who are currently on the study programme are on course to complete their programme successfully and gain the qualifications that they need to take their next steps in learning or employment.
- Current learners are making good progress in acquiring the skills and attributes they need to move forward with their lives. They gain increased confidence in meeting new people and coping with being in new and unfamiliar settings.
- A high proportion of learners progress to positive destinations once they complete the study programme. Most stay in learning and a minority move into employment or begin an apprenticeship. Many ex-learners return to the centre as volunteers or volunteer elsewhere.
- This year, more learners are undertaking a two-year programme and are using this time well to develop the skills they need to live with greater independence, such as increasing their confidence in using public transport.
- Learners achieve well on short courses and gain qualifications useful to them, for example in sports leadership and bicycle maintenance. Those taking qualifications in information and communication technology (ICT) achieve well. Learners take great pride in their achievements.
- There are no notable differences in the performance of difference groups of learners. Where gaps do exist, managers have increased the support available to learners and as a result of this and the close monitoring of their progress, most are on track to achieve well.
- Over the previous three years, not enough learners achieved qualifications as a part of

their study programme. The achievement of functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics was low and below those achieved by learners in similar providers. Last year, qualification achievement rates did improve from 2014/15 in all vocational areas, but remained comparatively low.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54175
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	36
Principal/CEO	Linda Phillips
Telephone number	0207 5871131
Website	www.rootsandshoots.org.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	15	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	11							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Jon Bowman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Barrett-Mold

Ofsted Inspector

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