

Greenbank Project

Partial reinspection report

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Type of provider: Voluntary organisation

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Introduction

This reinspection follows the previous full inspection of the Greenbank Project (Greenbank) in July 2009, when equality and diversity were judged to be good and overall effectiveness, outcomes for learners and quality of provision were found satisfactory. Leadership and management and capacity to improve were judged inadequate and were reinspected

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Aspect of the common inspection framework	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Capacity to improve	4	2
Leadership and management	4	2
Safeguarding	grade not previously published	2
Equality and diversity	2	1

Context

- Greenbank is a registered charity based in south Liverpool that specialises in providing education, training, sport and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, medical conditions and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Greenbank's provision, funded by the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency, includes contracts for: learning for qualifications; learning for personal and social development; and Train to Gain. The largest proportion of learners are on courses leading to qualifications. Future Jobs provision, funded by Liverpool City Council and the European Social Fund co-financed Routeways to Employment were not inspected.

Capacity to improve

- Greenbank's capacity to improve is good. Inspectors found many improvements since the previous inspection. Each reinspected aspect improved by two grades and equality and diversity by one grade. Inspectors identified further progress, since the February 2010 monitoring visit, in the two additional inspection themes. Marked improvement in the retention of learners has led to a correspondingly improved overall success rate, above the national rate in 2008/09, although with variations in different subject areas. The pace of quality improvement has increased since the monitoring visit, following the appointment of a full-time quality manager. Tutors' skills in target-setting have improved, but these are still inconsistent across subjects.
- Self-assessment is now a well-established improvement tool that draws from a broad range of evidence and reliable data. The recent draft 2009/10 self-assessment report is concise and reflects an organisation that knows itself well. Many of the findings were similar to those of the inspection team. However,

although the quality of evaluation is higher than in previous self-assessment reports, and areas for improvement are clearly articulated, some aspects remain over descriptive and record actions taken rather than evaluating their impact. Greenbank's managers are aware of the need to develop evaluative skills in their staff further.

Leadership and management

4. Greenbank has strong strategic direction in a period of significant change. The vision and strategy of the organisation is well understood and shared by all staff, who are motivated and enthusiastic about recent changes. Senior leaders understand the importance of ensuring the development of middle managers to provide stability and future leadership of the organisation. Operational managers meet monthly with individual staff to monitor the effective implementation of key targets and priorities.
5. Planning is focused and links well to programme improvement. Priorities are learner centred; business and long-term plans have clear targets that provide clear direction to ensure the stability and sustainability of the core business. However, managers recognise the need for a clearer link between the operational and strategic plans to ensure targets are even more focused.
6. Detailed knowledge of local and national priorities and labour market information, combined with Greenbank's key strengths, is being used very effectively to ensure that the organisation continues to develop in the changing economic climate. Regular meetings provide good opportunities for staff to share ideas and best practice. Staff skills, knowledge and expertise are used well to develop provision and to provide further opportunities for career progression, supported by good continuing professional development.
7. The Council of Management and sub-committees provide clear direction and a strong focus on establishing common values and key principles to inform the development of provision. They are rigorous in checking performance data and holding managers to account. In the last year, they have become significantly more engaged in all aspects of the organisation and ensure they are well informed about the progress and challenges that Greenbank faces. More recently, the levels of detail about performance management, provided in reports to the board have significantly improved.
8. Robust procedures ensure the safety and well-being of learners. Learners feel very safe. Those with poor or little prior educational experience settle well at Greenbank. The safety and well-being of staff, learners and customers takes a very high priority. Incidents and accidents are responded to promptly. Identified safeguarding issues are managed and reported effectively. Safe working practices are well promoted and learners have a good understanding of health and safety. All staff have received training on safeguarding; two have completed level 2 training. Well established plans ensure that all staff receive frequent and regular updating. Greenbank now has two trained, designated responsible persons. Well-established links with the local safeguarding board

are being used very effectively to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable learners.

9. A strong and lively equality and diversity group maintains a close oversight of all aspects of equality and diversity. Excellent progress has been made in ensuring that the progress and attainment of different groups of learners are very closely monitored. Data are now collected, analysed and used well. Greenbank's staff have high expectations that all learners will achieve their potential.
10. Effective individual support is provided for learners when needed. Support is carefully planned and managed with good involvement of learners. Good attention is placed on increasing or reducing support as learners' needs change, in particular to enable learners to develop independent learning and living skills. Learners and staff show high levels of mutual respect; learners interact with people of differing abilities, ages and cultural backgrounds very well.
11. Greenbank is particularly responsive to the needs of the local community and works hard to maximise access to its provision for under represented groups. Community partnerships are used especially well to promote inclusion and to provide learners with a broad range of work experience and taster placements.
12. Feedback from employers and schools is collected through regular surveys and frequent, formal and informal meetings. The students' union is beginning to provide effective links that engage learners in life at Greenbank more fully, through participation in open evenings, social events and providing feedback for improvement.
13. Self-assessment is well established as an integral part of the quality processes. Staff are engaged actively in the process at departmental level and consulted as the report develops. The draft 2009/10 self-assessment report is concise and shows that Greenbank staff know their provision well. The text of the report still tends to be over descriptive. In parts the report reflects actions rather than impact.
14. Quality improvement arrangements are comprehensive, well articulated in a clear visual format and inform planning. Their impact is checked through regular scheduled and unannounced audits, for instance, to check the quality of individual learning plans. The observation of the teaching and learning process has matured, is subject to a rigorous moderation process, and is leading to reliable judgements and improvement.
15. Resources are well managed: Greenbank offers good value for money. Financial management is strong. Success rates are good and improving and learners are making good progress. The quality of resources for staff and learners is good. The main centre benefits from significant financial investment and provides excellent specialist facilities for disabled people.

What does Greenbank need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the rigorous focus on monitoring attendance, punctuality and variations in success rates to achieve and maintain consistently high success rates across all subject areas.
- Ensure that all staff consistently set and monitor highly individualised learning targets, integrating them effectively into their own planning of teaching, to ensure that all learners understand their targets well and achieve them.
- Make good use of staff development and performance monitoring to build the capacity and skills of staff in order to develop effective succession planning and ensure continued and improved success of the organisation.

Additional Themes

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this reinspection.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in driving improved success rates through effective support and retention strategies?	Reasonable progress
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16. Additional support and retention strategies have proved very effective in improving success rates. Particularly well-designed systems help staff to monitor patterns in attendance and punctuality closely, and frequently to identify readily any learners at risk of leaving before their courses end, and to pinpoint areas of particular concern. Targeted additional learning support is well planned and sensitively allocated. Where learners are withdrawn from courses, it is clear that every avenue for support has been fully explored.
17. Greenbank's success rates have improved for every subject area since the previous inspection. In 2008/09, the overall success rate was 75%, 17 percentage points higher than in the previous year and just above the national average. However, marked variations between different subject areas are still apparent. For example, in hospitality, success rates improved from a low 33% in 2007/08 to 78% in 2008/09. Greenbank's 2009/10 data indicate that this rate was maintained. However, in preparation for life and work, although overall success rates improved from 52% in 2007/08 to 72% in 2008/09, data for 2009/10 show that they have fallen almost back to the 2007/08 level. Achievement remains consistently high in most courses and is 100% in many. Almost every learner who completes their course achieves his or her qualification.

Target-setting

What progress has been made to improve tutors' skills in setting individualised learners' targets and using these to plan and monitor their learning and achievement?	Reasonable progress
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18. Significant levels of staff training and support have improved their understanding about how to set and use individualised targets to plan and monitor learning and achievement. Individual learning plans are developing effectively to form a well-documented record of each learner's learning, progress and achievement. However, managers recognise that some staff still do not fully understand how to set and use targets. In the best examples seen, tutors set very clear and specific targets with achievable dates for completion. They use learners' targets in session planning to ensure that planned activities enable each learner to meet their targets. Progress reviews are detailed and supportive: they record praise for achievement and refined or new targets that maintain challenge. However, other individual learning plans seen include targets that are whole units of qualifications and not broken into achievable steps: every target is planned for completion on the same day, with no short-term achievements to motivate learners with success. Tutors do not consistently use learner's individual targets to inform their own session planning.

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