

Hill Holt Wood

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		5–7 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- The percentage of learners who achieved their qualifications since the last inspection is high but it showed a decline last year. The proportion of learners who progress onto further education, training or employment, although adequate, has also fallen.
- Too few learners achieve a qualification in English and mathematics at a higher level than the one they already had when they started their learning programme.
- The results of initial assessment are not used well to inform each individual learning plan and English, maths and information communications technology (ICT) are not sufficiently planned throughout the programme.
- Managers do not utilise data sufficiently to make decisions about the training provision.
- The self-assessment report and quality improvement plan are not sufficiently critical and challenging to bring about improvements to the provision.

This provider has the following strengths:

- The good support rangers (tutors) offer motivates learners to engage in education again. Their attendance at lessons is very high and they enjoy learning.
- Teaching and coaching, in the vocational areas in particular, is good and learners develop good personal, social and vocational skills.
- Managers and staff share a strong focus on enabling the personal and vocational growth of young people who present multiple and complex barriers to learning.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and learners become more involved in their communities through the good contributions they make while learning.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Raise outcomes for learners by increasing the proportion of learners who achieve their intended qualifications and ensuring that more learners acquire the necessary skills that will support them well in pursuing a positive destination into further education or employment.
- Further develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by using the outcomes of initial assessment better so that individualised and supportive learning is planned for each learner to allow them to fulfil their potential.
- Ensure learners make good progress in improving their functional skills by identifying and planning opportunities in the vocational areas for the development, practice and application of these skills for each learner.
- Fully utilise data to set challenging targets to improve outcomes for learners and to allow managers to monitor and evaluate the provision more effectively.
- Ensure the self-assessment report is sufficiently critical and evaluative and that it leads to meaningful actions and specific targets in the quality improvement plan.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for learners require improvement. The percentage of learners that achieved their qualifications within the Foundation learning programme was excellent in 2010/11 and, although it declined last year, it was still good and met the national average rate for other similar providers last year.
- Learners enjoy learning and their attendance is high and has increased from 77% in 2010/11 to 92%, last year. Current learners' attendance is similarly high.
- Despite this, too few learners make good progress with the development of their English and mathematics. Learners arrive at HHW with very low prior attainment of these essential skills. Last year, approximately 40% of the learners did not improve their English and mathematics skills in relation to their starting point.
- Current learners are making slow progress with their vocational qualifications. Over half of the learners have now passed the planned date for the completion of their awards.
- There are no meaningful differences in the achievement of the few females taking part in the programme compared to male learners. The number of learners from a minority ethnic background is too small to make meaningful comparisons.
- Learners develop good social, personal and vocational skills. They receive good motivation from their rangars and re-engage in education and learning, enthusiastically. Their self-esteem and confidence grows quickly once they start their programme and many develop good aspirations for pursuing their careers further. The standard of learners' work is detailed and of high quality and they observe health and safety regulations responsibly.
- The number of learners who progressed into employment or further training over the last two years has decreased from 61% to 53%, which is adequate. Although the number of learners progressing to full-time employment increased in the past 12 months, fewer learners entered full-time education than in the previous year.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, as reflected in the judgement for outcomes. Previously disengaged learners begin to appreciate and enjoy learning now. However, the development of functional skills is too slow.
- Learners are well motivated and keen to make progress. Learners are challenged well to improve their confidence and they acquire good practical skills in landscaping, construction, property renovation and forestry. Much of their learning takes place in woodlands where they develop high values with regards to sustainability, ecology and respect for nature.
- Rangers are very knowledgeable in their vocational areas and display great levels of empathy with their learners. They are committed to ensuring that learners enjoy learning within a wide range of occupational contexts while improving their skills. For example, one learner has gained a range of practical skills whilst learning about different aspects of property renovation. He takes pride in this and is now keen to pursue further training in property maintenance.
- Rangers use good, imaginative teaching and coaching skills, in particular questioning, to encourage learners to reflect accurately on their performance and to identify how they can improve. Learners develop good strategies for learning independently and from each other. For example during a mathematics session, learners worked well together to measure the circumference of a range of trees accurately.
- Learners improve their knowledge and understanding in lessons. However, rangers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of learners' potential to progress to higher levels.
- Initial assessment is adequate. All learners benefit from attending a highly interactive taster day and are interviewed to assess their suitability for the programme. This enables rangers to know the learners well and ensures that they join the correct programme.
- Initial assessment outcomes are not used effectively to plan individual learning. Assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills is insufficiently robust and rangers do not use the results to create individualised learning plans to enable learners to make sufficient progress in functional skills. Rangers tend to rely on learners identifying themselves as needing additional support.
- The assessment of learning is effective in helping learners to improve their practice and reflective skills. Through the frequent and good quality verbal feedback, learners develop good problem-solving and deeper thinking skills. However, written feedback that includes targets to improve is too vague to help individual learners to progress.
- Too few learners make good progress in the development of English, mathematics and ICT. These skills are broadly integrated within learners' vocational programmes. However, the teaching of these skills is not planned sufficiently well throughout the programme to allow learners to develop the topics identified as needing improvement.
- Learners benefit from specialist careers advice that identifies their personal strengths and career interests and offers advice on possible progression routes. The advice interventions are formally recorded but they are not monitored sufficiently well to ensure that all learners make progress towards their career goals.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well in the working and learning environments. Learners develop a good understanding of diversity by, for example, working alongside adults with mental health conditions. They feel safe and are well protected from harassment and bullying.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the provision require improvement. HHW has a clear mission and vision, shared by its staff, to develop the learner as an individual, experiencing full personal, social and educational growth. Leaders and rangers demonstrate high ambition and aspiration for learners ensuring they engage in education and employment and begin to consider their future careers, in some cases, for the first time. However, the provider does not set sufficiently challenging targets for the achievement of learners' qualifications and their progression rates into further training or employment.
- The board very effectively challenges the leaders and managers of the organisation to deliver good value for money by making sure the number of learners who access the offer is maximised and that HHW delivers high quality training.
- HHW has built strong partnerships in the community that have a real benefit to learners. It has developed very effective links with employers who have championed their roles to learners, for example, by highlighting the value of having good numeracy skills across a variety of industry sectors. The particularly effective networks with local councils and businesses have provided learners access to work and learning opportunities such as the renovation of housing in the locality and the maintenance of green areas.
- Performance management is good at HHW. Rangers hold frequent meetings with their line managers in which barriers to delivering their role to a high standard are identified and addressed. Managers focus on ensuring that teaching staff receive the appropriate training and development to enable them to deliver good teaching and coaching.
- Comprehensive teaching and learning observations give managers have a view of the quality of teaching and learning. Together with the rangers, they agree individual areas for improvement that have a clear impact on the quality of learning. As a consequence, staff are very aware of their own teaching strengths and weaknesses.
- HHW gathers extensive users' feedback on mostly an informal basis and uses it effectively to bring about improvements to the quality of the provision. The monitoring of individual learners' attendance and progress is frequent and the provider has a good understanding of how each of the learners is progressing with the vocational element of their programme. However, data referring to the overall progress of individuals and to the achievement for the entire cohort of learners are not sufficiently monitored and evaluated to inform managerial decisions that lead to improving outcomes.
- The self-assessment process is well established and staff contribute adequately to the annual report. However, the self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. For example, it does not focus appropriately on explaining the decrease in success rates and positive progressions. The quality improvement plan does not contain specific actions and target dates that have a meaningful impact on improving the provision and the outcomes for learners.
- The provider works well to plan pro that meets the needs of learners. HHW is well informed about the local and regional changes in labour market trends and has well advanced plans to develop the provision further in an urban setting to recruit learners from some very deprived areas. HHW has planned the further expansion of the curriculum effectively in order to include the delivery of ICT skills. However, the integration of all the components of the current Foundation learning programme needs further work. In particular, more structured planning for the successful delivery of English and mathematics throughout the programme is required.
- The promotion of equality and diversity at HHW is good. All groups of learners attain similar outcomes. Staff receive annual updates on equalities issues and the anti-bullying and harassment policies are detailed and offer good guidance on the signs that might indicate that learners are becoming victims of such behaviours. Recent marketing has increased the number of females entering the programmes. HHW very effectively promotes a sense of inclusivity for all

learners by providing them with learning opportunities where they make valuable contributions to their local communities. The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. HHW takes appropriate measures to manage risk and rangers place a good emphasis on keeping learners safe during both classroom and outdoor learning activities.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Hill Holt Wood

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
	Overall effectiveness	3						3	
	Outcomes for learners	3						3	
	The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3						3	
	The effectiveness of leadership and management	3						3	

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation learning	3

Additional socio-economic information

HHW is a registered social enterprise and charity based in ancient woodland covering 34 acres of land in Norton Disney, Lincolnshire. The provider manages a total of 600 acres across the locality where a team of 18 trainers, known as rangers, deliver HHW's training provision.

The majority of learners have a recognised social or learning need and/or a disability. Learners are based in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Newark. According to the latest census, the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSEs in the area was slightly above the national rate of 81%. The unemployment rate for the region of Lincolnshire varies between five and seven per cent compared to the national rate of four per cent.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Maria Navarro HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the training manager 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 two 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 of the 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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[Piccadilly Gate](#)
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