

Route2work

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates		24–26 June 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
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:

- learners' targets and goals are not consistently clear and individualised to plan learning and demonstrate the progress they make; recording and reviewing of all aspects of learners' progress, including their personal and social skills, are not consistently good
- the full development of learners' English and mathematical skills is not integrated and embedded across the whole curriculum
- written feedback to learners on the quality of their work and the progress they are making does not explain clearly how they can improve
- quality assurance processes are insufficiently specific and do not provide a clear focus on what Route2work needs to do to ensure consistent, rapid and sustainable improvement in all areas of its work
- the management and monitoring of staff performance are insufficient and do not enable all staff to improve their practice quickly enough.

This provider has the following strengths:

- outcomes for the majority of learners are good, particularly for those who were not previously in education, employment or training and/or those who have been unsuccessful in prior educational establishments
- learners make good progress in developing the skills they need to become more independent and to achieve their long-term goals. These include developing confidence, independent living skills, managing their behaviour and gaining relevant qualifications
- Route2work provides good work experience and volunteering opportunities that successfully develop many of the skills learners need to support their future lives
- the quality of learning support is good and effectively supports the progress learners make in lessons and in the workplace
- trustees, parents, carers, staff, employers and other partners work extremely well together to fulfil the ambitious vision of the college to help all learners move into permanent employment or volunteering.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Make sure staff set meaningful targets for learners to achieve, including those relating to learners' personal and social development. Monitor and improve the consistency of all targets and ensure that recording of progress indicates clearly what learners can do and what they need to work on.
- Integrate, reinforce and embed functional skills consistently throughout all learners' programmes so that learners understand the importance and relevance of these skills in daily living and in employment.
- Ensure all teachers and support staff receive clear actions following lesson observations so they are better placed to improve their practice. Additionally, ensure managers systematically check the quality of all learning, including the impact of support staff and staff who deliver and support work experience.
- Strengthen the performance management of staff by making certain that actions arising from appraisals and observations of teaching, learning and assessment align more closely.
- Improve the quality of teachers' written feedback on learners' work so that learners are not just clear about what they do well but are also clear about what they could do better.
- Sharpen the focus of quality improvement and action plans to enable senior managers and trustees to review and assess, with confidence, the full impact of their actions. Use data better, including trend data, to inform the self-assessment process.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Established in September 2014, Route2work offers educational provision for learners aged 16–25 with autism spectrum disorders, behavioural needs, and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection Route2work had been delivering study programmes for learners aged 16–19 and learning programmes for older learners for 10 months. The majority of the provision is at entry level with a small amount at level 1.
- Learners make good progress towards realising their planned learning goals. A highly effective blend of work placements, enrichment and classroom-based learning provides learners with plentiful opportunities to develop confidence and competence in English and mathematics, alongside their social, personal and work skills.
- Almost all learners are studying accredited qualifications in English and mathematics as well as qualifications in vocational skills. Early results are good for many learners.
- The working environment provides many varied opportunities for learning. All learners participate in carefully selected work placements where they make very good progress in understanding the world of work. They develop their employability skills successfully, improving timekeeping, communication and teamwork through a range of job roles. For example, they take orders, serve light refreshments and market a local coffee shop, manage the switchboard, receive visitors and frank letters in a local office, and deliver presentations to school groups and other visitors at a local history centre.
- A broad and well-planned range of enrichment activities reinforce and develop further the skills learned in the workplace. Learners plan, cost and book activities such as bowling and restaurant meals, making good use of their increased English, mathematical and communication skills. In the autumn term learners produced and performed in a Christmas pantomime having successfully bid for a sum of money to support the development of their singing and stage management skills.

- Reviews of progress carried out by learning support staff identify that across most aspects of the study programme learners make good progress relative to their starting points. However, the lack of specific, individual targets makes it difficult for staff and learners to understand the extent and impact of their progress. Targets resulting from termly and annual reviews are often too general and descriptive. All staff are aware of this and are currently developing a process to capture learners' progress more systematically.
- The progress learners make towards improving and managing their behaviour at college, in the workplace and at home is particularly good. Many learners join the provision displaying various levels of challenging behaviour and disengagement with learning. Appropriate personal development plans and very effective individual support planned in conjunction with the learner provide strategies to manage and reduce the incidence of these behaviours.
- Parents speak highly of the progress learners make during their time at Route2work. They report that learners 'gain in confidence and, most of all, self-respect', and that '... he sees the link between knowledge and the world of work'. One learner who would not enter the building when he first enrolled at the provider now attends full time and has successfully gained paid employment with a local business.
- Most learners develop a good range of English and literacy skills which improves their understanding of the written and spoken word. Additionally, they acquire good listening and advocacy skills. They also develop their mathematical knowledge through activities such as money handling in the workplace, in shops and when using public transport and demonstrate increasing confidence in using this knowledge.
- Attendance and punctuality are good; behaviour is excellent. For learners with a history of very poor attendance and/or poor behaviour in previous education, this is a considerable achievement.
- The programme is at an early stage of delivery and consequently there are no destination data. Route2work does not yet have sufficient information to identify and analyse trends in performance.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. The quality of support for learning is good. Staff have high expectations of what learners can do and plan sessions around the qualification requirements. However, targets are not sufficiently broken down to meet the individual needs of learners or to reflect the full range of their development needs. This means that tutors do not take full account of the small steps of learning that each learner makes in order to progress.
- Staff know their learners well. The planning of learning takes good account of the varied needs of learners. It makes good use of learners' interests and start points to ensure that learning is interesting, relevant to the workplace and supports the development of good behaviour management. All staff make use of a wide range of strategies and workplace opportunities to develop learners' independence, communication and vocational skills.
- Managers do not have sufficient information to evaluate fully the progress of learners from their starting points. Individual learner's targets are not precise enough to ensure effective assessment of their short-, medium- and long-term progress. Although the daily progress of learners is appropriately monitored, their overall progress over time is not always captured in sufficient detail in review documents.
- Learners make good progress in developing work skills. All learners complete work experience placements based on their skills and interests. Learners demonstrate a positive attitude to their work. They understand their tasks and complete them successfully. Some learners progress to working without support. Support staff work effectively with learners to extend their understanding of how to apply the skills learned in college to the workplace.

- The quality of written feedback varies too much. For example, feedback on learners' progress towards an aspect of their accredited qualification ranges from detailed and developmental to a short statement such as 'good work'. Generally feedback praises the learners for what they do, but does not clearly explain what they need to do to improve further. Occasionally, written feedback contains spelling and grammatical errors.
- In sessions, tutors make good use of questioning to check learners' understanding and they use realistic examples from their daily lives. Staff use praise appropriately to recognise learners' achievements, increasing motivation and extending participation within the activities. However, tutors do not always explore responses to extend learning or correct errors.
- The quality of support for learning is good. Support staff work cooperatively with tutors to facilitate learners' participation in their learning. Support staff and tutors meet daily to share information about learners' well-being and plan support for sessions. Staff successfully foster a culture of respect at all times and learners respond well, engage in learning and challenge themselves to succeed.
- Study and learning programmes are effective in providing English and mathematics in the classroom and the workplace. However, the integration and reinforcement of functional skills across all learning is not consistent. In the best examples, tutors and learning support staff carefully capture the learning taking place in the workplace, record this clearly and link it to classroom and accredited learning, and to the planning of future learning. Not all staff are equally skilled at this and they do not capture in enough detail what has been learned or relate it to classroom learning. Targets relating to the acquisition of functional skills in the workplace are not sufficiently challenging or detailed.
- The use of technology is underdeveloped. Much of the learners' work is handwritten and there are too few opportunities for them to learn how to use information and communication technology to present information to a high standard, to monitor their progress or to be more efficient in the workplace.
- The promotion of diversity in all aspects of the learners' experience is good and skilfully embedded across Route2work activities. Learners define key vocabulary and bring examples of stereotyping from their own experiences to lessons. Football games include mixed teams and celebration of cultural events is frequent. Support workers use learning from the workplace to reinforce learners' understanding. For example, in one lesson a learner discussed the creation of footpaths that were more accessible to those with mobility difficulties.
- Learners benefit from effective guidance from support staff to help them plan work placements and prepare for employment. A focus on the writing of curricula vitae, completing job and college applications, and interview support has been a key aspect of transition planning for the few learners leaving the programme this year. The intended outcomes of these activities are not clearly recorded in personal development plans and consequently, a minority of learners are not clear about the purpose of these activities or what they will be doing when they leave Route2work.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Trustees and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the Route2work programme based on high expectations for learners. Central to this vision is that all learners can and should progress into work or sustainable volunteering opportunities.
- Well-managed study and learning programmes include sessions designed to help learners improve their English and mathematics, participate in meaningful work experience and gain accredited vocational qualifications.
- The curriculum is well thought out and planned carefully to ensure that every learner has an individual timetable that matches their specific needs and aspirations. Regular curriculum reviews ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of learners. Staff make good use of

feedback from parents, learners and employers in the design, content and delivery of the curriculum.

- The highly skilled Board of Trustees makes particularly good use of local contacts, labour market information and personal expertise to ensure learners participate in realistic and purposeful work placements where there is a strong possibility of progression into paid employment.
- Partnerships with the local community, employers and the local authority are well established and effective in ensuring that learners have a wide range of local community-based learning opportunities.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment lacks rigour. The observation process for monitoring the performance of staff and the quality of learning sessions does not focus sufficiently on learning and its impact on the progress of the learner. Observations do not lead to clear action plans to help teachers improve the quality of what they do. Appraisals of staff do not link clearly to the outcomes of the observation process.
- The paperwork to record and report on observations is overly prescriptive and does not prioritise learning. Currently, no observations have taken place focusing on the impact of learning support in the classroom and the workplace.
- Trustees receive clear information about all aspects of the work of Groundwork Trust through monthly reports and regular visits. However, the self-assessment report and the supporting action plans focus on the whole range of South Tyneside and Newcastle Groundwork Trust projects. Consequently, key improvements and targets are too general. For example, a target of 90% achievement refers to the accredited qualifications learners complete during the programme.
- Self-assessment and action planning do not take account of the small steps of learning that contribute to learners' gains in confidence, personal and social skills, managing behaviour and employability skills. As a result, the trustees are not able to judge accurately the quality and pace of progress learners are making and hold senior managers to account.
- Staff training and development are good. Most staff are well qualified and receive continuing professional development so that they can continue to meet the changing needs of learners. Staff who wish to gain higher-level qualifications receive good support through reduced and flexible work patterns.
- The focus on inclusivity, respect and tolerance is very good. Staff at all levels provide an exceptionally welcoming and respectful ethos that permeates the provision. Recently managers have taken action to include the government's 'Prevent Strategy' to identify and manage risky behaviour that may lead to the radicalisation of learners. The newness of the programme means that the use of data to analyse trends in performance is at an early stage.
- Safeguarding procedures are good and Route2work meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Staff receive the training they need to ensure the safety of learners in their care. Innovative use is made of social media to ensure unsupported learners are attending work placements and are safe. Links with the local safeguarding children board, social services and families are good and proactive.
- Learners benefit from comprehensive risk assessments that help them to remain safe in a variety of settings on the main campus and in the wider community. Learners say they feel safe and families report high levels of confidence in staff. Incidents are rare but when they occur staff deal sensitively with vulnerable learners and their families.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Route2work

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Independent living and leisure skills	3

Type of provider	Independent specialist college								
Age range of learners	16-18 and 19+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	None								
Principal/CEO	Mr Andrew Watts								
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected								
Website address	www.groundwork.org.uk/stan								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	3	16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None								

Contextual information

Route2work is an independent specialist provider and a registered charity. Groundwork South Tyneside & Newcastle (GWSTaN) is an independent specialist provider and a registered charity. It is a local charity and part of the federation of independent charities which make up the Groundwork Federation. Each Groundwork trust is a member of the federation and signs up to a set of common aims and strategies, including improving people's prospects.

It caters for learners aged 16–25 with high needs across South Tyneside and Newcastle. All learners attend daily; the provider does not have any residential provision. Route2work started to offer programmes funded by the Education Funding Agency from September 2014. A one-year pilot, funded by the local authority, preceded the introduction of the programme. At the time of the inspection Route2work had been in receipt of EFA funding for 10 months. All learners are from the surrounding local authority areas and attend for five days a week. Route2work is one of the 175 projects that GWSTaN deliver. GWSTaN is governed by a local board made up of representatives from members including the Groundwork Federation. A board of trustees oversee the local strategic direction, operational performance and financial management of the trust.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Elaine Clinton HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Specialist Learning 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. They also used data on learners' achievements over the last 10 months 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:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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