

# Hill Holt Wood

Not-for-profit organisation

## Inspection dates

29 November – 1 December 2016

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Learners' attendance across all vocational areas is not consistently high.
- Not all learners experience high-quality taught sessions that effectively address their individual development needs.
- The proportion of learners who achieve qualifications and/or progress to their planned next step on leaving the programme is not yet good enough.
- Information, advice and guidance do not ensure that all learners have an adequate understanding of future career opportunities.
- Learners' appreciation of fundamental British values, staying safe online and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation requires improvement.
- Governors and senior leaders have yet to deliver improvements to the provision's quality so that all learners achieve.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Learners develop good employability and practical skills; they are proud of their achievements and enjoy their learning.
- Learners feel very safe and value the culture of tolerance and respect they experience while on their programme.
- Learners receive good personal and learning support that helps them to succeed.
- Learners receive good coaching and feedback on their performance that help them to develop their practical vocational skills.
- Leaders and managers ensure good and productive collaboration with local employers, and other stakeholders, benefits learners.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Hill Holt Wood is a registered social enterprise and charity based in ancient woodland in Norton Disney, Lincolnshire. The provider manages a total of 1,000 acres of woodland and amenity land across the locality where a team of rangers and senior rangers deliver the training provision.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have established motorbike mechanics training in Gainsborough. Catering programmes are offered at the main site in Norton Disney. In addition, tutors deliver heritage woodcraft in a second woodland. The majority of learners have a recognised social or learning need and/or a disability. Learners are primarily recruited from the Lincoln, Sleaford, Gainsborough and Newark areas. Typically, they attend for one to five days per week over a year.
- The proportion of young people leaving schools in Lincolnshire with at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics is similar to the national rate. Educational levels of the population as a whole are slightly lower than average for England. Unemployment is higher than the national rate.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and qualification achievement rates by ensuring that tutors:
  - use the outcome from learners' starting point assessment to plan personalised learning
  - set and monitor ambitious and precise targets that include those for personal, social and employability skills development to promote success
  - challenge learners to think through and solve problems with the minimum of help
  - within English and mathematics classes, rigorously check learners' progress and swiftly intervene where performance is below expectations
  - routinely correct learners' written work to ensure that they know how to improve and act on this information.
- Ensure that the quality assurance of taught sessions conforms to the planned observation schedule and leads to rapid improvements for learners.
- Introduce effective arrangements to challenge learners whose attendance is low.
- Provide well-synchronised, high-quality information, advice and guidance, so learners develop a realistic understanding of the available career pathways.
- Introduce learning activities that raise all learners' appreciation of fundamental British values, staying safe online and the risks of extremism and radicalisation.
- Ensure that governors make use of more detailed management information so they can better hold managers to account for their performance in rapidly improving the provision's quality.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Managers do not ensure that the quality assurance of taught sessions is fully effective in raising standards. Managers identify tutors' development points and implement remedial action, but have not carried out all observations within the expected time. The observation process fails to evaluate sufficiently how well learning is taking place. As a result, not all learners receive consistently high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. This results in them not always attaining or progressing to their full potential.
- Leaders and managers acknowledge that their analysis and use of data for planning, monitoring and decision making requires improvement. In addition, they make insufficient use of targets to allow for the comprehensive evaluation of the success of implemented actions in improving the learning experience.
- Managers have not acted swiftly enough to improve arrangements for information, advice and guidance. Learners receive useful help from tutors to prepare them for their next steps but managers recognise that this is too limited. Relevant staff training to build capacity is being undertaken but the help current learners receive is not sufficiently effective.
- Managers do not ensure that tutors always challenge learners to develop their English and/or mathematics skills so they attain to their full potential. Managers are aware that they need to more rigorously monitor and improve learners' performance to raise achievement.
- Leaders and managers use productive partnerships with employers and other providers of education and training to offer learners a good range of development opportunities, for example collaborative working with a local council offers learners specialist environmental and countryside maintenance experience. Joint action to provide learners, predominantly from the Traveller community, with construction skill training have been successful. Managers have used their good links with schools to introduce a programme for learners with identified high needs. Senior managers have carefully developed and aligned the study programme content to meet local skill shortages and priorities.
- Leaders and managers have a good appreciation of what actions they need to carry out to improve the provision. The trustees have recently appointed new key staff, including the chief executive officer and training manager, who have implemented a detailed and realistic improvement plan. Managers monitor the plan as part of effective performance management that is leading to improvements for all learners.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have improved the self-assessment process so that it includes a wide range of stakeholders' views. The associated report is self-critical and accurately identifies most of the areas for improvement identified during the inspection. However, managers have not used the available data well enough to evaluate fully the provision's quality and to identify all areas of weakness identified at inspection.
- Managers effectively use staff development to improve tutors' vocational skills. Tutors apply this learning well by developing learners' up-to-date vocational skills and knowledge to the level that employers require. Tutors have appropriate teaching qualifications but do not participate in a sufficiently wide range of updating training to improve professional

practice. Managers do not routinely share the good practice identified in taught sessions to raise the performance of all tutors.

### **The governance of the provider**

- The board of trustees brings a good range of relevant experience and knowledge to their role. They use this well to monitor managers' and tutors' contribution to achieving the clearly stated values and strategic direction. They have a strong commitment to providing a good experience for all learners and actively seek relevant training and advice to improve their effectiveness as trustees.
- Trustees make good use of their wider network of contacts to bring new ideas and commercial opportunities to help sustain the provider and add to the learners' experiences.
- Trustees ensure appropriate challenge and scrutiny of the regular reports they receive from the chief executive officer. The range of management information used requires improvement to allow for more regular and detailed checking of managers' success in raising standards for all learners.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers give safeguarding a high priority so that the protection afforded to all learners is continually improved. Managers make good use of available information to assess and minimise the risk associated with individual learners. Managers ensure that recruitment checks on staff are comprehensive and records are accurately maintained
- Leaders and managers have established a calm and harmonious learning environment where learners and tutors treat each other with mutual respect. Managers keep detailed accounts of safeguarding incidents and respond quickly where staff or learners raise concerns. They make appropriate use of external agencies when making referrals for specialist help.
- Learners feel well protected while attending their programme and demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will protect them from harm. Learners demonstrate a very sound understanding of health and safety practice and apply it well when undertaking practical work.
- Leaders and managers have appropriately implemented actions in response to the 'Prevent' duty. However, they have not improved, to a high enough level, all learners' appreciation of the dangers posed by extremism and radicalisation. Learners' awareness of how fundamental British values apply to their personal lives and wider society requires improvement. Their understanding of how to stay safe when using social media and the internet is not consistently high enough.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Learners do not always make the progress they should because of the variable quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Tutors' use of relevant strategies to develop learners' thinking and problem-solving skills is not consistently effective. In a minority of class-based tasks tutors provide learners with the answers too quickly, rather than helping them to discover and work things out for themselves.

- Tutors do not consistently use the assessment of learners' starting points well enough to plan individualised learning. This impedes learners' progress. Tutors have recently started using an assessment of learners' personal and employability skills when they commence their programme. Not every tutor uses this information well enough to help learners achieve by setting and monitoring challenging personalised targets.
- Within English and mathematics programmes, managers and tutors do not effectively monitor progress frequently enough. Tutors do not identify what further corrective actions they need to implement, and consequently slow learners' achievement.
- Learners' progress reviews require improvement to ensure that they effectively promote learners' personal, social and employability skills. Too often tutors set targets for learners that lack precision and therefore do not effectively support achievement. In a minority of cases, targets set by tutors only relate to the completion of the vocational qualification. As a result, learners and tutors cannot routinely identify all progress made and the further actions needed to promote wider skills and knowledge.
- Learners' understanding of what equality and diversity means in life and work needs further development. In a few instances, tutors make good use of learners' class and fieldwork on biodiversity and sustainability to promote their appreciation of living in a diverse community. Tutors do not plan classes or exploit topics generated during taught sessions well enough to enhance and reinforce learners' awareness throughout their programme.
- Tutors do not consistently correct learners' written work for errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, learners often fail to understand how to improve their written English skills. Tutors do not sufficiently encourage learners to spell correctly the technical vocabulary used in their vocational area. By contrast, tutors successfully develop learners' verbal and listening skills from what are usually very low competence levels.
- Tutors very effectively integrate English and mathematics within vocational areas. This helps learners to appreciate better the relevance of English and mathematics in the workplace and engages them in the set tasks. For example, in the classroom, learners calculated the area and volume of different shapes before going into the woodland to measure a range of logs. They then used this data to calculate volume and the timber's commercial worth. In another instance, tutors required learners to use reference books to discuss and debate the best method of completing a practical pruning exercise. This successfully encouraged them to practise their reading and develop their independent learning skills.
- The environment in which the training sites are situated offers highly effective work experience and opportunities for learners to develop their practical, creative and teamworking skills. Very experienced and vocationally skilled tutors convey their knowledge and skills to learners particularly well. Learners have the opportunity to participate in a good mix of classroom and practical work in the land-based and catering sector. This effectively allows learners to apply classroom learning to real work situations and promotes their understanding of applying theory to practical situations.
- Tutors use good coaching and feedback skills when developing learners' practical vocational skills. They observe and listen carefully to learners, exploring their understanding with incisive questioning, to identify areas for improvement. As a result,

learners are reassured to try things out independently and reflect on how they can learn from any mistakes they have made.

- Tutors provide good personal and learning support to help learners overcome barriers to progressing in their vocational qualifications. High-needs learners have very effective individual help that ensures that they complete planned tasks and encourages independence. Support received by learners aged under 16 years ensures that they settle quickly into their programme and develop the confidence to deal with progressively more complex challenges.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Attendance, particularly for learners aged 16 to 19 following a study programme, requires improvement. Managers recognise, but have yet to address effectively, the attendance patterns of a minority of learners that significantly lower the overall rates.
- Learners are not developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills sufficiently well. Managers have invested in appropriate ICT resources for all learners but they are not currently in regular use. Learners do not have the opportunity to achieve a nationally accredited ICT qualification.
- Learners do not receive good enough careers advice and information to ensure that they always know the full range of options available to them. Learners aged 16 to 19 are not sufficiently aware of their programme level and content to allow them to make realistic decisions about their future.
- Learners are generally well behaved, support each other well and show sensitivity towards the diverse needs of others. They are familiar with the standards required of them with regard to their behaviour, attitudes and tolerance towards others. In a small minority of cases, tutors do not always challenge inappropriate language by consistently applying previously set and agreed boundaries. This is particularly the case for study programme learners aged 16 to 19 years.
- Learners benefit from participating in a good range of activities that extend their learning and social skills. Learners who have not travelled outside their immediate community undertake residential trips to other parts of the country to participate in practical activities. This allows them to work alongside others and experience different ways of working. Learners attend a wide range and variety of exhibitions and site visits to extend their knowledge of work practices. For example, a recent external visit allowed learners aged under 16 years to gain an appreciation of how industry uses waste product incineration to generate energy while minimising environmental pollution.
- Learners take pride in their work and achievements and enjoy their learning. This experience motivates them to complete creative activities in their own time. For example, learners of all ages are keen to show and discuss their completed work and new hobbies, including woodcarving and writing poetry.
- Learners develop a good range of employment related skills by working in woodlands and the local community. For example, they learn to participate in productive teamworking to complete projects such as the removal of illegally dumped waste and the re-establishment of pathways and garden beds. Learners show a good appreciation of how to work safely and the importance of sound tool and equipment maintenance.

- Learners feel very safe and know whom to go to in order to raise concerns. The good relations between tutor and learners mean that learners are willing to confide in their tutors and are confident that they will act upon their concerns.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- In the most recent complete academic year, the proportion of learners aged 16 to 19 years achieving their main qualification has risen in comparison to the previous period but requires improvement. The rate at which learners achieve by the planned end date is not high enough. The proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics requires improvement. The rate at which learners acquire the relevant industry certification to allow them to work on building sites is good.
- Managers have correctly identified that achievement gaps exist between different groups. For example, the rate of main qualification achievement for children looked after and those receiving free school meals is lower than that of their peers. Male learners achieve qualifications at a higher rate than females. Managers' actions to close these and other achievement gaps have not had a significant impact.
- The proportion of 16 to 19 study programme learners who progress to their planned next step requires improvement so that a higher proportion move to sustained employment, education and/or training. Managers very effectively monitor learners' destinations and help learners to return to study where they have left their programme earlier than planned. Tutors adequately prepare learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities for independence in their everyday life.
- All current learners are making appropriate progress towards achieving their targets and qualifications when compared to their starting point. The large majority are on track to achieve within the planned time. Managers have recently improved the tracking of learners' overall progress and support arrangements to promote their achievement. Managers know that the tracking process needs further development to ensure that it fully contributes to rapid learner success.
- Learners develop their ability to use hand tools well so they can complete tasks to a good standard. For example, learners make and erect fencing and signposts to a commercial standard. Learners adeptly use an appropriate range of cooking implements to create fresh pasta and different sauces for meals sold to the public.
- Learners make good improvements in practical vocational skills development. Land-based programme learners demonstrate a good standard of tree pruning and cutting techniques that maximises harvesting while minimising infection and disease. Learners on the construction programme develop a good variety of competent joinery skills through building wooden buildings and furniture. Learners in receipt of high-needs funding use traditional wood-carving methods to produce good-quality decorative items. A high proportion of learners gain industry-specific qualifications such as strimming and/or brush cutting that are valued by employers.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	52210
Type of provider	Not-for-profit organisation
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	64
Principal/CEO	Steven Donagain
Telephone number	01636 892836
Website	<a href="http://www.hillholtwood.com">www.hillholtwood.com</a>

## 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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	36	1	16	5	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	14							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	15							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							



## Information about this inspection

The chief executive officer as nominee assisted the inspection team. 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, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Nigel Bragg, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jean Webb

Ofsted Inspector

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