Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

The Greenbank Project

Not-for-profit organisation

Inspection dates	16–19 January 2018

Overall effectiveness			**Good**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	**Good**	Adult learning programmes	**Good**
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**Good**	Provision for learners with high needs	**Good**
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	**Good**		
Outcomes for learners	**Good**		

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have rectified successfully the vast majority of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good because leaders and managers have implemented effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Leaders, managers and staff have developed a culture of high expectations of what students can achieve, which they promote successfully among parents and carers, employers and other key stakeholders.

- Leaders and managers have continued to foster strong partnerships, resulting in courses and activities that meet students' individual needs and that help them to achieve their long-term goals and ambitions.

- Tutors use a variety of stimulating, creative and interesting activities in lessons that enthuse and motivate students, and meet their diverse needs.

- Support for students with high needs helps them to learn independently, to make their own decisions and to work with decreasing levels of support over time.

- Students are very well behaved, show an awareness and respect for others and develop highly effective independence, social and communication skills.

- Achievement rates on the large majority of accredited courses, including functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, have improved markedly since the previous inspection.

- The new approach to establishing starting points for students with high needs requires further development to ensure that all students are enrolled on the right level of course for their abilities.

- Feedback for students with high needs is encouraging and motivational but it is not sufficiently developmental, resulting in a minority of students being unable to identify or express what they need to do to improve their work.

- Leaders and managers do not have a clear enough oversight of the progress that students make across their whole programme over time.

Full report

Information about the provider

■ The Greenbank Project is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It consists of Greenbank College and Greenbank Sports Academy. The college provides education and training to disabled people and other disadvantaged groups in the community. This inspection covered Greenbank College only. The college offers full-time provision for students aged 16 to 25, most of whom have education, health and care (EHC) plans. In addition, the college offers accredited and non-accredited courses for adults aged 19 and over. The college has a small subcontracting arrangement with a special school in Knowsley to offer courses for 23 students aged 16 to 18 who have special educational needs (SEN).

■ The Liverpool City Region (LCR) has the highest unemployment rate across the north-west region and nationally. The Greenbank Project is recognised as a key influencing partner in the LCR and has contributed recently to the development of the city region's skills strategy.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

■ Leaders and managers should continue their effective work to raise the quality of teaching and learning. To do this, leaders should concentrate on:

– improving the quality of feedback that students receive so that it is sharply focused and consistently helpful in enabling students to understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work and make even better progress

– ensuring that information on students' starting points is accurate and clear so that all students are enrolled to the right level of course for their abilities

– improving the new system for the monitoring and recording of students' progress so that they have a more effective oversight of the progress that students make across their whole programme over time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Senior leaders and 'council of management' members who have responsibility for governance have high expectations of staff and students. In 2016/17, the new chief executive officer restructured the senior management team and introduced a senior leadership team. The changes have improved overall accountability within the organisation. The new team has made rapid improvements that have dealt with most areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection.

- Leaders, managers and council members accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in the most recent self-assessment report. The draft 2016/17 self-assessment report is evaluative and identifies clearly how actions taken by leaders and managers have improved the quality of the provision. Leaders are taking effective action to deal with the areas for improvement that they have identified. For example, they have implemented targeted staff development to strengthen further staff's specialist knowledge to support the increasing cohort of students who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Leaders' and managers' strategy to improve teaching, learning and assessment is successful. Leaders and managers have improved the quality of teaching, particularly through improved performance management, staff development and the recruitment of new staff members who have the knowledge, skills and experience to work with students who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, lesson observations do not take into account routinely the impact of teaching on students' achievements and retention, or include work scrutiny.

- Managers have successfully improved the effective cooperation between tutors and support staff which enhances students' progress and helps them to develop confidence, leading to greater independent learning.

- Leaders have improved the effectiveness of performance management. Staff at all levels are set clear objectives that link effectively with the college's overall strategic objectives. Managers make judgements on staff's strengths and identify areas for improvement accurately, resulting in clear plans for improvement. Each member of staff understands their role in contributing to the success of the organisation.

- Leaders have developed a carefully planned and highly valued staff development programme for managers and tutors. Leaders have made a clear and substantial investment in staff development. They identify gaps in their staff's knowledge and/or skills, and implement appropriate training to help them improve their knowledge, skills and qualifications to meet the learning needs of students more effectively.

- Leaders and managers ensure that each student follows a personalised learning programme, which enables them to achieve their potential and long-term goals. Managers give the development of English and mathematics a strong priority and tutors promote the importance of these skills effectively across students' learning programmes. Leaders were successful in securing external funding to improve further the quality of the mathematics provision that has led to the recruitment of additional specialist mathematics tutors.

- The senior leadership team fosters excellent relationships with local and regional external

organisations, including the LCR, local authorities, employers, schools, support agencies and the community. Partnerships with these organisations bring benefits for students such as work experience, shared learning and support for students aimed at their particular needs. Relationships ensure that college leaders are able to contribute knowledgeably and successfully to regional strategic skills plans and the development of the regional provision for students who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Leaders, managers and staff promote equality and inclusivity, and celebrate diversity very effectively. Students demonstrate respect for each other, for staff and for visitors. Students learn to be tolerant of differences and celebrate different cultural and religious festivals to help them have a good understanding of the diversity in their communities and the wider world. Parents of students with high needs comment on how students develop a good understanding of each other's needs and challenges, and learn quickly how to take care of each other.

- Arrangements for the management of the subcontractor are effective. Leaders and managers complete extensive checks with the subcontractor to ensure that it is a suitable partner for the college. They monitor the quality of the provision regularly. Leaders at the college and the school have a very effective working relationship. The subcontracting arrangements provide good-quality education for students who would otherwise not be in education, employment or training (NEET) after completing their studies at the school because they are not yet ready to progress to large further education colleges. Students at the subcontractor enjoy their lessons and develop new knowledge and skills quickly. Tutors challenge them routinely to develop higher levels of knowledge and understanding. All students undertake relevant work experience. As a result, students make good progress and are prepared effectively for their next steps.

- Leaders use high needs funding effectively. Students receive good personalised support and follow individual learning programmes based on their specific needs. Leaders use funding to provide appropriate equipment, including personal protective equipment, for students so that they are all able to participate in a diverse range of learning activities.

- Leaders and managers need to further develop aspects of the quality monitoring systems. Recently introduced systems to monitor in-year performance are not yet fully integrated into the quality monitoring process. For example, the benefits of the recently implemented electronic monitoring and recording system cannot yet be seen. As a result, leaders and managers do not have an oversight of the monitoring, review and recording of the overall progress that all students make on their programmes.

The governance of the provider

- Members of the council of management are ambitious for students and passionate about the future of the college. Since the previous inspection, the council's membership has been strengthened. Members bring a valuable range of skills and knowledge that they use effectively to support the development of the college. They have expertise in education, business, human resources, finance, safeguarding and good local community knowledge.

- Leaders and managers provide informative reports to members. Members use their expertise skilfully to interrogate the reports and provide effective support and challenge for leaders. Members hold leaders to account for assuring the quality of the provision.

- They are knowledgeable about the interventions that have taken place and recognise that

further improvements are required in a few areas.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Leaders update safeguarding policies and procedures regularly and these are understood fully by staff. The safeguarding log is very comprehensive and shows what actions have been taken to protect students and how staff use a range of external agencies to respond swiftly and effectively to individual safeguarding cases as they arise. Leaders and managers promote a strong culture of feeling safe and being safe in the college, which they have extended effectively to embrace their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty.

- Leaders and managers ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, including disclosure and barring service checks and a comprehensive scrutiny of job applicants' suitability. Staff and members of the council of management have received appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders' and managers' understanding of the local risks posed by radicalisation is good.

- Leaders and managers have developed innovative methods to help students understand the issues around extremism and radicalisation – for example, the use of puppetry depicting an everyday scenario of meeting people 'down the pub'. Leaders have recently introduced an additional reporting procedure that is highly effective in identifying smaller concerns that allow designated safeguarding officers to identify potentially larger safeguarding concerns promptly.

- Risk assessments relating to students' learning activities and transport arrangements are detailed and thorough. They identify effectively actions that staff take to minimise any risk or harm to students.

- Safeguarding arrangements at the subcontractor are thorough and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- Staff are well qualified and experienced. They have good subject knowledge and provide interesting and varied activities that enthuse and motivate students. As a result, students develop good personal, social, emotional and vocational skills. They grow in confidence, and many students with high needs improve their skills of independence. For example, students are encouraged to make their own decisions and work with decreasing levels of support from learning support staff. As a result, most students make good progress towards their individual targets.

- Tutors plan learning meticulously. All students, particularly students with high needs, benefit from personalised learning sessions that meet their individual learning needs successfully. Tutors and learning support staff have high expectations of students, providing high levels of challenge to students who are more able and skilfully guiding students who require higher levels of support to enable them to achieve their targets.

- Tutors set students personalised, meaningful and challenging targets at the beginning of every session, and review and evaluate these at the end of the session. Most tutors check and consolidate learning regularly, ensuring that students understand topics and themes before moving on, which results in students making good and sustained progress.

However, the new system to monitor and record students' progress does not yet provide an overview of how students progress overall in their learning programmes.

- Tutors use a wide range of resources and teaching strategies skilfully, particularly for students with high needs, to support teaching and learning. Tutors and learning support staff work well together to facilitate learning. In-class support is very effective and encourages students to develop the skills to be able to work as independently as possible. As a result, students make good progress and gain independence.

- Students, particularly those on adult learning programmes, use technical terminology with increasing confidence and accuracy. For example, in health and social care, students talk competently about the 'human givens' psychotherapy approach to mental and emotional distress. In entry level English, students are able to use the terms 'activist' and 'fundamentalist' accurately in group discussions, and understand the difference between them.

- Students across all programmes develop good English skills through a range of stimulating activities. For example, staff use competitions effectively to explain homophones with the winning entry made into posters and displayed around the college. Students are currently exploring the word of the month, 'egalitarian', where they provide the definition of the word and compete to find as many words as they can from its letters.

- Students with high needs develop effective mathematics skills. They calculate portion sizes and increase or reduce ingredients for smaller or larger servings in catering sessions. Hairdressing students on adult learning courses accurately calculate ratios and volumes when mixing hydrogen peroxide for colouring hair.

- Students have a growing awareness of the celebration of diversity as they explore culture and religion. For example, they explore the Nigerian spirit costumes and their similarities to the festival of Hallowe'en. The college is inclusive and students are tolerant and respectful of others.

- Students have a growing awareness of, and regularly explore, life in modern Britain. For example, they participated in a full debate on devolution in Greater Merseyside with the metro mayor. They discuss recent events such as acts of terrorism and the effects on their personal safety.

- Tutors assess accurately the majority of students' starting points, including practical and academic skills. Although most students are placed on the correct level of course to meet their individual needs and interests, a very small minority are placed on a level of course below their academic ability, which results in students not making the swift progress of which they are capable.

- Feedback to adult learning students on their written work is specific and detailed and helps students make improvements to their work. Students quickly act on this feedback. Although feedback for students with high needs is positive and motivational, it lacks specificity, for example 'work on percentages', and is not always developmental enough to help them to improve. A minority of students with high needs are unable to identify or express what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good

- The vast majority of students attend regularly and punctually and are well prepared for learning. For example, adult learning students on hairdressing courses pay careful attention to their personal appearance and wear smart and functional uniforms.

- Tutors have high expectations of students and constantly challenge them to work to the best of their ability. Students take pride in their work, much of which is displayed around the college. They are articulate and develop good communication skills as they talk about the activities and work they have completed. Consequently, students complete work to a high standard.

- Students benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities to develop skills, including independence, team building and communication. Activities such as singing and mosaic making develop students' creative and communication skills, and lead to increased confidence. Job search activities and British sign language courses complement students' vocational programmes and help them to develop work-related skills.

- Most students, including adult learning students and students with high needs, benefit from planned work experience, which links closely to course objectives and students' personal development targets. A minority of students have secured employment at the end of their courses in organisations where they have completed work experience. Hairdressing students develop good employability skills on their weekly visits to the local children's hospital to provide hairdressing services to the parents of children who are inpatients at the hospital. Students on garment-making and art and design programmes set up small, online businesses selling items that they have made.

- Staff ensure that students are kept safe. As a result, students, particularly those with high needs, feel safe. They have a growing awareness of the dangers that social media present and the threats of radicalisation and extremism. All students have received training in the 'Prevent' duty. However, many students with high needs do not recall this training because it is not meaningful enough for them.

- Students develop a growing understanding of equality and can explain how legislation relating to protected characteristics can be applied in the workplace.

- Information, advice and careers guidance are good. Careers advisers skilfully and impartially provide personalised advice and guidance to ensure that students are able to make informed choices about their next steps on leaving the college. For example, most students on level 3 health and social care courses have applied for, and been offered, places to study at university in September 2018.

Outcomes for learners   Good

- Achievement rates on accredited courses have improved greatly since the previous inspection. Notable improvements were in health and social care, information and communication technology, retail and commercial enterprise, leisure, and preparation for life and work. Achievement rates for students aged 19 and over are higher than for those aged 16 to 18.

- In 2016/17, achievement rates for functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics improved greatly from 2015/16 and are higher than those of similar providers. Leaders acknowledge that achievement rates for the very small number of

students taking GCSE English and mathematics require improvement. The agreement to accept students from a failed provider impacted significantly on GCSE outcomes. This agreement has now ceased.

- Students make good progress from their starting points during their programmes. Tutors set them highly individualised targets that are challenging, appropriate and meet their personal needs and interests. As a result, progress is often better than expected and most make the progress of which they are capable. Tutors record students' progress daily in their log books/diaries and this demonstrates effectively the progress that they make over time.

- Students progress to positive destinations. The vast majority of students progress onto higher-level courses, both accredited and non-accredited, or move into voluntary work or paid employment.

- Students develop high levels of independence. As a result, support for students is reduced over time and this allows students to have greater autonomy at college and to make their own decisions. For a large minority of students, additional support funding is gradually reduced due to their increased levels of independence.

- Students take pride in their work and enjoy their learning. The standard of students' work is high. Students' work on vocational courses meets industry standards. Students have a positive attitude towards learning and develop high levels of confidence.

- Assessment to determine students' starting points on study programmes is not yet sufficiently robust. While improvements have been made, including the introduction of a more formalised approach to the assessment of English and mathematics skills, a small minority of students are still enrolled at a level that is below their starting points.

- Leaders and managers have identified that students who have not been formally diagnosed with SEN do not achieve as well as those who have. Achievement rates for these students are improving, but are still below the rates for those who have a formal diagnosis.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes	Good

- The college provides accredited and non-accredited vocational courses and GCSE English for adult students. At the time of the inspection, 42 students were on accredited courses, 88 students were on non-accredited courses and four on GCSE English. The college offers accredited courses in health and social care at levels 2 and 3, hairdressing at levels 1, 2 and 3, and sport at level 2. Non-accredited courses include garment making and art and design for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

- Staff assess students' starting points and barriers to learning thoroughly. Consequently, students are placed on the correct level of course to meet their needs. Highly effective teaching and learning that is personalised to meet students' individual learning needs result in most students, including the most able and those requiring high levels of support, making good progress on their courses.

- The vast majority of students attend their lessons regularly, remain until the end of their

programmes and, for those on accredited courses, achieve their qualifications. Many students progress to higher-level accredited courses or non-accredited courses of greater complexity, for example from introduction to sewing machines through to advanced garment making and from level 1 to level 3 hairdressing.

■ Students enjoy their learning and develop good technical skills both in and outside the classroom. For example, students on advanced garment-making courses make toiles accurately and with increasing dexterity to test out patterns before making them with expensive materials. Students often work on and complete their garments outside the classroom before submitting the final product for review by their peers and the teacher.

■ Tutors are well qualified and experienced. They provide activities that challenge students and very effectively develop practical skills to support employment. Students on hairdressing courses apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations successfully, for example when using complex cutting and colouring techniques or blow-drying clients' hair. Students' work portfolios are of a good quality and demonstrate high levels of skills development. Students on health and social care courses develop good English and independent learning and research skills as they explore and report on the history of public health, the Beveridge Report and the inception of the National Health Service.

■ Students receive good detailed oral feedback during their lessons and detailed and specific feedback on their written work. Students' competently use this feedback to improve the quality of their work. However, in a minority of instances, tutors' corrections to spelling, grammar and punctuation are not routinely good enough.

Provision for learners with high needs   Good

■ There are 106 students who receive high needs funding at the college and 113 have EHC plans. A large majority of the remaining 57 students at the college who are on study programmes have physical and/or complex learning needs.

■ Tutors have high expectations of students that raise students' aspirations and confidence. Students enjoy their lessons and participate enthusiastically in activities that successfully develop their knowledge as well as their independence, communication and decision-making skills. Students are punctual and keen to learn.

■ Staff collect thorough information about their students before the start of their courses. They use this information effectively in conjunction with EHC plans to establish students' starting points and to plan highly effective and challenging learning programmes. Staff listen carefully to students' views and enable them to make informed choices about their learning in close collaboration with parents and professional agencies. As a result, students benefit from stimulating and highly personalised learning programmes that meet their individual learning needs and support them to complete their programmes successfully.

■ Staff assess students' knowledge and understanding in lessons frequently. Tutors' questioning and observation skills are effective, which ensures that they identify additional support needs quickly. The most able students are given suitably demanding tasks to extend their skills and knowledge. For example, in entry level functional skills mathematics lessons, the most able students are required to use the terms 'nominator' and 'denominator' accurately when referring to fractions. In catering lessons, students ask

complex questions that extend further their knowledge of cuts of meat, for example the purpose of kidneys and what offcuts such as fat could be used for.

- Students benefit from the services of external specialists to help them overcome barriers to learning and to settle successfully into college life. Therapists work closely with students to ensure that their speech and language, occupational and physical therapy needs are linked directly to their EHC plans. For example, the occupational therapist has arranged for students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to attend daily gym sessions to help them manage their behaviour and reduce agitation and stress so that they are able to focus on their learning effectively. Other external specialists who support students effectively in their learning and attendance at college include social workers, family support workers and mental health agencies.

- Tutors and support staff develop students' mathematical skills effectively throughout lessons and activities. Tutors routinely plan activities that include students practising these skills within their learning and enrichment programmes. For example, students with high needs are able to calculate cooking times to gauge the feasibility of menu options for specified mealtimes. Students with more complex needs are able to define the meaning of vertical and horizontal. In creative craft lessons, tutors use shapes and measurements effectively to check students' understanding of mathematical concepts.

- Tutors integrate the development of English skills successfully into their lessons. Students develop effective speaking and communication skills through reading aloud to their peers and participating in group discussions. They have confidence in using their skills to make choices, express their opinions, work with each other and socialise. Students with speech difficulties are supported effectively to pronounce difficult words to the group, for example 'tagliatelle'. Tutors highlight spelling errors in students' work effectively and use innovative approaches to help students remember how to spell words correctly in the future. Students on external placements are able to meet and greet visitors and conduct tours in a confident and professional manner.

- Behaviour is very good and students move about the college calmly and with purpose. They demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. Students practise and develop social skills. For example, students with complex needs learn how to take it in turns to collect materials, queue respectfully, use polite language and show an awareness of others' needs.

- Students benefit from a wide range of work experience placements and work-related opportunities. Students attend work placements that link closely to their aspirations and are relevant to their future career plans. Employers work with staff to ensure the suitability of the placement and adapt working environments to meet the specific needs of students. Work placements are extended over time to develop students' skills further and to create resilience and independence. For example, students become increasingly able to work longer hours away from the college.

- Tutors make good use of high-quality resources and accessible learning technologies to engage students and to help them overcome barriers to learning. For example, students work confidently with interactive whiteboards to develop spatial awareness. They enjoy games and quizzes that develop their thinking skills. Students with visual impairment use specialist software to make learning accessible for them, and personal hearing loops ensure that students with hearing impairments can participate fully in lessons.

- Tutors and support staff work together effectively to facilitate inclusion. For example, in

several lessons, students with autism spectrum disorder found group work challenging and positioned themselves away from the other students. Staff coached them skilfully and supportively so that they were able to take part actively in discussions and practical activities.

- Staff praise achievement and celebrate success regularly. Students take pride in their work that is frequently displayed around the college.

- Transition planning for students with high needs is effective. Students and parents benefit from an array of activities to support students starting at the college. For example, staff visit students in their own settings initially. Students and their parents attend open events at the college and meet with the staff who will be teaching and supporting them. Independence, transition and employment are discussed from the beginning of students' time at the college. Staff create careers and 'moving on' events which are supported by a large number of employers, training providers and voluntary services. As a result, students and parents become increasingly familiar with the transitional process and this reduces their anxiety levels significantly.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52037
Type of provider	Not-for-profit organisation
Age range of learners	16−18 and 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	299
Principal/CEO	Mary Beaumont
Telephone number	0151 733 7255
Website	www.greenbank.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16−18	19+	16−18	19+	16−18	19+	16−18	19+
	99	96	61	37	3	4	-	-

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	-
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	106
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	The Altbridge School

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the education and curriculum manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the college'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 students 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 college.

Inspection team

Suzanne Wainwright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kay Hedges	Ofsted Inspector

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.