

Inspection of Green Labyrinth

Inspection dates:

26–29 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Green Labyrinth is a training provider based in the centre of Swindon. Fifty-three young learners, most of whom have few qualifications and face many social and personal barriers to learning, study level 1 and 2 courses. These programmes aim to re-engage them with education and prepare them for employment or further education. Twenty learners with high needs are on programmes designed to get them into employment.

Fifty-one apprentices, most of whom are based in the local area, follow a range of apprenticeships in business and digital marketing from levels 2 to 5.

Fifty-nine adult learners are in receipt of loans from the government to study. Most of these are on courses in beauty and holistic therapies and a small number are studying digital marketing.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners enjoy their education and training because staff provide very good support on personal matters and care for their learners.

Most of the young learners have not taken part successfully in education for some time. Green Labyrinth provides them with a chance to study in a safe, welcoming training centre with lots of support from staff. However, their teachers do not train them well enough to develop the skills they need to gain employment. Teachers do not provide these learners with enough useful feedback on their progress.

Learners with high needs appreciate the help they get with improving their knowledge of mathematics and English. However, staff do not have the specialist knowledge of how best to support these learners. Work experience placements for high needs learners are not good enough.

Most apprentices get appropriate initial advice and guidance which ensures they are placed on an apprenticeship suited to their career aims and job role. However, not all apprentices receive enough training. Some do not have enough opportunities at work to put into practice what they learn during their training.

Adults learn the knowledge and skills they need to work in their chosen industry. They are taught by trainers who use the extensive industry-standard knowledge to provide students with a high-quality education.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

The programmes offered by Green Labyrinth have been designed well to meet local needs. The apprenticeship programmes have been chosen carefully to reflect the job opportunities and training needed in the Swindon area. Leaders have identified accurately the local opportunities for beauty therapists and now deliver courses for adults that lead to employment. An increasing number of vulnerable 16- to 18-year-old learners attend study programmes in order to restart their education.

Teachers of programmes for young learners have not designed the curriculum with enough focus on the steps each learner needs to take to prepare them for their next stage of education or employment. For example, learners on a work skills study programme do not have enough contact with employers and very few complete their work experience placement successfully.

Most teachers and leaders do not have high enough aspirations for young learners. They do not give them enough guidance on how to improve the personal and social skills learners need for employment. However, when this is done well, these learners make better progress. For example, one young learner improved their ability to maintain eye contact during interviews as a result of a series of carefully planned sessions with their mentor.

More positively, leaders have built useful careers guidance into the curriculum which helps young learners understand the options they have at the end of their programme.

The curriculum which leaders have designed for apprentices also lacks ambition. Trainers do not ensure that all apprentices receive sufficient and relevant off-the-job training and trainers do not develop apprentices' skills and knowledge quickly enough. For example, much of the work recorded as off-the-job training for some business apprentices is actually only a normal part of their day-to-day job. Trainers do not provide a significant minority of apprentices with the support and encouragement to complete their apprenticeship as quickly as planned.

When training for apprentices is effective, for example in digital marketing, apprentices apply their new knowledge well in the workplace. Trainers check that apprentices complete the work they need for individual units and assignments and some use information from the assessment of these well to plan their curriculum.

Programmes for learners with high needs do not contain enough training on how to overcome individual barriers to getting a job. Too many in their third year of study follow a narrow curriculum of mathematics and English while waiting to start a work placement. Teachers and managers do not ensure that work placements for learners with high needs help them to develop their independence.

The best curriculum offer is for adults. Teachers have developed a curriculum which ensures that adult learners on beauty and holistic therapy programmes build their knowledge and skills well. For example, teachers ensure that learners understand Swedish massage techniques before moving on to teach Indian head massage. At each stage, they reinforce the basic techniques and technical language that they taught earlier in the course.

As a result of the high-quality training they receive, most adult learners pass their qualifications and are ready to be employed or to set up their own business. Beauty therapy learners demonstrate professional standards in their communication with clients, the techniques they use and the health and safety standards they apply.

Adult learners and apprentices develop professional standards of behaviour, including high levels of attendance. Teachers ensure that young learners behave very well and, when necessary, learn how to improve their behaviour. However, too many young learners miss lessons. While a small number of learners improve their attendance over the course of their programme, too many do not. Leaders and teachers are not taking effective actions to improve young learners' attendance.

Leaders and managers have not acted quickly enough to address the weaknesses in Green Labyrinth. For example, their focus on caring for young people has been prioritised over helping these young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to progress to employment or further training.

Senior leaders from the NPTC group of colleges, which has owned Green Labyrinth since December 2018, provide governance but do not have enough impact on

improving standards. Leaders from NPTC do not offer sufficient challenge to managers or hold them to account well enough for the effectiveness of the education they provide.

Teachers and trainers provide useful information to learners about the risks associated with using the internet, potential threats posed by local gangs, drug-related activities, radicalisation and extremism. Learners value the chance they have to discuss and learn about these matters. Even so, young learners do not remember what they have been taught about radicalisation and extremism.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know that many of their young learners have difficult lives and are at risk of harm. They successfully gain their learners' trust, and learners tell them if they have difficulties or problems. Staff respond effectively when they have concerns about a learner's safety.

Staff, including the senior leader who leads safeguarding, are trained well. Senior leaders' records relating to safeguarding are mostly thorough, although a small number of staff records were not up to date at the time of inspection.

Leaders from the NPTC group of colleges use their expertise on safeguarding well to provide effective support and guidance to leaders at Green Labyrinth.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Review the curriculum for learners aged 16 to 19 and learners with high needs so that it prepares them well to progress to employment. This review should include ensuring that learners gain greater experience of the workplace.
- Ensure that teachers assess young learners' progress on developing the skills and knowledge that will help them move into jobs or further training. Provide feedback that tells learners how well they are developing these and what more they need to do.
- Improve how well managers monitor young learners' attendance and make sure the strategies staff are using to improve attendance are effective. This applies particularly to learners whose personal circumstances prevent them from attending regularly in the early stages of their programme.
- Provide apprentices with better feedback on the skills, knowledge and behaviours they are developing. Ensure that apprentices develop these quickly so that they complete their apprenticeships within the allocated time.
- Ensure that leaders and managers understand the weaknesses in all their programmes and take swift action to make improvements.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59222
Address	1 Milton Road Swindon Wiltshire SN1 5JE
Contact number	01793 236245
Website	https://greenlabyrinth.co.uk/
Managing Director	Bryan Davis
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	15–17 March 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Steven Tucker, lead inspector

Roger Pilgrim

Paul James

David Baber

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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