

# Short inspection of Roots and Shoots

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 June 2023

## **Outcome**

Roots and Shoots continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Roots and Shoots is situated on a one-and-a-half-acre site in the London borough of Lambeth. Roots and Shoots was founded in 1982 with the aim of helping disadvantaged young people in London gain the skills and self-confidence they need for work. Facilities include classrooms, an environmental education centre, a greenhouse, a pond, an apple barn, a retail shop, a summer house, a wild garden and outdoor learning spaces.

Root and Shoots offers vocational education to young people aged 16 to 24 from across London who have education, health and care (EHC) plans. Students work towards level 1 qualifications in horticulture, floral design and retail. They take qualifications in mathematics, English, information and communication technology and employability, alongside their vocational training. At the time of the inspection, there were 35 students, of whom seven were aged under 18. The large majority of students are on the study programme, with six on a pre-supported internship.

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

Students enjoy attending Roots and Shoots, where they learn in a peaceful, tranquil and nurturing environment. Many students make new friends and broaden their social circle.

Staff know students well and understand their different needs and personalities. Staff supervise students effectively. They have fruitful relationships with them. For example, students are given time-out to manage their feelings when needed. Students behave well on site and when they are on work experience.

Students develop good skills, knowledge and behaviours through a wide variety of work experience placements and activities in the community. They attend well, are punctual, follow instructions and complete tasks with increasing independence. Once they finish their studies, a high proportion gain employment or move on to further education.

Students benefit from tutors, support staff and managers who are well qualified and experienced. Speech and language therapists, and art therapists, work closely with tutors to support students. All students who need therapeutic assistance receive good support.

Students feel safe. They say that Roots and Shoots is a safe place to study. Staff teach a curriculum that includes a range of highly relevant topics so that students know about safety and well-being. This includes information about healthy relationships, consent and online safety. Teachers revisit these topics frequently throughout the year. As a result, students understand how to keep themselves safe and are confident to report any concerns they have to staff.

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

Leaders and managers make sure that a broad, ambitious curriculum is effectively tailored to the individual needs and aspirations of students. Before students start their training, tutors carry out a thorough initial assessment of what they know and can do. For example, they talk to parents and carers, and consider education, health and care (EHC) plan outcomes, and speech and language assessments. As a result, students follow a personalised curriculum that helps them develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to become more independent and achieve their goals.

Students benefit from a curriculum beyond the vocational area they study. For example, they develop their food preparation and cooking skills by making a caponata for visitors to the centre using ingredients grown in the garden. Consequently, students learn skills and knowledge beyond those gained from studying for their qualifications.

In lessons, tutors recap frequently what they have taught previously so that students can consolidate and apply their knowledge. In practical lessons, tutors help students improve their skills when completing tasks. For example, they explain to horticulture students why it is important to plant at a greater depth to make sure that plants survive. This helps students develop well the knowledge they need for employment in the horticultural sector.

Leaders and managers make sure that students receive effective careers advice and guidance on their next steps. Throughout their training, students explore the different types of jobs and sectors that might suit them. Job coaches help students prepare for interviews. External speakers talk to students about their jobs, including in sectors that are not included in the vocational curriculum. Staff liaise effectively with parents, carers and students to ensure that work experience and supported internships meet students' aspirations.

Managers and staff keep parents and carers well informed about their young person's progress. Parents and carers value the weekly journals that summarise

students' achievements and identify any issues of concern. They see the positive progress at home, where, for example, young people's conversation skills blossom.

When teaching theoretical elements of the course, tutors do not always explain tasks clearly enough so that students understand the concepts that underpin the task set. This means that students are not able to complete activities or can only do so with significant help from support staff. Staff do not always use resources and visual aids that are age-appropriate and therefore do not fully support students to prepare for future employment.

Leaders and managers have made continuous improvements since the previous inspection. For example, the experienced trustees are now proactive in scrutinising the provision. They attend the centre frequently to support the director. They visit lessons with managers so that they have first-hand experience of the provision. In board meetings, trustees consider a suitable range of information about the provision. Together, these activities ensure that trustees have an accurate view of the quality of education that students receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, managers and staff place the safety and welfare of students as a high priority. They ensure that an effective safeguarding culture is in place. Leaders and managers maintain effective links with outside agencies to safeguard students, such as with social workers and the local safeguarding partnership. When staff need to act to keep students safe, they do so promptly and effectively. Leaders and managers follow safe recruitment and selection practice that ensures staff are suitable to work with students.

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

- Leaders and managers must ensure that tutors give clear explanations of theoretical components of the course so that students can be more independent in completing tasks and applying what they learn.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that tutors use resources and visual aids which are age-appropriate and prepare students effectively for employment.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	54175
<b>Address</b>	The Vauxhall Centre Walnut Tree Walk London SE11 6DN
<b>Contact number</b>	02075 871131
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rootsandshoots.org.uk">www.rootsandshoots.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal</b>	Linda Phillips
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 to 9 March 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	–

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Roots and Shoots was judged to be good in March 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Jon Bowman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joyce Deere

Ofsted Inspector

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