

Short inspection of Harington Scheme Limited (The)

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 June 2024

Outcome

The Harington Scheme Limited continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

The Harington Scheme Limited (Harington) is a registered charity based in Highgate, north London. It provides training in employability, horticulture and retail for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, behavioural difficulties or mental health needs. All students at Harington have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and receive high-needs funding.

At the time of the short inspection, Harington had 52 students, of whom 43 were aged 19 to 24 and nine were under 19. There were 24 students following the horticulture pathway, 12 taking the retail pathway and 9 on the employability pathway. All students take qualifications in their vocational subjects and English and/or mathematics. Seven students are enrolled on supported internships.

Students are taught at the main site in Highgate and the Harington training centre and charity shop in Hornsey.

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

Students love studying at Harington where they feel safe and welcome. They enjoy learning in the beautiful gardens in Highgate and the well-equipped training centre in Hornsey. The vast majority of students and supported interns complete their courses and achieve their qualifications.

Leaders and managers arrange highly effective work experience placements for students. The placements are carefully planned so that students can apply the skills and knowledge they learn in training when they are ready. For example, horticulture students work in the Harington gardening business to build gardening skills and customer service skills. As they become more knowledgeable and confident, they move on to external work placements at employers such as Highgate Cemetery. Employers value the skills that students bring to their workplaces.

Students work well together in lessons and a wide range of enrichment activities. They encourage each other to do their best. For example, horticulture and retail students play cricket together in the Highgate gardens. They have a lot of fun and make good friends. Over time, students become more resilient, they learn from their mistakes and keep trying hard when they find things difficult. Students are rightly proud of their achievements and enjoy their success with staff and the local community at well-attended celebration events.

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

Leaders and managers offer a curriculum that aligns well with their vision. The curriculum provides the means for students to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to enter meaningful employment or higher levels of education. The curriculum also meets the needs of the local economy for skilled gardeners and retail workers.

Managers and teachers plan a well-sequenced curriculum. Curriculum leads in all subjects carefully design and teach content that builds on students' existing knowledge and gradually becomes more complex. For example, in horticulture, students doing the entry 3 course learn plant identification and the names and functions of tools in the winter months. Teachers plan lessons where students must remember the names of plants and tools and complete progressively more demanding tasks. Consequently, by springtime and early summer, students can use the correct tools to pot on seedlings and plant them into vegetable beds. They can correctly identify unwanted plants when they are weeding the vegetable beds. Students progressively gain the knowledge and skills that they need. They develop into competent gardeners and retail workers.

Teachers and tutors are suitably qualified and experienced in special educational needs and/or disabilities. They teach students well, using techniques that help them to understand and remember new content. For example, in mathematics lessons, teachers expertly use pictures, interactive practical exercises and helpful aids such as mix-and-match activities. As a result, students deepen their knowledge and understanding and can recall well what they have been taught.

Students on supported internships develop employability skills through high-quality internal and external work placements. Staff support students to further develop employability skills such as communication, organisation and teamwork, through focused activities at the training hub. As a result, students develop these knowledge and skills incrementally over time.

Students on all pathways quickly develop the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to complete their qualifications. Overall achievement across the different subjects, including English and mathematics, is excellent. The vast majority of learners go on to positive destinations, such as further training at Harington, employment, supported internships, voluntary work or external further education

courses. However, too few supported interns go on to employment after completion of their internship.

Job coaches, internship supervisors and dedicated careers staff provide students with relevant and impartial guidance about working in horticulture, catering and retail. Students can make informed decisions on their immediate next steps into higher-level courses, internships or employment. However, students, including those completing supported internships, are less clear about their longer-term career options or working in different sectors. Leaders recognise the need to expand the number of employers they work with so that students can experience work in different areas, such as transport and childcare.

Trustees, leaders and managers have managed significant changes to the organisation's senior leadership well. Recent challenges involving recruitment of senior leaders and turnover of trustees led to some disruption. This harmed staff morale and held up strategic planning and quality improvement work. Following restructuring, the board and leadership team have sufficient educational expertise to make strategic plans and implement quality improvement measures effectively. Leaders, managers and trustees have a clear strategic vision for Harington. As a result of thorough quality monitoring processes, they accurately know the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the provision of careers advice and guidance so that students and supported interns know about long-term career options and experience work in different sectors.
- Increase the proportion of supported interns who move on to purposeful employment after their internship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54860
Address	The Harington Scheme 55a Cholmeley Park Highgate N6 5EH
Contact number	020 3457 7997
Website	www.harington.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Jacqui Steel
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Dates of previous inspection	6 to 8 June 2017

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since The Harington Scheme Limited was judged to be good in June 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the principal/CEO, 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

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