

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **The Harington Scheme**

**29 June 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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## The Harington Scheme

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Harington Scheme (the Scheme) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee based in Highgate, North London. It was set up in 1980 by local people, aiming to advance the education, training and social development of young people with learning disabilities or learning difficulties by providing training in horticulture and life skills. Most learners are recruited from the North London area, but the scheme's unique nature also attracts learners from across the whole of London. Most of the young learners have attended special needs schools and/or have had a statement of special educational needs at school.
2. A voluntary board of 11 directors have overall responsibility for the Scheme's management. Much of the operational responsibility is delegated to the Scheme's manager who reports to the chair of the board. The Scheme employs a staff of 16, including three part-time workers. In addition to this it has six supported employees, who work as assistant gardeners. The day-to-day service delivery is supported by six part-time volunteers, two learning support assistants and three part-time freelance staff.
3. The Scheme has a contract with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for London North to provide employability training through Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes. It also has training contracts with social services departments and a local college. It also provides, through Harington Gardeners, work placements and supported employment in gardening for current and former learners. This includes one employee who is on a Workstep programme with another organisation. The Harington Gardeners generate income through gardening services provided to local organisations and private customers.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** More specifically, the Scheme's leadership and management and its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are good. Provision is good in preparation for life and work.
5. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The process is well established and was completed by evaluating provision against the Common Inspection Framework. The process takes good account of the changes made in the ALI's new inspection cycle. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and provides a good overview of performance. It is written as an inspection report and includes judgements on overall effectiveness and the Scheme's capacity to improve. The self-assessment process takes good account of the views of a wide range of partners, staff and learners and makes good use of data to support judgements. The report is highly critical and very well focused on improving the experience of the learners. It is accurate and correctly identifies the main strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, although some of the grades given by inspectors were higher. The development plan is used well by staff and effectively monitored on a monthly basis. Many of the actions identified had been completed by the time of the inspection.

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### 6. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.

The Scheme is responsive, listens to learners and has a strong focus on improving the experience of the learners. Attendance, retention and progression rates have improved and learners develop very good vocational, personal and social skills. There is a good focus on quality improvement and staff are knowledgeable about what should be further improved. The capacity of the staff has been strengthened and the Scheme has managed to continue developing during a period of uncertainty. It has resolved accommodation difficulties and created a more stable environment. Development planning is accurate and carefully monitored, and prompt action is taken to make improvements. The Scheme has a history of sustained improvement, works hard to create a sustainable future and is not afraid to respond to the uncertainties of a difficult external funding environment.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE HARINGTON SCHEME:

- continue to improve teaching and learning
- develop more ambitious targets for progression
- improve integration of literacy and numeracy into vocational training
- complete arrangements for performance management
- improve accommodation and information and communications technology (ICT) facilities

### GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		2

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Employability training</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Entry to Employment	25	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. This is the Scheme's third full inspection. The Scheme has a history of sustained improvement. Within preparation for life and work, employability training consisted of E2E provision and was inspected and graded. A specialist inspector for horticulture was recruited for two days to provide specialist support for horticulture.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	10
Number of learners interviewed	40
Number of staff interviewed	12
Number of employers interviewed	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	5

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

8. **Progression rates into employment, further education and training are good.** The progression rate for the 2003-04 intake was 46 per cent with one learner still on programme. For 2004-05 starters, the current progression rate is 21 per cent with 54 per cent of the learners still in learning. Eighty per cent of the 2005-06 intake are still in learning. These rates are particularly good given the learners' significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

9. **Learners develop very good vocational, personal and social skills.** They improve their ability to manage difference and resolve conflicts. They develop appropriate behaviour and language to participate in work placements and move into employment successfully. Learners also improve their physical fitness, stamina and concentration.

10. Learners produce work of a good standard. They develop good practical horticultural skills and knowledge, and are able to complete simple tasks such as weeding, and progress onto more complex skills such as preparing sweet peas for exhibition. They understand horticultural theory, work well in a team and show a thorough understanding of health and safety, often challenging their tutors and peers over matters such as discarded tools.

11. Learners achieve prizes in local horticultural shows for their pot plants and vegetables and produce plants for public sale.

12. Achievement of qualifications is satisfactory and improving. Learners have gained entry level 2 qualifications and level 1 and 2 national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in horticulture. Learners are also gaining entry level 1 and level 1 qualifications in literacy and numeracy.

13. Attendance is good and has improved from 81 per cent in January 2006 to 91 per

cent at the time of the inspection.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Preparation for life and work	0	4	3	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

14. **The highly individualised and flexible programme supports learners' individual needs, abilities and aspirations.** The programme has a wide range of modules, including horticulture, literacy and numeracy, life skills, off-the-job training sessions and high-quality work placements.

15. The six-week induction period includes a work taster week in horticulture and a range of assessments. These include risk assessments, a vocational profile, and a literacy and numeracy diagnostic assessment. The induction is used effectively in planning the learning programme.

16. Enrichment activities help learners to develop teamworking skills, and include sports activities, a residential week, selling plants and taking part in horticultural shows. These are appreciated by learners.

17. **Learners receive excellent vocational and personal support.** Staff work very hard to meet the support needs of learners who often have significant and multiple barriers to learning and employment. Learners receive effective individual coaching on work placements, and frequent reviews in the workplace which include the work supervisor. Their development of vocational and social skills is monitored well. Key workers provide personal support, weekly target-setting and monthly reviews.

18. Learners have the opportunity to work with a life coach, and speech and occupational therapy is available on an individual basis. Volunteers including the Friends of Harington offer individual support and help to develop learners' reading skills.

19. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The most successful lessons integrate literacy and numeracy with the vocational interests of the learners, although this is not systematic. Tutors do not use a sufficiently wide range of strategies to challenge more able learners in literacy and numeracy lessons. In horticulture, teaching and learning are good. Practical demonstration, such as a simple technique to show a learner with visual impairment how to handle small seeds, is good. Learning is continually reinforced and learners are challenged to work faster and attain higher standards.

20. Assessment is satisfactory and is carried out at suitable intervals. Initial and diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy is thorough and detailed, although the results are not adequately shared with vocational and life skills tutors.

21. **The programme is not planned sufficiently to integrate literacy and numeracy training.** The Scheme conducts no systematic analysis of where and how literacy and numeracy skills could be developed and improved within horticultural, personal and social development activities. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not consistently identify



how to develop and reinforce learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

22. **ICT facilities are insufficient.** Learners' opportunities to develop ICT skills are limited.

### **Leadership and management**

23. The Scheme has a strong ethos centred on the provision of a sustainable and high-quality learning environment for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff and learners are very loyal, highly committed and work hard to provide a productive learning environment.

24. **The Scheme has a clear strategic direction shared by staff and learners,** and is carefully positioned as a valuable part of the local community. Business planning is consultative and staff understand how individual and team objectives contribute to the Scheme's overall aims. The business plan is comprehensive, identifies realistic objectives and is clearly focused on improving the experience of the learners.

25. Directors make a positive contribution to the Scheme. They provide a good range of skills, and expertise and have worked hard in recent years to develop closer working relationships with staff and learners. Directors recognise the need to further develop strategies to exploit their skills more effectively.

26. **The leadership and management of significant changes within the Scheme has been successful.** Following a period of difficulties, major changes in the management of training have created a more stable work and learning environment. The Scheme has strengthened the capacity of its staff and has focused well on making working practices more professional. It has created a more formal and accountable culture, closely focused on raising standards. The Scheme provides efficient value for money.

27. Communication is good and staff are well supported. Individual supervision of staff provides an effective structure for review and support of learners' needs, which can be stressful and demanding.

28. The Scheme carries out a wide range of productive partnership work which helps to improve the learners' experience. Links with employers provide good-quality work placements which build learners' confidence and employability skills.

29. **The promotion of equality of opportunity is strong.** It is central to the ethos and activities of the Scheme and there is a strong culture of mutual respect and tolerance. The Scheme is a happy place where learners look after each other and learn to trust in their own growing confidence and skills. Staff and learners have a good understanding of what equality and diversity mean. The management of equal opportunities is well established and policies have been updated. A current action plan for equality and diversity is yet to be completed.

30. **The Scheme provides an inclusive learning community,** listens to learners and is responsive to their individual needs. Staff provide particularly effective support and guidance. Work placements support progression into work and the Scheme has responded to the government's Every Child Matters initiative, clearly identifying how its activities reflect the initiative's key themes in relation to vulnerable young people within its

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care.

31. **There is a good focus on quality improvement.** Staff clearly identify what needs improving. Quality improvement projects are an important and increasingly effective system for integrating quality into all aspects of the Scheme's work. The observation of teaching and learning is generally accurate, although it does not sufficiently focus on learning.
32. Self-assessment is well-established, critical and accurate. It takes account of the views of learners, staff, the board and other stakeholders.
33. Staff development is satisfactory, although it is not systematically supported by appraisal and individual development plans. No formal monitoring and evaluation of training takes place. Appraisal focuses well on the performance of learners but it is not an efficient system.
34. The Scheme has an appropriate skills for life strategy. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. A skills for life manager has been recruited and improvements have been made to the initial and diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy.
35. **Arrangements for managing performance are incomplete.** Individual performance targets within appraisal are not sufficiently linked to the Scheme's key performance indicators and the directors' monitoring of performance is not sufficiently rigorous.
36. **The system to monitor progress and achievement is ineffective.** The paper systems are difficult to use, with data being spread over a number of files. Data is collected and analysed but the current system is unable to record detailed information on learners' progress. Monitoring of learners' individual progress cannot be recorded in the overall system. The setting of more ambitious targets for completion for learners is restricted.
37. **Accommodation is poor.** Following a period of uncertainty about the location of the Scheme, planning permission has now been granted for the new accommodation plan. Some facilities have been renovated but overall, buildings are in poor condition and office and teaching space is insufficient.

### Leadership and management

#### Strengths

- clear strategic direction reflecting a strong ethos created and shared by staff and learners
- successful leadership and management of change
- inclusive learning community
- strong promotion of equality and diversity
- good focus on quality improvement

#### Weaknesses

- incomplete arrangements for performance management

- ineffective system for monitoring progress and achievement
- poor accommodation

## **Preparation for life and work**

### ***Employability training***

#### *Strengths*

- good progression to employment, further education and training
- development of very good vocational, personal and social skills
- highly individualised and flexible programme of learning
- excellent vocational and personal support for learners

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning of programme to integrate literacy and numeracy
- insufficient facilities for ICT

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT THE HARINGTON SCHEME:**

- the friendly teachers
- a happy learning environment
- 'I love planting seeds and seeing vegetables grow'
- the work experience
- 'the variety of places we go to with gardeners is exciting'
- 'I love the residential'
- passing assessments and tests

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK THE HARINGTON SCHEME COULD IMPROVE:**

- 'we need more literacy and numeracy teachers to make better progress'
- 'we would like new lockers'
- the Connexions adviser - not very reliable
- 'the sport is good but we need more variety of activities'
- the number of pairs of boots provided
- learners' meetings - they get confusing...the same issues keep getting brought up

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- clear strategic direction reflecting a strong ethos created and shared by staff and learners
- successful leadership and management of change
- inclusive learning community
- strong promotion of equality and diversity
- good focus on quality improvement

#### Weaknesses

- incomplete arrangements for performance management
- ineffective system for monitoring progress and achievement
- poor accommodation

38. The Scheme has a clear strategic direction shared by staff and learners. This reflects the Scheme's strong ethos to develop a sustainable, high-quality organisation which supports the education, training and social development of mainly young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff are very loyal and highly committed to the ethos of the Scheme and work hard to provide a productive learning environment. Following a period of uncertainty, the strategic and business plan has been finalised and the Scheme is carefully positioned as a valuable and intrinsic part of the local community. Business planning is consultative and staff understand how team and individual objectives contribute to the overall aims of the Scheme. The plan is comprehensive, identifies realistic objectives and is clearly focused on improving the experience of the learners. It recognises the need to broaden provision and diversify funding streams, confirming the Scheme's alertness to considerable financial and external challenges. Plans are appropriately aligned to the LSC's priorities but also retain a good focus on the specific needs of learners who face significant barriers to employment.

39. Directors offer good support and make a positive contribution to the Scheme. They provide a good range of skills, expertise, and valuable connections. They have worked hard in recent years to develop closer relationships with staff and learners and to make a better contribution to support improvement. Directors recognise the need to further develop strategies to exploit their skills more effectively and to develop more structured contact between staff and directors. Board meetings do not regularly and systematically monitor performance on all key aspects of the Scheme's activity. For example, they do not include regular updates on learners' progression.

40. Leadership and management of significant changes within the Scheme have been successful. Since its previous inspection, the Scheme has experienced a period of management difficulties including staffing changes. Leadership during this period has been effective and major changes in the management of training have created an increasingly stable work and learning environment. The capacity of the staff has been

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strengthened with the appointment of new team leaders. The Scheme has focused well on professionalising working practices, including the development of an increasingly formal and accountable culture to raise standards. A wide range of appropriate policies and procedures is in place. Formal and informal communication are very good and include a wide range of well-documented meetings. Staff are well supported. Regular, task-orientated individual supervision provides an effective structure for review of individual concerns relating to learners' needs, which can be stressful and demanding. Staff appreciate the open and supportive culture, have a good involvement in planning of provision and are well informed and clear about their work objectives.

41. Since the previous inspection, the Scheme continues to enjoy the benefits of a wide range of effective partnerships. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report. Partnerships help the Scheme to improve the learners' experience through additional activities. Examples include provision of ICT training on the computer bus provided by a local college. A recent joint art project resulted in a large painting and provides a wonderful expression of learners' creativity, while the Scheme's hosting of work placements, including student nurses, provides additional support for learners. Links with employers and other training providers provide good-quality work placements which build learners' confidence and employability skills. The Friends of Harington continue to offer voluntary support through activities such as fundraising and helping learners.

42. Staff development is satisfactory. It is linked to the Scheme's objectives but the new overall plan has yet to be systematically supported by appraisal and individual development plans. There is an increasing focus on the provision of training to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and some staff are currently taking teaching and skills for life qualifications. Staff are adequately qualified. The Scheme has produced a workforce capacity plan to assess training needs and plan qualifications. Currently no formal monitoring and evaluation of training takes place.

43. The Scheme provides efficient value for money. It makes effective use of staff and limited resources. Finances are closely monitored by the Scheme's manager and board of directors, and teaching resources are improving. Learners' satisfaction rates are high and participation and attendance rates are generally good. The horticultural environment is unique within an urban setting and provides a welcoming, safe and purposeful work and learning environment. Health and safety practices are satisfactory and learners demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety. Effective procedures are in place to manage child/adult protection issues, although staff and directors' training in this area is yet to be provided.

44. The Scheme has an appropriate strategy for skills for life. This strategy clearly recognises the importance of integrating literacy and numeracy support in vocational training to support employability and lifelong learning. The provider has recruited a skills for life manager and has improved its initial and diagnostic assessment and skills for life target-setting.

45. The Scheme has a satisfactory staff appraisal process, which provides opportunities for developmental discussion for staff. The appraisals focus well on how staff members' individual performance meets the needs of learners. However, it is not an efficient system. It is too detailed, with an extremely wide range of performance standards and insufficient attention to specific target-setting.

46. The Scheme's arrangements for managing performance are incomplete. Although the provider has focused strongly on developing a performance culture to raise standards, arrangements are still being developed and formalised. For example, individual performance targets within appraisal are not sufficiently linked to the Scheme's key performance indicators and the board's monitoring of performance is not sufficiently rigorous. The appraisal of the Scheme's manager has not been regular or linked to specific targets. Although close attention is given to the achievement and progression of learners, the development of increasingly ambitious targets for completion is not systematically dealt with.

47. The system to monitor progress and achievement is ineffective. Improvements have been made on the monitoring of learners' progress and achievement. However, the paper-based systems are difficult to use, with data being spread over a number of files. This weakness was recognised in self-assessment. Data is collected and analysed but the current system cannot be used to record detailed information on learners' progress. For example, while individual teaching and training have been developed well, the recording and monitoring of learners' individual progress cannot be recorded in the overall system. The setting of more ambitious targets for completion is restricted. Staff recognise the need to further develop and fully integrate a Scheme-wide system and have recently developed a strategy to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning.

48. Accommodation is poor. This weakness has been recognised in self-assessment, and although it was also identified during the previous inspection, progress has only recently been made. Much of the work that the accommodation needs has been outside the control of the Scheme. Following a period of uncertainty about the location of the Scheme, planning permission has now been granted for the new accommodation plan. The Scheme has renovated some facilities but, overall, buildings are in poor condition and office and teaching space is insufficient.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

49. Equality of opportunity is central to the ethos and activities of the Scheme, which provides an inclusive learning community. There is a strong culture of mutual respect and tolerance. The Scheme is a happy place where learners look after each other and learn to trust their own growing confidence and skills. Staff work hard to promote strong democratic principles within activities and in relationships with, and between, learners. Learners are encouraged to play an active part in the learning community and feel valued. The Scheme listens to learners. Learners' meetings, chaired by learners and minuted to ensure actions are carried out, identify and discuss issues that affect training including equality and diversity, and health and safety. They also provide an important opportunity to celebrate weekly achievements.

50. Staff provide particularly effective support and guidance for learners who experience significant and often multiple barriers to participation in all aspects of society. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Each learner has a key worker who conducts regular reviews, provides support and counsels learners on a wide range of personal and social issues. During the inspection, key workers' meetings with groups of learners demonstrated effective discussion about diversity. This discussion helped learners to locate themselves in society and accept both similarities and differences between people.

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It generated conversations about how to manage behaviour and behave in ways which are fair and respect difference. Volunteers provide valuable individual support and support enrichment activities, such as football and cookery.

51. The Scheme is a responsive, flexible organisation which makes changes to meet the constantly changing needs of learners. Careful attention is given to the needs of individual learners, and specific support with adaptive technologies is provided as needs emerge. Some learners get additional individual support from learning assistants, although insufficient attention is paid to integrating the contribution of these assistants into learning sessions. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of what equality and diversity mean and the programme offers learners good opportunities to develop independent learning skills. For many learners, the horticultural content of the programme is highly motivating. The Scheme recognises the need to further integrate skills for life training into the vocational training.

52. The recruitment and employment team provides a very good range of services including recruitment, interviews, induction, placement, work experience and support for progression into work. It makes good use of the Scheme's partnerships with external support agencies such as social services, specialist counselling services and housing associations. All learners have opportunities for support from the life coach who is a psychotherapist and who is also available to offer staff support. Induction includes a full range of assessments including risk assessment, diagnostic skills for life assessment and vocational profiling to assist the planning of individual learning. Staff work hard to engage and support learners into and through employment. There is a range of good-quality work placements including the Harington Gardeners, who often provide a first placement for learners. These work placements offer a safe learning environment, support learners' development of readiness for work and provide learners with opportunities to develop skills before placement in higher risk, external work environments.

53. The promotion and understanding of equality of opportunity is good. The management of equality of opportunity as an integral part of all activities is well established. Equality and diversity are regularly discussed at staff and learners' meetings, and the policy has been re-written to take account of legislative changes. The Scheme has a range of supporting policies and statements and has recently written a child and adult protection policy. However, the Scheme has yet to produce a current action plan for equality and diversity. Complaints are dealt with effectively. The staff handbook is comprehensive. Although the learners' handbook clearly outlines rights and responsibilities, it is very detailed and too difficult to read for learners with weak literacy skills. Insufficient development activities take place to support staff to further promote equality and diversity strategies. The observation system does not include comments on equality issues to support tutors to develop good practice.

54. The Scheme checks the equal opportunities policies of its work placements before placing learners in employment. However, there is no handbook for work placements to ensure that employers understand their responsibilities in relation to equality of opportunity and child/adult protection issues. The recording of equality and diversity discussion within reviews during work-placement visits is insufficiently detailed.

55. Equal opportunities data is used to monitor trends, and the Scheme's equality and diversity impact measures recognise the need to recruit more female learners.



The Scheme's response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is satisfactory. An accessibility audit has been conducted and necessary actions identified. The Scheme has responded to the government's Every Child Matters' initiative and is clearly able to identify how its activities reflect the key themes of the initiative in relation to the vulnerable young people within its care.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 2**

56. The Scheme has a good focus on quality improvement. Staff are very committed to continuous improvement and articulate with confidence the areas that have improved and those which need improving. The Scheme has a clearly recorded quality improvement system, which is co-ordinated and monitored by the Scheme's manager. The quality improvement manual and associated procedures have been recently updated and are comprehensive. However, the Scheme has no clear and sufficiently detailed criteria against which judgements are being made on the quality of, for example, reviews or the activity plan records. A timetable for quality improvement activities is used effectively to observe relevant aspects of provision and audit to a range of documents supporting the learning process. The Scheme's manager and two teamleaders have regular quality improvement meetings at which they monitor, analyse and evaluate progress against targets in the development plan and the various quality improvement projects.

57. The Scheme's quality improvement projects have included re-scheduling the timetable to enhance learning opportunities and improve attendance and punctuality. Between January and June 2006, attendance improved from 81 per cent to 91 per cent. The literacy and numeracy quality improvement project has clearly identified areas for improvement which includes low achievement rates in literacy and the integration of skills for life with vocational training. Another quality improvement project has had a positive effect on the rigour of assessment in horticulture and the more timely achievement of qualifications. The initial assessment and induction process has been overhauled and is now providing a fuller picture of each learner's prior attainment and starting point. However, it is too early to assess the full effect of the improvement projects.

58. Internal verification is satisfactory and there are effective arrangements for standardisation and moderation of the horticultural provision. Assessors' work is sampled regularly and assessments are observed, with the verifier offering detailed and constructive feedback.

59. The Scheme has developed an effective lesson observation scheme to monitor the quality of training sessions. The observations accurately identify variations in the quality of teaching and learning, confirmed by the observations during the inspection. The outcomes from the observation system are not used systematically to meet appraisal and training needs. The form used to record the outcomes of observations does not sufficiently focus on learning activities and checks on learning. The observation system has not been used to identify or champion good practice in teaching and learning.

60. The Scheme collects, collates and analyses feedback from learners and other stakeholders on a regular basis. Actions for improvement are identified. For example, learners asked for the outdoor smoking area to be moved and employers requested more work-placement visits. The Scheme responded promptly to both requests. Learners are actively encouraged, informally and formally, to evaluate their training programme in general terms. However, the feedback questionnaire gives learners little opportunity to

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identify which learning activities they prefer and why.

61. Self-assessment is well established and takes account of the views of learners, staff, the board, placement providers, referral agencies and other partners. Judgements in the self-assessment report are supported well by data. The report is critical and highly focused on the learners. It is accurate and concurs with the judgements made by inspectors. The accompanying development plan is used well by staff and is effectively monitored on a monthly basis.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Preparation for life and work

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Employability training</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Entry to Employment	25	2

62. The Scheme provides employability training through the E2E programme at a large horticultural site in Highgate. The proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities starting programmes has increased significantly over the past three years, from 69 per cent in 2003-04 to 100 per cent in 2005-06. There are currently 25 learners enrolled on E2E programmes. Each learner has an individual programme and works towards accreditation which best suits their individual needs. Most learners are working towards qualifications at entry level or level 1 NVQs in horticulture. Three learners at the time of inspection were following a life skills programme. Learners also take national qualifications in literacy and numeracy and life skills. Specialist tutors carry out training in personal development, employability skills, and literacy and numeracy. The programme has been designed so that learners can start at any time of year. The Scheme's manager has overall responsibility for the training provision. Three teamleaders manage the programme and also deliver some training. They are responsible for seven training staff. The horticultural programmes are also supported by three assessors based at Harington Gardeners.

### ***Employability training***

#### *Strengths*

- good progression to employment, further education and training
- development of very good vocational, personal and social skills
- highly individualised and flexible programme of learning
- excellent vocational and personal support for learners

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning of programme to integrate literacy and numeracy
- insufficient facilities for ICT

### **Achievement and standards**

63. The progression rate into employment, further education and training is good at 46 per cent for the 2003-04 starters, with one learner still on programme. For the 2004-05 intake, the current progression rate is 21 per cent with 54 per cent of the learners still in learning. Retention has been particularly good in the current year, with nearly 80 per cent of the 2005-06 intake still on their programme.

64. Learners develop very good horticultural, personal and social skills. They gain

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particularly good communication skills and self-confidence, and work well with other learners, staff and colleagues on work placements. During the programme, learners improve their ability to resolve conflict and develop appropriate behaviour and language to participate in work placements successfully. Horticulture learners also benefit from improving their physical fitness, stamina, and concentration, which contribute to their employability. Fifty-four per cent of the learners are currently in work placements.

65. Most learners attain good standards of work. Learners' practical horticultural skills and knowledge are good. Learners show competence not only in simple tasks such as soil cultivation and weeding, but also in more complex operations such as sowing seeds in modules and training sweet peas for exhibition. Learners regularly win prizes in local horticultural shows for their pot plants and vegetables. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of the horticultural theory behind practical tasks and can explain complex issues such as environmental manipulation during seed germination. Most learners work well as a team and work at near-industrial speeds in tasks such as planting, weeding and harvesting. Learners show a thorough grasp of health and safety issues, often challenging their peers and even their tutors over matters like discarded tools and safe lifting.

66. In literacy and numeracy, learners make satisfactory progress. In the life skills classes, learners produce portfolios of work to an appropriate standard using a range of different sources, including photographic evidence. Of particular note are the illustrations and drawings used in healthy eating sessions, which have been produced and laminated by learners to use as a learning resource for others. Marking of work is satisfactory, although strategies to assist learners in mastering commonly misspelt words are not consistent. In addition, some learners are not adequately supported in developing good study skills, such as writing on lined paper to improve letter formation.

67. Achievement of qualifications is satisfactory and improving. Of the 26 learners who started training in 2003-04, four have so far gained a level 1 NVQ and two have gained entry-level 2 qualifications in horticulture. Ten learners have gained qualifications in literacy and/or numeracy from entry level 1 to level 1. At present, of the 24 learners entering the programme in 2004-05, seven have gained level 1 NVQs in horticulture, and nine learners have gained literacy and/or numeracy qualifications.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Entry to Employment	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	14		24	100	26	100											
Progression <sup>1</sup>	0		5	21	12	46											
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	0		4	17	10	38											
Still in learning	11		13	54	1	4											

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

## The quality of provision

68. The Scheme provides learners with a highly individualised and flexible programme that meets their specific needs. A work-taster week in horticulture and the initial assessment induction period of six weeks are used effectively to provide information to place each learner's individual programme. A wide range of modules is available including horticulture, literacy, numeracy, life skills, personal and social development, ICT and jobsearch. The length and content of each learner's programme can be extended or changed as new needs or interests arise. The life skills module includes citizenship, community, home management, basic ICT, personal care and preparation for working life. Other vocational and personal development options are available to learners through part-time courses or tasters with other providers and colleges. Learners attend off-the-job training sessions on one day each week to support their vocational training. Literacy and numeracy training is also provided for one day a week. A range of high-quality work placements are carefully chosen and include the Harington Gardeners, a local city farm, garden centres, floristry, retail, and childcare placements. In addition, a wide range of enrichment activities promote team building. These include sports activities, a residential week, plant sales and exhibiting and visiting horticultural shows, and are much valued by learners.

69. Learners receive excellent vocational and personal support. Staff are highly committed and strongly empathise with the learners. There is a high degree of mutual respect among learners, staff and employers. Learners receive very effective individual coaching, when appropriate, on work placements from the recruitment and employment team. Frequent reviews in the workplace include the work supervisor and they monitor the development of learners' vocational skills, as well as their employability. Each learner has a keyworker who provides personal support as well as conducting weekly target-setting sessions and monthly reviews. All learners have the opportunity to work with a life coach to resolve issues of conflict. This service is well used and valued by learners. Specialist support in areas such as speech and occupational therapy is available on an individual basis. The Scheme uses volunteers effectively to provide learners with individual to develop their reading skills.

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The most successful literacy and numeracy sessions relate learning to horticulture or learners' interests. For example, in a practical numeracy session, learners performed a stocktake of gardening tools and equipment and then produced a variety of graphs and charts to record their findings, which were then displayed. However, the integration of literacy and numeracy training with learners' vocational interests is not systematic. Furthermore, tutors do not sufficiently use a range of strategies to challenge more-able learners. Teaching and learning in horticulture are good. Trainers use a variety of flexible teaching methods, explain horticultural principles clearly to engage all learners and demonstrate practical tasks well. For example, trainers very effectively demonstrated a simple technique to enable a learner with visual impairment to handle small seeds. Learning is continually reinforced and monitored by group and individual question and answer techniques. Well-designed worksheets are used to test and consolidate learners' knowledge at the end of each session. Learners are challenged to extend both the breadth and depth of their horticultural knowledge and to extend and perfect their practical skill by performing unfamiliar tasks, or doing a familiar task faster and to a higher standard. Assessment is satisfactory and learners are assessed at suitable intervals.

### **Leadership and management**

71. The programme was restructured last year and two new teamleaders were recruited. They work well together and the provision has significantly improved. Communication is good. The Scheme holds regular informal and formal team meetings where staff discuss learners' progress, achievements, issues of concern, retention, attendance and punctuality. Staff are encouraged to take part in development activities, and four are currently working towards an initial teaching qualification. Vocational staff are appropriately qualified and the literacy and numeracy tutor is trained to the appropriate level in literacy. Resources are satisfactory overall, with a good range of learning facilities for horticulture ranging from an organic vegetable garden, to a small commercial greenhouse with heated benches for propagation. There are good-quality hand tools and a full range of professional machinery.

72. Insufficient planning of the programme takes place to integrate literacy and numeracy training into all aspects of the learners' programmes. Although they have received training, staff still lack confidence and do not adequately share learners' development needs in literacy and numeracy with vocational and life skills tutors. No systematic analysis takes place of where literacy and numeracy skills could be improved within horticulture, and personal and social development activities. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not consistently make reference to literacy and numeracy and trainers do not always reinforce these with learners.

73. ICT facilities are insufficient. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report. A small number of learners have opportunities, once a week, to attend ICT classes in a well-equipped ICT learning bus from a local college.

