

# Hill Holt Wood

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319649

## Contents

<b>Background information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Inspection judgements .....	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
<b>Description of the provider.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Summary of grades awarded .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overall judgement.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Effectiveness of provision .....	6
Capacity to improve .....	6
<b>Key strengths .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Key areas for improvement.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Main findings .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Achievement and standards .....	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management .....	9
Equality of opportunity .....	9
<b>What learners like .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>What learners think could improve.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Learners' achievements .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Preparation for life and work

## Description of the provider

1. Hill Holt Wood (HHW) is a not for profit organisation limited by guarantee and a charity. It is based in 34 acres of woodland situated on the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire border. The wood at HHW is open to the public.
2. HHW has a 20-place contract with Lincolnshire and Rutland LSC to provide an E2E programme for young people aged 16 to 18. Currently 18 learners, including two female learners, are on the programme. Learners face disadvantages such as homelessness, exclusion from schools, a history of offending and mental health. HHW accepts all learners referred by Connexions. Learners attend for 30 hours per week. HHW provides a minibus service to transport all learners.
3. HHW also provides a Solutions 4 programme for school pupils aged between 14 and 16, funded by Lincolnshire local authority, to sample activities such as conservation, horticulture, environmental studies and woodland skills. This contract is not in the scope of the inspection.
4. A group of 16 voluntary directors manage the organisation. One of the previous owners is the Chief Executive of the organization and manages the wood with support from a team of 19 full-time and one part-time member of staff. Staff are known as rangers.
5. The achievement rate for five GCSEs at grades A\* to C is 51% in Lincolnshire compared to the average rate for England of 47%. Minority ethnic groups, according to the census of 2001, make up less than 1% of the local population, compared to the average for England of 9%.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

## Sector subject area

Preparation for life and work (Entry to Employment)	Good: Grade 2
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Leadership and management and the provision of preparation for life and work are all good. Achievement and standards and equality of opportunity are outstanding.
7. Achievement and standards are outstanding in E2E. The standard of learners' practical work, as well as development of skills, is exceptionally high. Learners quickly become responsible citizens. The rates of entry into sustainable employment and education leading to good careers and vocations are all good.
8. The quality of provision is good overall. The tutors use a good mix of practice and theory in the woodlands and classroom to develop learners' skills and knowledge. However, learning is not always well planned. Rangers provide a high level of effective support to the learners. The range of courses and programmes is outstanding and perfectly matches the needs of the learners, employers and the rural communities.
9. Leadership and management are good. Very experienced and highly committed board members set a strong direction for the social enterprise, which is passionately shared by all staff and learners. HHW has led on and established some outstanding partnerships. Social inclusion is outstanding. The provider has used a broad range of strategies to engage, support and progress disadvantaged and disengaged learners. Learners have changed their lives and made an excellent contribution to their communities. Staff are highly committed, well experienced and qualified in their field. Some of them have very successfully dealt with difficult circumstances personally and they hugely support and inspire the learners. However, many of them do not have teaching qualifications. The managers have not paid sufficient attention to improving the quality of teaching and learning on a continuous basis.

#### Capacity to improve

#### Good: Grade 2

10. HHW demonstrates good capacity to improve further. HHW has maintained or improved on all the strengths and has successfully dealt with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Achievement rates for qualifications in literacy and numeracy, use of data and the range of work-placements and tasters have all improved. Inspectors awarded higher grades for achievement and standards and for equality of opportunity.
11. The self-assessment report remains comprehensive, thorough and inclusive. It is mapped against the 'Every Child Matters' themes and gives a very accurate account of the provision identifying the areas for improvement and strengths. The action plan to deal with the areas for improvement is robust. HHW takes effective action promptly in response to feedback from learners, employers and other stakeholders. Quality improvement is now fully established in all aspects except in the observations of teaching and learning.

12. Two rangers have been given greater responsibility to manage aspects of training. During the long period of illness of the chief executive, the staff have worked well to maintain the standards. The arrangements to deal with identified areas for improvement are satisfactory.

## Key strengths

- Very good achievement of a broad range of practical and employability skills
- Excellent use of the environment to meet learners, employers and community needs
- High level of very effective support
- Strong strategic direction and vision
- Outstanding partnerships
- Outstanding social inclusion through a highly successful social enterprise in rural communities
- Very thorough self-assessment process

## Key areas for improvement

- The planning of learning
- Observation of teaching and learning

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

13. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Learners gain a broad range of practical skills in a work environment that are easily transferable in many employment sectors. They gain a good degree of knowledge of the land-based industries and very quickly develop high-level skills in joinery, gardening, laying and maintaining pathways. This strength was correctly identified in the self-assessment report.
14. Learners develop an outstanding work ethic. Their attendance and punctuality is excellent. They develop the right attitude for learning and work. They become highly skilled at jobsearch as they go through the rigorous process of applying for the posts of junior rangers. Other soft skills such as communications, team working and self-esteem all improve significantly throughout the programme. For example, learners take visitors to the woodlands on guided tours and proudly demonstrate their workmanship and knowledge. They contribute well to the projects by assuming higher levels of responsibility quickly. All of them find clear direction to their lives.
15. The standard of the learners' work is of exceptionally good quality and compares favourably with the other professionals. Learners love working in a safe and healthy environment. They take pride in the place and ensure the site is well kept and free of litter. Learners are currently working on building a community resource centre at HHW. Inspectors were particularly impressed with the excellent behaviour of the learners.
16. The rates of positive outcomes are high in the local context. In the current year, HHW has the third highest level of positive outcomes in the region at 58%. Many learners enter into sustainable full-time employment with the local employers and change the course of their lives. Several of them have successfully entered into careers and self-employment. Many of the learners at HHW had previously been difficult to place and had been excluded from other providers. Learners often have a very low starting point but make huge progress in a short period. Most learners come back to HHW to complete higher levels of qualifications or do some voluntary work in the woodlands. Current learners are also progressing well and many have already secured places on vocational courses to start in the new academic year.
17. All learners are making equally good progress but an increased number of female learners have gained better positive outcomes.
18. The achievement of short, work-related qualifications such as emergency first aid is excellent. The achievement rate for qualifications at Level 1 in literacy and numeracy is good at 71%.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

19. The quality of provision is good. Most teaching takes place in the woodlands and the rangers use good demonstration skills. They integrate numeracy and literacy appropriately into the practical lessons and reinforce these skills in the classrooms. Rangers give



constructive feedback to the learners to help them improve their knowledge and skills further. HHW has good range of computers to use for research and jobsearch activities. Initial assessment is thorough. Rangers work closely with the learners to identify their barriers to learning, learning styles as well as interests and aptitude. Learners play a full part in the assessment process and take full responsibility for achieving their learning goals.

20. Learner progress reviews are good and are regularly conducted and reviewed on a monthly basis jointly with a Connexions personal adviser. The targets are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic to complete in a short time period. These are based on completing units of qualifications in literacy and numeracy and personal learning goals. Learners are very clear about their level of progress. Equality and diversity is well reinforced in progress reviews. Learners fully understand matters such as respect for the people and its importance in personal life, on site or in employment.
21. Learning is not sufficiently well planned. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Rangers often concentrate on completing the planned lesson and fail to make use of incidental opportunities for reinforcement of learning. In one lesson, the learners understood the formula for calculating the area but made mistakes in multiplication. Some teaching sessions are uninspiring, long, and focus highly on complex theory. The language used in handouts is too complex for the learners.
22. HHW makes excellent use of the beautiful woodland to deliver a broad range of practical skills to the learners that perfectly matches their needs and that of the employers. Learners gain appropriate qualifications and find employment in the local community. A broad range of enrichment activities and work-placements are available to help develop learners' social and personal skills. A local college provides excellent help to HHW to develop the programme further to meet the industry standards. The programme provides an excellent vehicle for North Kesteven district council to provide a well maintained and pleasant environment for its residents and outstanding value for money.
23. HHW provides very high levels of effective support on an ongoing basis to the learners and their parents. The staff learner ratio at 1:6 is very good. Rangers provide good quality and objective information to the learners to help them make informed choices about their training and career paths. HHW has very good relationships with other agencies including employers. Several of these provide on-site support for pastoral issues such as housing and counselling. Learners benefit from free transport from home to their workplaces. HHW actively monitors the progress of the learners beyond the end of the programme and provides high levels of study support and pastoral care. Inspectors agreed with the provider and confirmed this strength.

## **Leadership and management**

**Good: Grade 2**

**Equality of opportunity**

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

24. Highly qualified, knowledgeable, committed and experienced board members give their time and knowledge generously to provide strong strategic direction to HHW. They are fully committed to sustainable use of the environment to prepare disadvantaged young

people for a good quality of life. The staff are equally committed to the project and share this vision passionately.

25. HHW has developed outstanding partnerships that benefit the rural communities extremely well. HHW has shaped the thinking of many partners and used their resources and influence to make substantial changes to the fabric of the local community. Partners provide work experience, contacts, training and curriculum development that directly benefits HHW and its learners. For example, in partnership with The Woodlands Trust it maintains the commercially unviable woodland area. The learners have upgraded the wetland and the woodlands of the local parish councils. Local schools use the woodlands as a learning resource to learn about the environment. One of the outstanding examples of partnership work is the work with the 'Watch NK' (North Kesteven District Council) and the local police. The learners maintain the walkways and pathways and report abandoned cars and litter to the local authority and the police.
26. HHW, as a social enterprise, is an outstanding example of social inclusion. It has used its resources and knowledge effectively to engage learners who had been or are at risk of exclusion from schools into learning or to secure jobs and make a positive contribution to their communities. Learners are doing something very positive to deal with the issues of rural isolation, disadvantage and deprivation. Many of them have successfully broken the long cycle of dependency on benefits and have taken effective control of their lives. Many learners have become good role models and command respect from their peers. HHW has taken strong action to increase the number and achievement of young women on the programme. For example, in the current Year 6 female learners joined the programme and achieved well. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet the current government requirements. Staff are carefully vetted and trained to deal with the learners. Learners and staff have a high degree of awareness of equality matters and work in an environment with mutual respect. HHW has an appropriate policy on equality of opportunity and social inclusion. Bullying and harassment is very effectively challenged and the learners are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities towards others.
27. Quality improvement is working effectively. HHW has improved the quality of the provision. Staff make good use of highly effective 'what if' boards around the site to remind them what to do in particular situations. Learners make very useful contributions via the 'way forward' group to bring about improvements. Several changes have been made to improve the provision. Observation of teaching and learning is under developed. The feedback from recent lesson observations is various in quality. Observers focus on tutor input rather than evaluating the effectiveness of the sessions. They are insufficiently critical and do not provide guidance to further improve teaching and learning. A partner organisation is scheduled to conduct observations.
28. Communications, business planning and the management of health and safety on site is good. Data collection and usage is satisfactory for monitoring purposes. Staff performance management is satisfactory. Staff development is satisfactory and equips them to deal with issues facing learners well. However, too few rangers have a teaching qualification. HHW recognises this and has plans for several members of staff to attend teacher training.

## What learners like:

- 'Hill Holt Wood helps you to become independent'
- 'Staff give you a lot of respect. Rangers are like your mates'
- 'Maths and English help you get a better job'
- 'Staff explain things very well and we know where we stand'
- 'It's like a second family at HHW and they are always there when you need them'
- Good helping in the community
- The learning environment – 'it's fantastic here,' 'it is loads better than the school'
- Transport support – 'the van that picks me up every morning'
- 'Making new friends'

## What learners think could improve:

- 'Nothing! They are fine; doing a great job!'

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E)** programmes managed by HHW **2005 to 2007**

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
05-06	25	44%	44%
06-07	32	69%	69%
07-08	24	46%	58%

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

\* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

\*\* Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period