

Short inspection of Groundwork South and North Tyneside

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 2024

Outcome

Groundwork South and North Tyneside continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Groundwork South and North Tyneside is part of a federation of independent charities that make up Groundwork UK. Each Groundwork trust adheres to the common aims to work in disadvantaged communities and improve people's prospects.

Groundwork South and North Tyneside's 'Route2Work College' is based at the Eco Centre in Hebburn, South Tyneside. It provides programmes for learners with high needs, many of whom have autism. Learners have access to a heritage farm, a museum and a visitor centre at Jarrow Hall. They also have access to the grounds at the Eco Centre for land-based activities and space to run a regular 'pop-up' cafe. Learners aged 16 to 24 are recruited from the local area. At the time of the inspection, there were 41 learners enrolled, 15 of whom were under 18 years of age.

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

Learners benefit from well-qualified and experienced tutors, who enable them to make good progress in developing important skills and behaviours, such as travelling independently, communicating with others and handling money during social activities in the community. Tutors support learners well to increase their confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

Learners value the supportive environment that staff provide, which helps them to cope more effectively with a range of barriers to learning that they experience, including mental health and well-being issues. They talk positively about the caring and professional approach of staff. Learners who have not attended school for a long period of time now attend regularly at the provider, supported by staff who understand their needs.

Learners feel safe at the provider due to the support that they receive from staff and because of the presence of closed-circuit television cameras in the building. Tutors teach learners about local risks, such as gangs and anti-social behaviour in certain localities, and how keep themselves safe.

Learners have a good understanding of healthy relationships and consent, and can recognise the signs of an abusive relationship. Tutors teach them well about sexual harassment in the workplace and what action to take if they experience this.

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

Leaders and managers provide an inclusive and rich curriculum that meets the needs of learners and supports them to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need in adulthood. Learners benefit from practical activities in real-life learning environments, including a local farm, where they develop and enhance the key skills that they need through working with a range of livestock. They value the wider aspects of the curriculum, which include independent travel skills, work experience opportunities, enrichment activities, personal, social, health and economic sessions and the development of employability skills.

Leaders and managers have carefully reviewed the English and mathematics curriculum since the previous inspection in order to increase the proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications. Although this has resulted in an increase, as leaders and managers rightly recognise it needs to improve further. Leaders and managers have recently recruited specialist tutors, who deliver additional sessions to learners working towards these qualifications. They are currently reviewing which mathematics qualifications to offer, as they recognise that many of their learners struggle to read and understand the questions in examination papers due to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these measures.

Leaders, managers and governors have accurate oversight of the quality of education provided to learners. They complete a range of activities, such as learning walks, where they review the quality of teaching and assessment. Leaders and managers use these activities to identify areas for development and staff training needs. For example, managers identified that a number of tutors were struggling to keep learners engaged for the full session. They worked with tutors to use specific techniques relating to autism and attention deficit hyperactivity, such as 'now and next' boards, to motivate learners and keep them focused.

Staff identify accurate starting points for learners in vocational subjects and in relation to other skills as identified in learners' education, health and care plans. Tutors use this information well to identify targets for learners and to plan individual programmes for them. However, they do not make sufficiently good use of initial assessment information in English and mathematics to give learners a clear understanding of the skills that they need to develop, strengthen and consolidate.

Tutors plan and deliver the curriculum in a logical order to enable learners to progressively develop their knowledge and skills. For example, tutors delivering mathematics start with developing and consolidating basic mathematical skills, such as use of whole numbers, before moving on to more complex topics, such as using standard formulas to calculate time, distance and speed.

Tutors use a range of teaching strategies well to develop, reinforce and consolidate learners' knowledge and understanding. For example, tutors in mathematics use step-by-step demonstration to strengthen learners' understanding of how to use the 'borrowing' method when completing learning activities which require the use of mental arithmetic skills. Tutors in animal care use informative explanation and demonstration to reinforce the importance of using the correct personal protective equipment, especially when working with larger animals, such as pigs and bulls.

Tutors use a range of assessment methods effectively to check learners' understanding. In English, tutors use interactive quizzes to assess learners' understanding of the difference between fact and opinion and the difference between reliable and unreliable sources of information.

Learners benefit from effective careers advice and guidance that helps them to make informed choices about their next steps. Tutors work closely with external agencies, including the local Connexions Service, to ensure that learners receive impartial and informative careers advice and guidance. Specialist careers guidance officers hold one-to-one meetings with learners and provide each learner with a careers action plan, which provides learners and their families with useful information.

Tutors provide high-quality careers information to learners in employability lessons, enabling learners to develop an understanding of different career options in many vocational areas, including customer service and animal care. Tutors support learners to produce curricula vitae, to search for jobs and to develop interview skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Use initial and diagnostic assessment information to set individual targets for all learners so that they have a clear understanding of the specific skills that they need to develop in English and mathematics.

Provider details

Unique reference number	141503
Address	Eco Centre, Windmill Way Hebburn Tyne and Wear NE31 1SR
Contact number	0191 4281144
Website	www.route2work.org
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Andrew Watts
Provider type	Independent specialist college
Date of previous inspection	20 to 22 May 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Groundwork South and North Tyneside was judged to be good in May 2019.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of provision and achievements, 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

Jacquie Brown, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Clark

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024