

The Harington Scheme

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 54860

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Last day of inspection: 18 May 2012

Type of provider: Voluntary organisation

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Information about the provider

1. The Harington Scheme (Harington) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee based in Highgate, North London. It was established in 1980 by local people, aiming to advance the education, training and social development of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by providing life skills and horticultural training. It also provides, through 'Harington Gardeners', work placements and, for former learners, supported employment in gardening. It generates income through gardening services provided to local organisations and private customers.

2. The training arm of the scheme offers Foundation Learning within preparation for life and work programmes, incorporating retail and horticultural training, functional skills and personal and social development for young people and adults. Most of the learners have learning difficulties, learning disabilities, behavioural difficulties or mental health needs. The majority of the young learners attended schools for children with special needs and/or had a statement of special educational needs at school. Most learners are recruited from the North London area but Harington attracts learners London-wide. The scheme has a contract with the Education Funding Agency (formerly the Young People's Learning Agency) to provide Foundation Learning (formerly Entry to Employment). Government funding supports the majority of the scheme's work with some aspects supported through charitable trusts, for example to fund a job coach and counsellor.

3. A voluntary board of 11 directors manages the scheme. Operational management is the responsibility of the scheme manager who oversees seventeen staff, including five part-time staff. Sixteen part-time volunteers, one freelance psychotherapist (counsellor) and one freelance internal verifier also support the scheme.

4. The Harington Scheme provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - City and Islington College (Foundation Learning)
 - Riverside School (vocational education for students aged 14 to 16).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: Foundation Learning, including Entry to Employment	39 full-time learners 20 full-time learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject areas	Grade
Preparation for life and work	2

Overall effectiveness

5. A high proportion of learners progress to further education, training and sustained employment. Learners achieve additional qualifications and improve their employment prospects. They develop excellent vocational, personal and social skills and gain in confidence. Lessons are well paced and challenging for learners as they increase in complexity, step by step. Learners are very enthusiastic and make excellent progress. Arrangements to meet the needs and interests of learners are outstanding as the range of provision has increased and is closely linked to good work placements. The learners' experience is enhanced by helpful volunteers. Good partnership working is enhancing the learning opportunities and resources available to support learners. All staff are sensitive to the needs of learners and learners receive outstanding support from tutors, the recruitment and progression team and placement providers. Leadership and management are good with excellent business planning, closely monitored to maximise resources. Safeguarding arrangements are good and ensure learners' safety and promote continual awareness of potential harm. Equality and diversity are integrated well into the everyday experience of learners and staff, who treat each other with care and respect. Quality improvement arrangements are well established and effective; however, the system for quality assuring lessons is insufficiently focused on learning.

Main findings

- Qualification rates and progression rates into further education, training and sustained employment are very high. The development of vocational, social and personal skills is outstanding. Learners make excellent progress in lessons and learners' employability and vocational skills rapidly improve as they gain in confidence throughout the programme.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners benefit from well-planned lessons that take good account of individual learners' needs. Topics are closely linked to learners' goals and help them develop the necessary skills to live independently and gain employment. Learners use work experience effectively to practise and hone these skills.
- Highly personalised programme planning and flexible scheduling of work placements ensure coordinated activity to meet learners' needs. Subjects relevant to learners' needs, introduced to the curriculum since the last inspection, are expanding learners' options.
- Partnerships to develop provision to meet learners' needs are effective and enhance the opportunities and support available to learners. A volunteer scheme provides very effective support to identified learners; however, volunteers receive insufficient staff development opportunities.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. Tutors and the recruitment and progression team, including the job coach and counsellor, very effectively enable learners to remain on the programme and to derive full advantage from it.
- Leadership and management are good. Excellent analysis of the provision contained in the business plan supports strategic objectives for future development well. The operational management of the provision is good.
- The board of directors is supportive of staff and managers providing good strategic direction and overview of the provision. They monitor the scheme's performance well.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. The monitoring of safeguarding concerns is good and staff monitor those at risk carefully. The promotion of safeguarding is good in the content of lessons, and staff reinforce safeguarding issues with learners throughout their programme.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and is integrated well throughout the provision. The environment is inclusive. Harington makes good use of the diverse learner profile to promote equality and diversity, and wall displays are fully representative of this diversity.
- The learner engagement strategy and practice are excellent and involve more than representation of learners' views at meetings or eliciting their opinions via questionnaires; the process is also effective in seeking how to develop the learner voice to evaluate and develop the provision.
- Quality improvement arrangements are well established and are effective in improving provision. The observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory but

has too much emphasis on teaching rather than learning. Reports are descriptive and contain insufficient judgement on the quality of teaching and learning.

- The scheme uses resources particularly well to provide very good value for money. It accesses a wide range of funding sources to fund enrichment activities, additional staff posts and to provide extensive work experience opportunities.

What does The Harington Scheme need to do to improve further?

- Provide further professional development and support for volunteers to ensure that the company makes best use of this resource.
- Strengthen the process of lesson observations and records produced, to focus on learning and improve the effectiveness of lessons.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the staff, who are supportive and helpful
- the opportunities to increase confidence and skills and become a better person
- the help they get with their reading and writing
- the quality of teaching, as teachers break down tasks to help them understand more easily
- the help they get from the counsellor, particularly at times of crisis or when they have a specific problem
- going over tasks to help consolidate and reinforce learning.

What learners would like to see improved:

- doing evening duties, as sometimes there are too many jobs
- the canteen facilities, for example the provision of a vending machine.

Summary of the views of partners as confirmed by inspectors

What partners like:

- the partnerships with Harington, which are very successful in preparing learners for work
- the way Harington provides better trained and more independent learners
- receiving excellent safeguarding training
- the effective, efficient and inclusive methods of learning the scheme provides
- the tailored support to ease learners into their placements

- the volunteers that Harington provides, the help it gives to the community and the work experience and opportunities it offers to develop learners' confidence
- the very good communication they have with the scheme.

What partners would like to see improved:

- the opportunities to be more involved in reviewing learners' progress.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

6. Harington has a good track record of sustained improvement over time. Since the last inspection, Harington has put in place a range of improvements, including those that required significant funding. Harington uses resources carefully and wisely to maximise their impact on learning. The programme of fundraising, grant applications to charities and voluntary work contribute considerably to the the organisation's ability to extend the range of services. High progression rates and improved retention and achievement rates show a consistently improving trend. Harington sets and meets ambitious targets to achieve very good outcomes for all learners.
7. The scheme has a clear vision and appropriate priorities to sustain improvement and raise expectations for all users. Self-assessment and quality improvement activities are well developed and effective. The learner engagement strategy is excellent. Harington has an appropriate management structure and sufficient staff and other resources to carry through its plans for improvement. The board of directors fulfils its duties well, both at strategic level and in the management of the provision.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

8. At 83%, progression rates to further education, training and employment are very high and show an improvement of 16 percentage points over the last two years. There are no significant variations in outcome between different groups of learners and the development of vocational, social and personal skills for all is excellent. Learners in customer service settings show increasing confidence in dealing with the public, initiate appropriate conversations and perform tasks to a high standard. Citizenship classes helpfully focus on topical issues and raise awareness in, for example, healthy living, which learners enjoy. Qualification achievement rates are high. Between August 2010 and May 2012, 97% of leavers entered for qualifications achieved a vocational qualification and 83% of those entered also achieved a functional skills qualification. Learners make particularly good progress in lessons and the well-planned tasks enable learners to demonstrate increasingly complex skills. Learners' employability skills are excellent as learners gain confidence and improve their literacy, numeracy, language and information and communication technology skills throughout the programme.
9. Learners placed in voluntary sector organisations make a good contribution to the community, as both the organisation and learners gain from their work experience. Learners are able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being which are subjects promoted in citizenship lessons and as part of their life skills sessions. Access to a life coach promotes positive mental health particularly well. Learners feel safe at the training centre and in work placements. They understand the importance of keeping safe and receive good,

clear information on the meaning of cyber bullying and safe internet usage. Harington promotes safe working practices and learners on placement demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety and work safely in their work settings.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

10. Learners benefit from well-planned lessons delivered at a pace to suit their attention span, with manageable segments of learning and tasks closely related to their individual needs at a level appropriate to them. Topics are relevant to their aims and enable the development of healthy, independent living and employability skills. The effective integration of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum provides opportunities for learners to develop and apply these skills in real vocational and everyday-life contexts. Thorough initial assessment informs individual learning plans, which identify appropriate targets from across the learner's programme. Learners are actively involved in reviewing their progress against targets but forms are too dependent on a written format. Work experience provides very good opportunities for learners to apply and further develop their skills, and progress reviews take account of feedback from work placement supervisors.
11. Highly personalised programme planning meets learners' individual needs particularly well and flexible scheduling of work placements ensures these are well coordinated with their training programmes. The taster and induction period very effectively identifies individual needs, interests and a vocational profile that informs planning of the programme and potential work placement. Tailoring placements to individual needs and interests, along with thorough preparation, enable learners to benefit fully from their work experience. The good range of curriculum subjects is relevant to learners' needs. The introduction of information and communication technology functional skills and the retail vocational pathway has expanded learners' options. An increased range of facilities, developed in response to learners' feedback, enriches the provision.
12. A wide range of good partnerships, in many cases long standing, enhances the opportunities and support available to learners. Partnerships with employers, voluntary sector charitable organisations and community groups enable mutual benefits by providing well-supported and relevant work placements for learners. These enable learners to apply and develop their skills, increase their confidence and operate independently. Harington makes good use of student nurses on placement to enhance support for learners. Partnerships with several organisations have contributed to successful funding applications, enabling increased opportunities for learners. A volunteer scheme provides targeted support to identified learners, fostering their development. However, Harington provides insufficient staff development for volunteers to ensure best use of this resource.

13. A very high level of support for learners enables them to benefit from the range of opportunities and to sustain their progression. Staff know the learners well and skilfully adapt their approach according to individual needs. Where necessary they receive professional support themselves, to ensure they are best equipped to support learners. Induction is very effective in preparing learners for their programme, increasing their understanding of health and safety, safeguarding arrangements and equality and diversity. Before learners start their programme, a thorough assessment of individual needs ensures timely arrangements for the necessary support. Extended support for transition into work placements ensures learners benefit from the experience. The progression team, which includes the job coach and counsellor, provides learners with highly effective support during the programme and after progression to employment or training and, where appropriate, to parents and carers. This enables learners to remain on, and to benefit fully from, the programme.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

14. Since the last inspection, Harington has made significant improvements in the collection and management of learners' data. It uses this information well to set targets for improvement and to monitor learners' outcomes, such as progress on programme, achievement of qualifications and progression to further training and employment. The business plan provides excellent analysis of the provision and strategic objectives for future development. The day-to-day management of the programme is good, particularly in its responsiveness to the needs of the learners. Tutors are well qualified and feel very well supported. They have good opportunities to develop their skills through teacher training and continuous professional development. Harington exploits the resource of the horticulture site itself well, and this adds a unique feature to the experience of the learners.
15. Support from the board of directors is good. The board provides both good strategic direction, and effective monitoring and monthly support to review the performance of the scheme.
16. The scheme has good safeguarding arrangements. The monitoring of safeguarding concerns is good and a watching brief is maintained for those at risk. A good range of training ensures that policies and procedures remain current and staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Useful risk assessments, completed on every learner and all activities they engage in, maintain good learning opportunities at minimal risk and identify additional actions needed to enable full participation. Good internet usage policies and procedures are effective and are continually reinforced with learners through posters and during reviews. The promotion of safeguarding is good during lessons. Operating on an open site, staff are extremely vigilant, and know their learners well. Good partnership work with the local community police and London Transport police has resulted in very effective travel training and safety awareness for learners.

17. The promotion of equality and diversity throughout the provision effectively creates an inclusive experience for learners and staff. Equality and diversity are standing agenda items on the weekly learner meeting. Harington makes good use of the learners' diverse ethnic profile to promote diversity, and wall displays reflect the diversity of learners well. The scheme has carried out a thorough analysis of learner groups and the potential to attract new learners. It has taken good steps to cater for a wider range of learners, such as young women and learners with lower level abilities. To meet the needs of a wider group of learners, the addition of the vocational area of retail widens the scope of the provision.
18. An excellent learner engagement strategy enables Harington to seek the views of the learners systematically and to evaluate and develop the provision. Lively, regular weekly meetings between all learners and staff enable effective review of progress. Learners are closely involved in setting and reviewing their own goals through four-weekly reviews. The role of the counsellor is particularly effective in ensuring that learners remain engaged and complete their programmes, helping them to understand their barriers to participation and success.
19. Quality improvement arrangements are good and self-assessment is well established as an improvement tool. The self-assessment report and quality improvement plans are thorough and accurate. The observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory; however, the focus in the observation reports is on teaching rather than learning. The reports contain too many descriptions of what happened in the lesson and insufficient judgement on the quality of teaching and learning.
20. Fundraising, grants and sponsorship create excellent value for money, enabling the scheme to provide extensive work experience for the learners, enrichment activities and the support of a job coach and counselling.

Information about the inspection

21. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the scheme manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
22. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gain the views of learners and partners. They also looked at questionnaires learners and partners had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
The Harington Scheme

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive LDD	19+ Learner responsive LDD
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	29	12	17
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2		
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1		
▪ How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1		
▪ How well do learners progress?	1		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2		
Quality of provision	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1		
Leadership and management	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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