

Inspection of NDA Foundation

Inspection dates:

11 to 13 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Adult learning programmes

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

NDA Foundation, established over 30 years ago, is an independent learning provider based in Nottingham. Leaders offer level 3 diplomas in professional interior design, garden design, and curtain-making and soft furnishings for adults. Courses are taught online or through a combination of online and in-person studio classes. At the time of the inspection, there were 245 adults studying these courses.

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

Students study design courses either online or through a combination of online and in-person classes. Leaders offer various course durations and flexible start dates. Students rightly value this approach, which allows them to select a study route that meets their needs.

Tutors introduce students, who are new to design, to a diverse range of design concepts. They swiftly progress to looking at specific design components, such as colour, lighting and furniture styles. Students quickly develop a sound understanding of the fundamentals of design.

Tutors integrate ethics and sustainability into the curriculum well. Students understand how these areas affect their designs. Garden design students consider the selection of hard landscaping materials and how these are mined, along with the sustainability issues that may arise when using porcelain.

Leaders and tutors ensure that health and safety aspects feature prominently in the curriculum. This starts at the most basic level of how to use a scalpel safely in craftwork. Tutors provide useful information to students on how to stay safe online. Students feel safe when studying online and in class.

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

Leaders and tutors use their wide range of industry links and personal experience to plan a highly relevant interior and garden design curriculum. Tutors create a professional learning environment with a strong focus on the knowledge and skills students need when working as interior or garden designers.

Tutors use well-designed, clear and engaging presentations in classes. They share a range of stimulating designs from across the world and over time. Tutors explain and define technical terms well in their lessons. Most students use these well in class discussions and written assignments. A few garden design students struggle to complete technical drawings to a high standard. As a result, these students rely on help from people they work with to complete their drawings.

Students ask thoughtful questions to clarify their understanding of topics. Tutors answer questions well and clear up any misconceptions. Tutors revisit students' prior learning at regular intervals. This helps students to gain a confident grasp of key design concepts.

Tutors design assessment tasks well to help students embed and apply their new knowledge. For example, tasks that link to client briefs allow students to apply a range of knowledge to real-life scenarios. This helps students to understand the requirements and pressures of the design industry. Tutors provide students with good feedback on written assignments that is clear and direct and sets high standards. Students know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is accessible for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Tutors make suitable adaptations to support these students. For example, tutors convert materials into easy-read documents or use more graphic symbols.

Leaders provide students with basic, but useful, information on mental well-being at the start of their courses. This includes how to get support for any mental health concerns they have. Supportive adjustments are made for students with health issues to help them to continue with their course.

Most students receive good information about their next steps, including talks from previous students about their career progression. They complete useful activities to prepare for job interviews, and receive guidance on how to present a professional portfolio. Students access information about pertinent job, competition and project opportunities. However, around half of the jobs and competitions listed were considerably out of date, limiting students' opportunity to pursue them.

Previous areas for improvement have been addressed by leaders. They carefully track student progress and intervene quickly to support students when necessary. As a result, most students successfully complete their course. Students progress to higher education courses, gain entry-level roles in design companies, or set up their own business.

Leaders follow an effective annual quality cycle. This includes a range of activities, such as quality reviews, student voice and peer observations. Leaders utilise the results to inform, and quickly implement, improvement actions and staff development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a suitable focus on safeguarding students. Although no formal referrals have been made, staff fully understand the policy and procedures. Leaders follow safer recruitment practices. All appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken.

Staff and the designated safeguarding lead complete suitable safeguarding training every three years. Staff discuss topical safeguarding issues infrequently. This means that students' awareness of pertinent or local issues is limited.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Tutors should consider how to develop the curriculum so that it supports garden design students to develop their technical drawing skills.

- Leaders should ensure that job roles and competitions that are promoted to students to broaden their experience are current so that students are able to benefit from them.
- Leaders should consider how to update staff more frequently on pertinent safeguarding themes so they can better raise students' awareness of topical issues.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1247998
Address	Rufford Hall Waterside Way Trent Park Nottingham NG2 4DP
Contact number	01159 123 412
Website	www.nda.ac.uk
Principal	Pauline Riley (Academy Director)
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 January 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy director, 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

Emma Woods, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Saul Pope	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Whelan	Her Majesty's Inspector

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