

Case study: Groundwork 2024

What is Groundwork?

Groundwork are an organisation focused on improving community services, people's life skills and employment prospects as well as helping young people in schools build their confidence and make new friendships

Inspiring Choices funded five schools to work with Groundwork Yorkshire during Spring/Summer 2024. We received feedback from two (school A and school B) of the five schools involved in the process. We also interviewed four young people from school A who engaged in Groundwork during this time.

The young people had six sessions with Groundwork Yorkshire where they were working towards a level 1 horticulture qualification on their school premises. The schools were also offered the option of a visit to the land based college Askham Bryan.



Summary of the young people's responses

- The young people particularly enjoyed the fact that Groundwork is outside, they found it more enjoyable than being in the classroom.
- Three out of four of the young people said they felt their confidence had improved since they started the Groundwork sessions.
- The young people already had ideas for their futures but liked that Groundwork had shown them a new career idea and opened their eyes to how different plants grow in the outdoor environment.
- New skills involving using shears, saws, and cutting down trees were developed by the young people.
- One young person mentioned looking into horticulture courses at a further or higher education level.
- When asked if their wellbeing had improved since starting Groundwork the young people said they felt happier being outdoors and with their friends. One young person said they looked forward to the sessions.

Summary of the feedback from school A and school B

- School attendance of the young people attending Groundwork in school A improved by 1.1% on average, and increased by 2.35% in one pupil, it stayed the same in school B.
- School A said the young people's behaviour had 100% changed since engaging in Groundwork and meeting Steve Tuck, who ran the sessions. They also mentioned two students have cleared their behaviour contracts due to taking part in the Groundwork sessions.
- School B said Groundwork enabled the young people to develop understanding and respectful approaches to other people which they can apply to their everyday school life. They explained that it has had a positive effect on the harder to reach young people in particular.
- When asked how they feel about Groundwork, both schools said it was a brilliant opportunity for targeted young people to get a feel for the post 16 world of work or study. Steve Tuck and his delivery of the course and connection with the young people was praised as well by both schools. School A said they wish it could run longer.
- Both schools listed interpersonal skills, team work, employability skills, life skills and work experience as benefits of Groundwork.
- Both schools said the sessions met the individual needs of the students involved. School A explained that the sessions had provided the young people with an insight into horticulture and landscaping, and school B shared that they hope Groundwork is on offer in 2025.

The following pages feature the feedback from the young people interviewed

Getting outside just makes everyone in general happy doesn't it? It makes me feel better than staying in a classroom, when I can go outside and do something I enjoy.



Tidying up the area, and chopping trees that have fallen making them into firewood.

Tidying up the area and making it look less overgrown.

What you have been doing in Groundwork?

Making the area look less overgrown, ready for someone else to replant.

Organising the area better by taking out the bushes and trees and flattening the ground.

I find it fun, I just don't like when it rains.

It gives me something to do instead of lessons, it's better for me.

How are you finding the Groundwork sessions?

I find it really enjoyable. It's just a way to get out of lessons and do what I like.

I'm finding it fun. It's really interesting to get out and about and just have fun with your friends and do stuff that can possibly get me a job.

No, I feel the same as I have done loads of stuff like this before.

Yes, I'm confident. I feel like I know what to do because Steve's showing us what to do.

Has taking part in the Groundwork sessions increased your confidence?

Yes, I definitely feel more confident because of Groundwork because I like to saw things and I get to chop down trees.

I would say my confidence has gone from a six to a seven or an eight since doing Groundwork. I just feel like I can do more.

No, I'm just sticking to bricklaying.

A little bit but I've already got something that I want to do.

Has Groundwork affected how you feel about your future?

Yes it's given me an idea of whether I want to go into planting or gardening when I'm older.

Yes, I never thought about doing Groundwork but I actually enjoy it when I do it.



Has Groundwork introduced you to an area of work you hadn't considered before?

Yes it has introduced me to do lots of different things you can do.

A little bit, I've improved on stuff I knew how to do before like the sawing and cutting.

Definitely in terms of how to chop down a tree.

Have you learnt any new skills from Groundwork?

Yes I've learnt how to use shears. I didn't know how to use them before but it was pretty easy. Also how to cut down a tree efficiently and keep out of its way when it falls.

It's better out there because I am with my mates and not sat in a classroom all day. I feel like it's better.

How do you feel about the environment and has Groundwork affected this?



It's interesting to see how things grow because things can grow in many different ways depending on what soil and plant you've got.

I'll probably just stick to college and not university

I think I'm going to go into being an apprentice.

How do you feel about further and higher education?

I would be interested in going into further or higher education if there was a course on gardening, I would need to think more about it.

College is quite scary for your first day but I don't mind going higher up maybe to university.

I just like being out, it's better than being sat in a classroom all day. It just makes you feel better.

It's better because I don't have to sit in lessons all day and I can just actually work and just be with my mates and that.

Do you think Groundwork has affected your wellbeing?

Yes, just getting outside more just makes everyone in general happy doesn't it? Just makes me feel better than staying in a classroom for six hours, when I can go outside and do something I enjoy.

I just feel better just knowing it's what I'm doing every Tuesday. Like say on a Monday I'm looking forward to it.

The following pages feature the feedback from school A and school B involved in Groundwork

Alongside improving their employability skills and interpersonal skills the pupils have the chance to experience hands-on sessions that give them a head start for their post 16 options, and valuable work experience within a sector they are interested in. - School A.

I think it is a wonderful opportunity for targeted students. We heavily invest in the programme to make it the best experience possible for the students and Steve Tuck is exceptional in his approach to the course. He works alongside us like he is part of our school staff. It is something that I hope can be funded going forward. - School B

It is a fantastic opportunity for pupils to have a sense of the world of work and the expectations of them becoming young adults moving into post 16 college and the working world. I would love for it to run for longer! - School A

How do you feel about Groundwork?

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What do you think are the benefits of Groundwork for the students?

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Real life experiences, it feels like work experience for them with all the benefits of working with an employer. Relationships are formed between students who you would think would never engage with each other. They work together and understand each other's needs, learn how to read body language, speak with adults and learn life skills for the future. - School B

Do you think Groundwork has met the specific needs of the students involved?

Yes – all the boys involved have thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and getting stuck in. All of them now have a clearer idea of what they want to study post 16 and have been given an insight into the world of horticulture and landscaping. - School A

Most definitely, and I hope that Inspiring Choices has it on offer again next year. - School B