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Students realise their potential through Gardening Short Course

ASDAN's Gardening Short Course develops practical, social and work-related skills in young people aged 11-16. Vikki Bishop, Vocational Lead at Coal Clough Academy, shares the impact of the course on their learners.

“At Coal Clough Academy, we chose to deliver ASDAN's Gardening Short Course because of its flexibility,” says Vikki Bishop, Vocational Lead. “We started delivering it this academic year in order to develop our learners' interpersonal skills and improve their self-esteem as well as their ability to work in a group and take responsibility for their actions,” says Vikki.

Coal Clough Academy in Burnley is an alternative provision centre for young people aged 11-16. Their learners include those who require educational interventions, including young people who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school and those on respite or medical referrals.

Tailored, practical programme

ASDAN's Gardening Short Course is a multi-level internally moderated award available as a student book or e-portfolio.



ASDAN learner planting daffodils

“The Gardening Short Course can last for however long the learner is enrolled at Coal Clough Academy,” says Vikki. “We're able to tailor the tasks to the individual needs of our students,

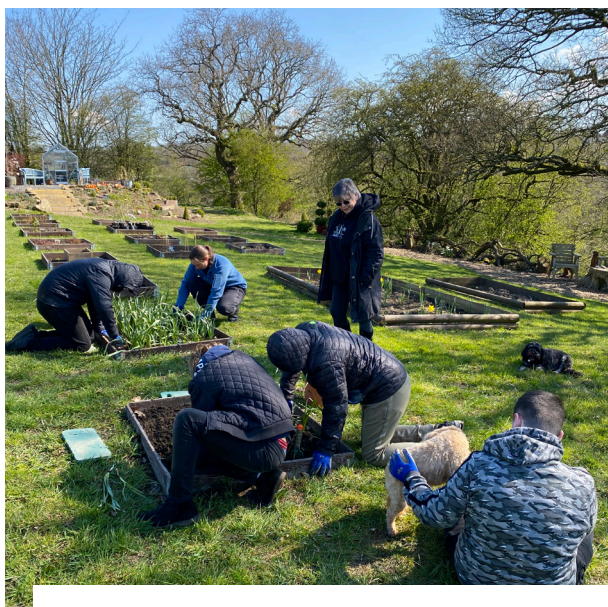




which is brilliant as we have a real mix of learners with different social needs and academic abilities.

“We visit a local five-acre plot of green space. The learners absolutely love being outside and tending to an allotment there as part of *Module 2: Growing food on the allotment*.

“Students really like that there’s not a lot of writing involved in the Gardening Short Course, it’s very practical,” says Vikki. “It’s wonderful for our learners to be able to see the long-term benefits of their planting and there’s a huge sense of achievement when they harvest their produce.”



Learners preparing the bed for planting

Broadens knowledge from crop to shop

“Our learners have made strawberry jam as part of the *Module 5: Using your produce in the garden*. Students aren’t just learning horticulture, they’re gaining knowledge about all stages of the production and manufacturing process,



Strawberry jam made from fruit grown by the learners

from preparing the soil to packaging and sales.

“ASDAN’s Gardening Short Course really encourages students to challenge themselves,” says Vikki. “Being outside in the elements has really made our learners have to work outside their comfort zone. Sometimes it’s been bucketing down with rain and they’ve just had to get on with it. The course develops soft skills that they wouldn’t develop in a classroom environment.”

Raises students’ self-belief

Students are regularly rewarded for their achievements on ASDAN’s Gardening Short Course as certification is available for 10-60 hours of work.

“Each learner has taken responsibility for their patch and have become very protective over the piece of allotment that they’ve been tending,” says Vikki. “There’s a real sense of ownership and pride, which is so lovely to see.





“One of our Year 10 pupils, Martin, has particularly shone through the Gardening Short Course. We’ve seen a range of improvements in his learning and his confidence has grown significantly” says Vikiki.

“Since taking part in the Gardening Short Course, Martin can now work collaboratively. Martin struggles to communicate with his peers and since the Gardening Short Course, Martin has been able to regulate his emotions and work very well. He thinks the course is amazing!” says Vikki.



Carrots grown on the allotment by the learners

Students realise their worth

“When students come to Coal Clough Academy, in their minds, they have had a poor experience of education. ASDAN’s Gardening Short Course has shown our students that they can really achieve. It’s rebuilt their self-esteem and shown them that they do have valuable skills.



Gardening Short Course learners working on their allotment

“Our students are now researching careers that involve practical outdoor skills and are finding colleges where they can study horticulture. Through this research for *Module 8: Careers in gardening*, the students have started to realise that they do have a future, which they didn’t believe before.

“ASDAN’s Gardening Short Course has made our learners realise their worth. I think it’s a great vehicle to develop young people’s life skills.”

Please contact info@asdan.org.uk if you would like to work with us to share your centre’s success story or would like to find out more about **ASDAN’s Gardening Short Course**.