

Juniper Training Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52805

Name of lead inspector: Deavon Baker-Oxley HMI

Last day of inspection: 24 September 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Juniper Training
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Information about the provider

1. Juniper Training Limited (Juniper Training), formerly known as Carver Training, was established in 1983 as a youth training centre for warehouse training. It now offers Foundation Learning as its core business and employability skills programmes. With the phasing out of Entry to Employment (E2E) funding the large majority of learners are now on the new Foundation Learning programme. Juniper Training currently has only 212 learners on programme, although numbers are expected to increase over the coming months.
2. Juniper Training operates from 10 centres across the West and East Midlands and subcontracts with two other providers. Juniper employs 140 staff. The senior management team consists of the managing director and two senior managers. They are responsible for all aspects of the companys day to day management, and are supported by four middle managers. Two area managers oversee the work of 10 centre managers, who are responsible for the tutors who deliver the curriculum and learner reviews. Training is funded through contracts with the Young Peoples Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency.
3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of Juniper Training:
 - County Training, Shrewsbury
 - Pertemps, Cannock.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: Foundation Learning	125 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Employability skills	87 part-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	2
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject areas	Grade
Preparation for life and work	2

Overall effectiveness

4. The overall effectiveness of Juniper Training is good. The company has good capacity to improve and outcomes for learners are good. The quality of provision is satisfactory with some good features. Current retention rates on the foundation programme are high. Learners' achievement of qualifications in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly and is now good. Learners' progression into employment and/or training is much improved. Many learners develop self-confidence and enjoy and value their learning. They develop good levels of motivation and employability skills.
5. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but some teaching is uninspiring. The setting of targets for learners needs to be further developed so that targets clearly focus on achievement. Learners are well supported by tutors, with effective partnership working with external agencies to provide good welfare and health information for learners. Learners feel safe.
6. Leadership and management are good, with clear strategies in place to ensure continuous improvement. The safeguarding of learners is good and well promoted by the provider. The promotion of equality and diversity is good, with learners having a sound understanding of equality and diversity issues.

Main findings

- Learners' achievement of additional qualifications is good. The achievement of key skills at level one is good and has risen significantly over the past year. Retention rates for current learners on the foundation programme are very high. Learners progress satisfactorily to further learning or employment. However, job outcomes and the achievement of qualifications are low for learners on the employability skills programme.
- Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning. They develop a good range of personal and social skills. Learners demonstrate increased confidence and motivation whilst attending the programme. Training officers help learners to recognise the skills they already have and how to apply them to learning activities.
- Learners' contribution to the community is good. Many learners benefit from voluntary work and fundraising activities that develop employment-related skills effectively. These activities develop learners' team-building, communication and problem-solving skills. Voluntary work provides learners with up-to-date work experience to record on their job applications.
- Learners' progress in lessons is satisfactory. They develop an appropriate range of skills relating to their qualifications. Overall progress in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory although it is often too slow for more able learners as they wait for less able learners to complete an activity.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, learners benefit from a wide range of activities that challenge and interest them. In the less successful lessons training officers rely on standard lesson plans and resources that do not meet the needs of all learners. A few lessons are dull and uninspiring. In many lessons the checking of learners' understanding is insufficient.
- Tutors are supportive and committed. However, due to the change from E2E to Foundation Learning, many training officers and tutors do not have teaching and specialist qualifications to meet fully the demands of this programme.
- Target-setting in individual learning plans and learner reviews is often insufficiently precise. Information from initial and diagnostic assessment is not used consistently well to identify learning needs. Key objectives are often expressed inappropriately as a list of activities. Many learner reviews do not sufficiently record skills attainment.
- Learning programmes meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Foundation learners can achieve qualifications in functional English, mathematics and ICT and a qualification to support progress into further learning and/or work. At this early stage of the new Foundation Learning programme, learning is not sufficiently personalised. An employability qualification is provided for adult learners.
- Partnership work is highly effective. Links with external agencies are used well to support learners with additional personal needs. Good links with public services support learners to become better citizens. Work with drug and alcohol agencies improves learners' understanding of their harmful effects.

- Pastoral and learning support are satisfactory. Learners' additional learning needs are identified and some individualised support provided. Juniper Training is in the process of raising trainers' awareness of strategies to support dyslexia. However, it has not taken steps to identify the scale of need through screening.
- Juniper training has a clear strategic direction. Business goals and values are used to bring about improvements. Good curriculum management has ensured the successful transition to Foundation Learning. Effective performance management ensures realistic targets are set and monitored at all levels of the organisation. Communication is good.
- Juniper Training's arrangements for, and promotion of, safeguarding for learners are good. All tutors and learners who work with children and vulnerable adults during their work experience are Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked. The provider gives high priority to ensuring all its staff, learners and employers are made aware of the importance of safeguarding. Learners report that they feel safe.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners show good awareness of equality and diversity issues, which are included in activities and projects within the curriculum. Centres celebrate key cultural and religious events in the calendar well. The company monitors the performance of different groups of learners. However, action plans do not address performance gaps in sufficient detail.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive and the self-assessment report is broadly accurate. It incorporates the views of key stakeholders and is well moderated and validated. Action plans at centre level and overall are sufficiently specific and timely, well monitored and continuously updated. However, the observation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently focused on the quality of learning.

What does Juniper Training Limited need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop a wide range of employability activities to increase the number of learners progressing into further learning and/or work with training.
- Ensure that the content of learning sessions is adapted to meet the differing needs of learners so that all learners are appropriately challenged. Improve the quality of observations to ensure that both teaching and learning are evaluated and that judgements are informed by evidence.
- Improve the quality of targets set on learning plans and at progress review meetings so that they are precise, measurable and specific.
- Develop and implement a strategy to raise the number of teaching staff with subject specialist and nationally recognised teaching qualifications in line with sector standards.
- Ensure that centre plans address the variations in achievement between different groups in appropriate detail so that all learners achieve their potential.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the time taken to explain the work in detail
- the extra push needed to improve
- having fun while learning
- the information to help when leaving Juniper Training.

What learners would like to see improved:

- faster computers
- more practical work
- more challenging work
- more to do in the lunch break.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- good working relationships
- the professional approach
- learners who provide a valuable resource to the business
- the involvement in reviewing learners' progress.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more contact with Juniper during learner placement.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. Juniper Training has good capacity to improve. Most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been remedied. Strategic management is good. The company has expanded its provision substantially in the last two years and has overseen a significant improvement in qualification success rates for learners, as well as in the development of their personal and social skills. The well-established quality assurance system has been improved with the addition of mini-inspections, grading of learning activities and detailed action plans. Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. Centre staff are motivated to make quality improvements through effective performance management and an internal benchmarking "league table". Managers generally make good use of data to monitor performance. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, particularly at centre level. Communication across the centres is good and standard systems ensure consistent practice across the organisation.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Success rates have improved significantly. E2E learners achieve well in application of number, communications and information technology and additional qualifications such as first aid and employability certificates. Their progression into further training or employment is satisfactory. Learners on employability skills programmes have low rates of achievement both in job outcomes and achievement of qualifications. Retention rates are high for current learners on the new Foundation Learning programme at 97% for 2009/10. Attendance is satisfactory at 86% for current learners. There are no significant differences in achievement rates for different groups of learners.
9. Learners develop a wide range of personal and social skills whilst attending the programme. They contribute well to community projects and significantly develop their team working and communication skills. Learners produce a high standard of work and display much of their work within the centre. They are proud of their achievements and grow in self-esteem and confidence.
10. Actions to promote the health and safety of learners are effective. Learners feel safe and understand centre health and safety practices and procedures. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including use of the internet, and they adopt safe practices in practical activities.
11. Learners improve their skills satisfactorily in lessons. They enjoy many of the classroom activities while working towards achieving their qualification. Overall, learners make steady progress in literacy and numeracy lessons although a few learners do not progress sufficiently as the work is too easy or too difficult for

them. Learners develop a good understanding of equality and diversity in lessons including celebrating different faith-based festivals.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

12. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better lessons, learners benefit from a wide range of activities that challenge and interest them. Training officers maintain a balance between practical project work and theory. In less successful lessons trainers rely on standard lesson plans and resources, which do not meet all learners' needs. A number of lessons are dull and uninspiring. Trainers do not check sufficiently that learning has taken place. Literacy and numeracy lessons do not meet the needs of all learners. Too few training officers have teaching and specialist qualifications.
13. Target-setting in individual learning plans and reviews is often insufficiently precise. Standards of completion vary significantly. Information from initial and diagnostic assessment is not used well to identify learning needs. In both learning plans and lesson plans, key objectives are often expressed inappropriately as a list of activities. Many reviews do not sufficiently record skills development, although they do pinpoint improvements in learners' behaviour and attitudes.
14. The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Learners follow an appropriate range of qualifications in preparation for further learning and/or work. The number of work experience placements has increased steadily and links with employers have been strengthened to provide further opportunities to develop work skills.
15. Partnership arrangements for joint planning and the sharing of good practice in the transition to Foundation Learning are good. All Juniper trainers were actively involved in contributing to the development of the curriculum and met with other providers' staff to plan for the new programme. Strong links with employers, community groups and local police enable learners to develop new skills, gain knowledge, increase self-esteem and become better citizens. Employers report that they receive good support from a very professional service. Community projects in childcare and gardening are good. Well-developed work with drug and alcohol agencies is evident in centres and freely accessible to learners.
16. Pastoral and learning support are satisfactory. Designated training officers remain with learners to offer support throughout the programme. Learners' additional learning needs are identified and some support provided in one-to-one sessions. Juniper Training is in the process of raising training officers' awareness of strategies to support learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. However, it has not taken steps to identify the scale of need through screening or detailed specialist assessment.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

17. Juniper Training has a clear set of priorities that are understood by staff and that directs all its activities. Good liaison with external agencies ensures it is highly responsive to local, regional and national priorities. Performance management across the company is good. Senior managers monitor the performance of the centres closely. Centre managers make good use of accurate and timely data to set and monitor performance targets for staff. The company makes good use of available information to benchmark its provision with other providers and uses internal benchmarks between centres to bring about improvements. Curriculum management is good. The curriculum manager, centre managers and training staff have worked as an effective team to plan the new Foundation Learning programme. Effective communication ensures consistency of practice across centres.
18. Arrangements for, and the promotion of, safeguarding for learners are good. All learners feel safe. Their induction programme provides comprehensive health and safety information. Safeguarding issues are well embedded throughout the curriculum. First Aid training is offered to all learners as an additional qualification. The provider gives high priority to ensuring all its staff, learners and employers are made aware of the importance of safeguarding. All tutors have undergone safeguarding training. Roles and responsibilities are clear. Named personnel in each centre have received additional training in dealing with sensitive information. Clear records are kept of any safeguarding issues, disclosures and outcomes. Cooperation with outside professionals and agencies to safeguard learners is good. All appropriate checks are in place. The company has robust policies and procedures in place to support the safeguarding of learners.
19. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The company has comprehensive data on the performance of different groups of learners. Data include a breakdown of the recruitment and achievement of different groups by centres against targets, which take appropriate account of local demography. The data are used to inform centre action plans. However, actions tend to focus on starts rather than variations in achievement and they are insufficiently detailed and specific. Each centre has a champion who uses weekly centre meetings to keep staff updated with changes in regulations, raising staff awareness of diversity issues and sharing good practice. Juniper Training celebrates diversity well. Good account is taken of cultural and religious festivals through calendars, displays and social activities. Equality and diversity are promoted well in teaching and learning. Bullying and harassment are recorded and dealt with appropriately.
20. Juniper training has developed a learner involvement strategy to engage with users to support improvements. Currently centres carry out formal and regular evaluations of learners' views at different stages of their programme, and use focus groups to capture learners' experience. Centre action plans are informed by learners' views, and these lead to specific improvements. The company carries out formal evaluations of employers' views, but response rates are low.

21. Self-assessment processes are thorough and inclusive. Centre staff are fully involved in the process and have a strong ownership of the centre report. Action plans drawn from a good range of evidence are used effectively to drive improvements. Centre reports undergo a robust moderation process involving both mini-inspections and an external validation. The inspections capture and utilise learners' views appropriately. The internal observation of teaching and learning scheme results in specific action plans and training where appropriate. However, it lacks a strong enough focus on the quality of learning.

22. Value for money is good. Juniper training invests in staffing and learning resources well. All centres are well-resourced and conveniently located. The company has invested in developing and making accessible a range of learning materials and resources to support staff and ensure consistency in training across centres. A good range of both internal and external courses supports staff in developing their skills and expanding their roles. However, currently the company has too few staff who have appropriate qualifications, experience and skills to teach some of the specialist aspects of the programmes, in particular literacy and numeracy.

Information about the inspection

23. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Business Improvement 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 bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
24. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers 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)
Juniper Training Limited
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Leamer 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	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	125	125	0
Part-time learners	87	0	87
Overall effectiveness	2	2	3
Capacity to improve	2		
Outcomes for learners	2	2	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2		
Quality of provision	3		
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3		
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?	3		
Leadership and management	2		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a		
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?	3		
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?	2		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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