

# John Laing Training Limited

## Independent learning provider

|  |                         |                            |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Inspection dates</b>                      |                         | <b>17–20 February 2015</b> |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>This inspection:</b> | <b>Good-2</b>              |
|  | Previous inspection:    | Satisfactory-3             |
| Outcomes for learners                        |                         | Good-2                     |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment |                         | Good-2                     |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   |                         | Good-2                     |

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- senior leaders have high expectations for their staff and for apprentices and this is reflected in good teaching, learning and assessment, and in the good outcomes achieved by the large majority of apprentices
- trainers ensure that apprentices develop a high standard of administrative and sales skills and improve their broader professional abilities, confidence, and communication skills
- staff provide apprentices with very good information, advice and guidance throughout their programme
- the strong partnerships that managers build with employers result in carefully designed programmes that meet the requirements of their businesses and the learning needs of each apprentice
- senior managers' careful analysis of the training priorities of local employers ensures that the expanding curriculum closely reflects their needs.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- managers and trainers do not place enough emphasis on evaluating teaching and learning during self-assessment and in improvement plans
- not all of the development needs of apprentices, identified during the thorough recruiting process, are recorded and expressed through targets in apprentices' individual learning plans; as a result, learning plans do not focus sufficiently on broader development beyond the requirements of the programme
- records of apprentices' learning activities, progress and circumstances are not sufficiently up-to-date and comprehensive for trainers to use more effectively to provide accurate information about each apprentice and their progress.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that managers and trainers place a greater emphasis on teaching, learning and assessment during self-assessment and in improvement plans, and complete the implementation of the improved observation process for all learning activities. Use the feedback from the improved observation process more effectively to inform monthly meetings between managers and trainers.
- Develop more specific and detailed planning and target setting for the development of broader work-place skills and ensure that records fully reflect apprentices' learning activities, progress and circumstances.
- Ensure trainers use the information about apprentices' personal and broader professional needs to inform individual learning plans fully.
- Managers and trainers need to encourage and support the very small minority of intermediate apprentices who are not exempt from English and mathematics functional skills tests to achieve the award at level 2 when their starting point is a grade D at GCSE.
- Managers and trainers to reinforce and develop effectively apprentices' awareness of equality and appreciation of diversity, covered during induction, throughout the programme.
- Ensure that trainers, who mostly offer very good verbal feedback, support this by providing written feedback in all subject areas of a high standard.

### Inspection judgements

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| <b>Outcomes for learners</b> | Good |
|------------------------------|------|

- John Laing Training Limited (JLT) provides apprenticeships mainly at intermediate level, with a smaller number at advanced level. JLT is developing a very small but expanding range of higher-level apprenticeships. Inspectors covered the most significant subject areas of provision and considered the quality of the provision as a whole.
- In the first year of the new contract in 2013 to 2014, success rates for the small number of apprentices were high. The providers' own in-year data indicate that apprentices' success rates remain high in most subjects except for the very small numbers of advanced apprentices in marketing and sales. No significant differences exist in the achievements of different groups.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and receive very good support from their trainers. The very large majority make good progress relative to their starting points and a small minority make swift progress in achieving their learning goals ahead of planned timescales.
- Apprentices' attendance and punctuality at the increasing range of workshops is good and they have good attitudes to learning. They develop strong work-related skills, which makes them more effective at work. For example, a sales negotiator apprentice in an estate agency improved her performance significantly and gained early promotion to a senior negotiator role.
- Apprentices benefit from carefully tailored programmes, which use learning units that match their needs and their employers' requirements. Employers often fund additional units where they are useful for the apprentices. Apprentices develop a broad range of employment-related skills including improved confidence, inter-personal skills and team working.
- Trainers develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills to meet the requirements of the framework, but these do not always have sufficient challenge. For example, for apprentices who have achieved a D grade in mathematics, trainers do not always develop their mathematical skills to take the award at level 2 during their intermediate apprenticeships. However, trainers

do ensure that apprentices gain a good understanding of English terminology and mathematical skills that they will use in the workplace.

- A very high proportion of apprentices secure permanent employment. This is due to the excellent work that the JLT apprenticeship recruitment team puts into carefully matching employers and apprentices and the high standard of initial information, advice and guidance for prospective apprentices. The majority of apprentices who do not remain in employment enter higher-education courses.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The large majority of intermediate and advanced apprentices complete their qualifications in property services, administration, marketing and sales successfully because of the careful recruitment and selection processes and good training by JLT trainers and employers.
- Initial selection and recruitment of apprentices is particularly thorough, supportive and effective. The recruitment team assesses applicants systematically and matches them carefully to prospective employers whom they brief fully to ensure employers are capable of supporting and developing an apprentice. This good professional advice and guidance ensures applicants and employers are particularly well prepared for the apprenticeship programmes.
- Trainers are knowledgeable, passionate and competent in the development of apprentices' knowledge and skills. Trainers make effective use of professional discussions and questioning to coach and support apprentices during monthly visits. Trainers use their previous experiences very well to explore and discuss topics in workshops and coaching sessions such as the rationale for the different types of contracts used by estate agents and the dangers of 'gazumping'.
- Trainers keep employers well informed and involved in apprentices' training. Employers recognise how training is improving apprentices' knowledge, business and sales skills. They appreciate how trainers agree the scope and structure at the start of the programme to ensure it meets business and apprentices' needs. Trainers make effective changes to programmes when requested by employers. Employers provide good on-the-job training and provide apprentices with sufficient time to work on their apprenticeship programmes.
- Managers have introduced a series of successful informative workshops recently providing apprentices with a good opportunity to network with their peers and learn topics in a group environment to improve their performance; topics included using social media in a business. Apprentices appreciate and benefit from the opportunity to learn from each other by discussing their employers' approaches to topics such as ensuring compliance with the Consumer Protection Act. Not all apprentices have had the opportunity to attend one of these useful workshops.
- Trainers and apprentices make very effective use of the on-line systems for recording assessment outcomes and progress, and for accessing learning resources. Apprentices have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they need to do to complete their qualifications. However, a small minority are making slower than expected progress.
- Trainers do not use individual learning plans well to record progress. They do not always provide clear and meaningful targets in learning plans. Written feedback on assessed work is not always sufficiently detailed. Neither trainers nor apprentices record the activities and time allocated by employers for apprentices to complete learning activities, such as researching information for their qualifications, completing workbooks, or attending courses, coaching sessions and workshops. Trainers do not always record changes in apprentices' circumstances or note reasons for gaps in regular visits in apprentices' files.
- The majority of apprentices achieve English and mathematics qualifications at level 2 before starting their apprenticeship. Trainers provide appropriate additional support to apprentices who need to develop their English skills, such as improving sentence structure in business emails or

coaching on speaking clearly on the telephone. However, not all trainers correct spelling errors in written work routinely. Useful on-line resources are available for apprentices to develop mathematical skills.

- Employers are particularly positive about the skills apprentices develop to work with spreadsheets, interrogating complex information, which is often at a level above that required for the apprenticeship framework.
- Apprentices receive comprehensive information regarding equality and diversity and safeguarding as part of their induction. Apprentices develop a broad understanding of the Equality Act but trainers do not explore more fully how apprentices apply the principles to their jobs or workplaces. Property services apprentices receive effective guidance on lone working during a workshop using references drawn from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| <b>Administration</b>  | Good |
| <b>Apprenticeships</b> |      |

### **Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are good because:**

- a high proportion of apprentices make good progress and most are on target to complete their frameworks on time; they develop good work related skills, for example using business related telephone techniques, minute taking and using databases
- trainers work effectively with employers to help apprentices achieve their qualifications; they visit apprentices frequently in the workplace and provide comprehensive assessment activities which they plan with the employer and link clearly to the apprentices' job role
- trainers use technology well to develop apprentices' self-study skills; they use an on-line system to set apprentices' work and provide support materials that reinforce learning
- trainers plan comprehensive progress reviews well; they involve employers fully in quarterly reviews and their verbal feedback proves very helpful for apprentices in identifying what they need to do to improve their skills in the workplace
- staff provide particularly effective subject workshops based on feedback from apprentices and employers; apprentices attend increasing numbers of workshops and develop skills relevant to their job roles, for example creating and using databases, understanding data protection and working in recruitment and selection
- trainers mark apprentices' work frequently and accurately; they provide clear written and oral feedback on how well they have done and what they need to improve
- trainers develop apprentices' English skills effectively; they relate tasks to their work roles, for example using the most appropriate format for sending emails and other written communications to customers, enabling apprentices to improve their business English skills
- staff provide good information, advice and guidance; they inform apprentices about the course requirements and the options they have to move to a higher level of study and improve their career prospects, so that many apprentices progress to a higher level of study or their employers give them more responsibility at work
- apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding and they can stay safe in their workplace; they understand whom to contact if they have any problems with JLT staff or with their employer and know how to keep safe when working alone.

**Administration is not yet outstanding because:**

- trainers do not always check apprentices' understanding sufficiently well in progress reviews; they do not use appropriate questioning frequently enough to reinforce and extend apprentices' understanding of the topics being discussed
- trainers do not help apprentices broaden their understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently; although apprentices understand the main features of the Equality Act and appreciate diversity, trainers do not extend their understanding sufficiently well so that they can confidently apply and benefit from their knowledge within their working and personal lives.

|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| <b>Marketing and sales</b> | Good |
| <b>Apprenticeships</b>     |      |

**Teaching, learning and assessment in marketing and sales are good because:**

- a large proportion of apprentices complete their qualifications successfully; they make good progress and produce a high standard of work, reflecting clearly their growing understanding of the principles and practices of marketing and sales
- trainers and employers have high expectations of their apprentices; the large majority develop a good range of professional skills to advance their roles and responsibilities within the organisation, for example, in much improved negotiating and valuation skills
- a significant proportion of apprentices progress to the next level of study or gain additional responsibility or promotion at work; trainers provide particularly effective detailed and accurate information, advice and guidance in supporting them through every stage of the programme
- apprentices learn well and are able to apply a good range of skills and knowledge; this they demonstrate in their responses to questions, in the quality of their work, in discussions with their trainer and in workshops where they share their experiences with other apprentices completing related programmes
- trainers work very effectively with apprentices to support their learning and progress; trainers at workplace visits, coaching sessions and workshops use good questioning and motivational verbal feedback to check and develop understanding
- academic support for learning is very good; apprentices benefit from knowledgeable and skilful trainers who share excellent up-to-date information that informs and improves their practice, for example, identifying useful webinars and social media sites
- employer support for learning is very good; highly relevant activities in the workplace further advance apprentices' learning, progress, skill development and professional practice
- resources to support learning are good; trainers use learning materials of a high standard to reinforce understanding and prepare apprentices for planned assessments and discussions; additional learning sessions are available, for example, on spreadsheets and to improve English and mathematics even when apprentices are exempt from this element of the programme.

**Marketing and sales are not yet outstanding because:**

- trainers do not always use questioning well to extend learning and promote independent thinking
- written feedback is insufficient to tell apprentices how they can improve their work.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Leaders and senior managers have a very clear organisational vision and high expectations of staff and learners, which are resulting in good outcomes for apprentices and good quality teaching, learning and assessment. They plan strategic objectives very effectively and as a result have developed their trainers very effectively to support apprentices' learning. Staff commit to the organisation's vision and values very well. Internal and external channels of communication are very clear, and staff and partners receive frequent good quality information.
- Leaders and managers meet employers' and local community needs very well. Particularly good partnerships exist with employers. Close working relationships help ensure that programmes meet their requirements and the development needs of apprentices. Managers are developing new provision in property services and for those working in the bids and proposals sector very effectively, in partnership with professional bodies and local employers.
- Very good links exist with schools, where managers promote apprenticeship programmes well. Managers maximise the benefit of schools visits by providing practical learning activities to raise pupils' awareness of career and employment options. Managers also work closely with Jobcentre Plus, provider networks and local employer partnerships to promote career and training opportunities.
- Performance management is good. The collection and use of data is particularly effective and informs decisions accurately. Managers use a wide variety of reports that have clear focus on specific aspects such as marketing, recruitment, participation, success rates and quality, which inform them of the progress they are making well. Managers set relevant performance indicators, which they review monthly. The monthly one-to-one meetings between trainers and their manager are effective in monitoring workloads and identifying and developing action plans to resolve any concerns about apprentices' progress.
- Managers plan staff learning and development well. In recent months, many activities have taken place to develop skills in teaching and learning, including coaching and mentoring, as well as the teaching of English and mathematics, with clear strategies to improve the provision further.
- The improved observation process is proving increasingly effective; early indications show a very robust system emerging. Much work is underway, including training for observers and the use of external support. Observations seen by inspectors were accurate with good feedback to trainers. However, observation reports do not always focus sufficiently on learning, and improvement actions lack sufficient detail to ensure that trainers are clear what they need to do to improve. Feedback from observations does not inform individual trainers' performance reviews sufficiently.
- Self-assessment covers apprentices' outcomes and management very well, but it does not judge the quality of the learners' experiences effectively. Although the quality improvement plan focuses very well on organisational goals and plans effectively to achieve them, it does not sufficiently identify what actions managers need to take to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers collect and use apprentices' feedback well. They evaluate feedback from induction and throughout the programmes very thoroughly. The feedback indicates very high levels of satisfaction and managers respond well to apprentices' comments, for example by providing more workshops.
- The promotion of diversity requires improvement. Trainers do not promote diversity well enough in learning and at reviews to ensure all apprentices have a sufficiently good awareness as they progress in multi-cultural and diverse workplaces. Managers use data well to monitor participation and success of different groups. Although no achievement gaps exist, the number of learners from minority ethnic groups is low. Much activity takes place promoting apprentice

opportunities as well as general careers guidance in local communities, including in areas with higher minority ethnic populations, and there are early indications of an improving trend in participation of some of these groups. Staff take care to ensure that learners receive fair treatment at work and in learning, and learners have a sufficient understanding of equality of opportunity. Managers keep staff up-to-date through frequent training, including on-line learning for new staff.

- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. Staff receive appropriate and frequent training. Managers responsible for safeguarding, currently trained to level two, are about to undertake the level three award. Learners feel safe, and work and learn in safe environments that have appropriate health and safety checks. Most learners have a clear understanding of safeguarding. They receive sufficient relevant information at the start of programme and can access useful learning materials available on the virtual learning environment, including e-safety. Where incidents occur, managers investigate thoroughly and take appropriate action, reporting resolutions promptly to senior management. However, no overall log is in place to collate individual incidents. Managers undertake thorough individual risk assessments where appropriate, for example in their work in schools. Managers do not use links with local safeguarding boards sufficiently.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### John Laing Training Limited

| Inspection grades are based on a provider’s performance:<br><br>1: Outstanding<br>2: Good<br>3: Requires improvement<br>4: Inadequate | Overall | 14-16 part-time provision | 14-16 full-time provision | 16-19 study programmes | Traineeships | 19+ learning programmes | Apprenticeships | Employability | Community learning |
|---|---------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Overall effectiveness   | 2       |                           |                           |                        |              |                         | 2               |               |                    |
| Outcomes for learners   | 2       |                           |                           |                        |              |                         | 2               |               |                    |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment  | 2       |                           |                           |                        |              |                         | 2               |               |                    |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management  | 2       |                           |                           |                        |              |                         | 2               |               |                    |

| Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Grade    |
|---|----------|
| <b>Administration</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Marketing and Sales</b>  | <b>2</b> |



## Provider details

|   |  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
|---|--|-----|-----------------|-----|----------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| <b>Type of provider</b>   | Independent learning provider                            |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Age range of learners</b>  | 16+  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>                  | 189  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Managing Director</b>  | Mrs Lorraine Tomlinson                                   |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>  | November 2009  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Website address</b>  | www.jlaingtraining.co.uk                                 |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>                                       |  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Main course or learning programme level</b>  | <b>Level 1 or below</b>                                  |     | <b>Level 2</b>  |     | <b>Level 3</b> |     | <b>Level 4 and above</b> |     |
| <b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>                                     | 16-18  | 19+ | 16-18           | 19+ | 16-18          | 19+ | 16-18                    | 19+ |
|   | N/A  | N/A | N/A             | N/A | N/A            | N/A | N/A                      | N/A |
| <b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>                                    | <b>Intermediate</b>                                      |     | <b>Advanced</b> |     | <b>Higher</b>  |     |                          |     |
|   | 16-18  | 19+ | 16-18           | 19+ | 16-18          | 19+ |                          |     |
|   | 59   | 70  | 5               | 23  | 2              | 4   |                          |     |
| <b>Number of traineeships</b>   | 16-19  |     | 19+             |     | Total          |     |                          |     |
|   | N/A  |     | N/A             |     | N/A            |     |                          |     |
| <b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>  | N/A  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Full-time</b>  | N/A  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Part-time</b>  | N/A  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Number of community learners</b>   | N/A  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Number of employability learners</b>   | N/A  |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>Funding received from</b>  | Skills Funding Agency (SFA)                              |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |
| <b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A.</li> </ul> |     |                 |     |                |     |                          |     |

## Contextual information

John Laing Training provides apprenticeships in business administration, marketing and sales, and property services. The large majority of apprentices are at the intermediate level with a small but increasing number at advanced level and higher level. Apprentices come from a wide range of communities including relatively affluent rural and urban areas and from areas of significant deprivation.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Mark Shackleton HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Quality and Compliance as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the past three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement            |
|---------|----------------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          |
| Grade 2 | Good                 |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           |

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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