

# Juniper Training Limited

Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>	9 February – 4 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Require improvement
Traineeships	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- The extent to which learners achieve is too variable, and their performance depends on which of the centres they attend.
- While attendance is improving, not enough learners are attending regularly in order to achieve their qualifications, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Trainees do not develop their work skills quickly enough and the standard of all learners' written work is not consistently good.
- Senior managers have not ensured that all training centres perform as well as each other.
- Quality improvement action planning is not sufficiently detailed or monitored and has therefore not raised standards quickly enough.
- Senior managers do not utilise data sufficiently well to gain an oversight of the overall performance of the provision.

### The provider has the following strengths

- The recently implemented changes are having a positive impact in some aspects of the provision. The proportion of learners who achieve their main vocational qualification is rapidly improving.
- Taking part in good enrichment activities enables learners to improve their self-esteem, often from low starting points, enabling them to progress well to further learning and employment.
- Employer links continue to be good and particularly effective for trainees. These links are enabling all learners to sustain their employment well.
- Staff training and development are frequent and extensive. Juniper has addressed its staff turnover issues and is further developing its teaching capacity, in particular among English and mathematics tutors.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Juniper Training Limited (Juniper) formerly known as Carver Training was established in 1983 as a youth training centre for warehouse training. Currently 510 learners are following study programmes and 17 trainees are following traineeships. Learners on study programmes work towards a generic vocational skills qualification. The very large majority of learners who commence their training with Juniper have not previously achieved well at school and around half of learners have a learning difficulty and/or disability. Many learners at Juniper have personal issues that affect their learning, for example teenage pregnancy, youth offending and mental health issues.
- Juniper operates from 12 centres across the West Midlands, East Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, with its head office being based in Wolverhampton. Almost every centre is in a geographical location experiencing significant social deprivation.

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

- Further develop the use and analysis of data to allow leaders and senior managers to gather a comprehensive view of Juniper's performance, including an overview of attendance, punctuality, pass rates and the timely completion of qualifications.
- Set up demanding but realistic targets for improvement for the company as a whole. Ensure that all the training centres deliver fully each of the component parts of the programmes as necessary.
- Reduce the inconsistencies in performance of the different centres by setting up supportive improvement strategies and utilising best practice found in the better-performing centres. Ensure that identified areas for improvement are planned accordingly and that managers monitor the effectiveness of each centre's actions.
- Ensure that quality assurance processes lead to improvement. Teaching, learning and assessment observations need to focus rigorously on measuring the learning that takes place and they should relate closely to the achieved outcomes for each subject and tutor. Identified areas for improvement from quality reviews need to be followed up systematically by senior managers.
- Further develop tutors to enable them to deliver good-quality learning in English and mathematics that will increase achievement rates in these subjects. Evaluate the effectiveness of the training delivered by measuring the impact it has on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Develop tutors' practice to support learners in acquiring essential employability skills such as the presentation of good standards of work and good writing skills.
- Review the traineeship delivery model to ensure that opportunities for trainees to develop their study and work skills early on and at every stage of their programme are appropriately planned.
- Ensure that study programmes meet the needs of learners of all abilities by ensuring that they undertake different activities during lessons to challenge them and support them to make good progress.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Managers have continuously developed the programme to meet the needs of learners better. They have extended the length of the programme and successfully piloted GCSE English qualifications. However, the performance of elements of the programme such as English and mathematics is not good enough. Inconsistencies in the way different training centres perform exist and the pace of progress to rectify this, until very recently, has been slow.
- Action planning is insufficiently robust to bring about improvement quickly. The lack of specific and challenging targets to address areas for improvement has prevented senior managers from carrying out a thorough monitoring and evaluation of the progress being made towards improving the provision. Centres that are underperforming have not received sufficient challenge and support from senior managers to improve faster. The provider has recently restructured the regional management team to increase the level of managerial oversight of the training centres with the aim of bringing about rapid improvement, but this is too recent to have had a tangible impact on performance.
- Managers do not use data sufficiently well to gain a more comprehensive view of the provision's overall performance. Juniper has only recently started to measure the timely completion of qualifications. Information such as on first-time pass rates, performance on work experience, progression or punctuality is not being routinely gathered and analysed in order to base managerial decisions. The provider monitors the performance of different groups of learners according to their ethnic background.
- The provider's extensive quality arrangements have not led to an overall improvement in the learning experience. Managers do not focus on ensuring that there is a correlation between the quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed and the outcomes obtained by learners. Regular teaching and learning observations take place but these are still insufficiently focused on measuring learning.
- Senior leaders hold a clear vision to deliver a study programme that promotes learners' inclusion. They have designed a programme that focuses on the development of generic, vocational, work-readiness qualifications allows a wide range of learners with a wide range of different needs and occupational interests to participate. At Juniper, more learners are now undertaking a challenging vocational qualification and English language than previously in the Foundation Learning programme.
- In the current year, and in particular in the last few months, Juniper has begun to effect improvements in outcomes for learners. The provider has increased the number of teaching staff in its training centres and it has reduced its high staff turnover. Effective performance management has led to a number of managers and teachers leaving the organisation.
- Attendance and the achievement in vocational qualifications have improved considerably, and the achievement of mathematics functional skills is slowly improving. However, Juniper cannot yet demonstrate an improvement in the achievement of English functional skills.
- The further developed links with employers have resulted in an increased number of good-quality work placements which have benefited many learners. Juniper is meeting well the identified local priority to support young people who are not in education, training or employment to develop their skills and improve their chances of employability and further study.
- Juniper invests well in developing its people. Since the introduction of the study programme, tutors have undertaken a wide-ranging development programme that equips them well to support learners' needs. Approximately half of the teachers now have a mathematics qualification at level 3 and Juniper is currently developing further the English skills of its tutors. However, leaders and managers have not evaluated the impact this training has had on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that learners experience.
- The process of self-assessment has recently improved, and is now largely evaluative. Each training centre's staff conduct their own self-assessment and their provision is critically graded by the senior team. They are aware that the performance of the provision is not good enough and know what the challenges and key areas for improvement are.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Governance arrangements are effective and provided through the senior management board meetings with the input of the chairman, who monitors the performance of the provision.
  - Juniper has strengthened its governance by enlisting the support of an external governor, who is committed to work closely with managers to support the improvement of the provision. However, it is too early to gauge the impact of this recent introduction.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - Learners are safe at Juniper because staff have received extensive training which allows them to

identify any safety risks affecting vulnerable learners, and to react promptly to protect them. Training has increased the number of safeguarding incidents as a result of improved awareness and staff have developed good awareness of child sexual exploitation issues.

- Leaders and managers have worked hard to develop the strategy towards the prevention of extremism and radicalisation and this has led to an intervention in a potential case of radicalisation. However, leaders acknowledge that the understanding some learners have about British values and diversity needs further improvement.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- On study programmes too few tutors provide learners with enough challenge, failing to set sufficiently high expectations. They do not ensure that learners make as much progress as they are capable of, either because the work they set for them does not match their ability or because the pace of lessons is too slow. Tutors do not promote sufficiently the development of trainees' study and work skills in the lessons.
- Initial assessment of learners effectively identifies any support needs or personal barriers to learning. However, this information is not used well enough to plan individual goals in English and mathematics lessons to ensure that learners in study programmes achieve their full potential. Learners are not making good progress to develop these skills and only half of the learners achieve their qualification aims in these subjects.
- Feedback given to learners during activities and assessment is insufficient in many instances to help them improve their written work. English grammar errors are not corrected well and mathematical errors are left uncorrected. Not enough learners are able to improve their work as a result of feedback and to pass their examinations at their first attempt.
- Learning centres are well resourced and staff create a welcoming environment and establish a strong rapport with learners. As a result learners feel safe, are able to discuss and resolve their issues and many stay in learning or progress to a positive destination.
- Staff produce a programme of a wide range of enrichment and enterprise activities that engage with learners. These activities are closely linked to the development of learners' interpersonal skills and career development needs. They promote learners' inclusion well and develop and support team working between learners.
- Juniper has further strengthened its effective links with employers, particularly, on the traineeship programme. Employers understand learners' development needs well and this is enabling learners to have a good-quality work placement experience where trainees are developing essential employability skills.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** require improvement

- Attendance at Juniper, although improved across the provision in the last three years, is too low. Further improvement is particularly required at five centres where attendance is very low. Improvement actions have not secured a significant increase in attendance to date.
- Learners' punctuality is not well monitored and lateness is not challenged consistently. Managers are currently addressing this by ensuring that staff receive the necessary training to enable them to apply the organisation's behaviour policy rigorously.
- In a few training centres, learners display mildly disruptive behaviour which interrupts the progress they make in lessons and towards the achievement of their qualifications. Despite managers' best efforts and actions to tackle this, disruptive behaviour has not been eliminated across the provision.
- All learners develop their English and mathematics skills in relation to their starting points but only around half develop these skills well enough to gain a qualification higher than at the start of their programme. Learners who do not achieve a higher-level qualification do not receive sufficient guidance as to how to improve their skills in order to meet examination requirements.
- Too few learners develop a full understanding of the importance of work experience placements and the provider has experienced a few difficulties with learners being reluctant to undertake this aspect of their programme. Juniper has recently placed more emphasis on learners undertaking work experience, and participation has increased in the current year.
- Learners develop their self-confidence and esteem well through the personal support provided by tutors and partners. This enables them to gain a better understanding of the world of work, further learning and how to improve, for example, their health and well-being.

- Enrichment activities are wide-ranging and aligned to the development of employability and personal development skills in learners. These include financial management, visits to employers and enterprise initiatives. As a result of the enrichment programme, progression rates and readiness for work are improving.
- Learners receive good information advice and guidance prior to and at the start of their programme. This is further reinforced during enrichment activities and through work experience placements. Staff are particularly skilled at managing successfully either unrealistic or too-low aspirations. This is enabling learners to sustain their progression into further learning and employment.
- Juniper raises learners' awareness of personal safety well through the reinforcement of topics such as e-safety, sexual health, harassment and bullying. As a result, learners know how to keep themselves safe from harm, which is particularly important within Juniper, as many learners are deemed to be vulnerable.

## Outcomes for learners

## require improvement

- The extent to which learners achieve the main programme learning aims or progress to further learning and/or employment is too variable. How well learners achieve depends on which centre they attend, reflecting too much variability in the quality of provision between centres.
- Success rates in English and mathematics qualifications, while improving over a two-year period, remain just below the low national rate and therefore require improvement. The provider has identified issues surrounding learners not passing their exams at first and second attempts and has taken recent actions to improve classroom delivery in these subjects, but these improvement actions have not raised success rates sufficiently.
- Standards of learners' written work are not always good. For instance, portfolios of evidence and learners' reference notes from their English and mathematics lessons are not well organised. In these cases, learners are not acquiring and developing the skills they need sufficiently well to further their learning and improve their independent working.
- Most learners who are able, due to their personal circumstances, complete their programme, or even progress early to employment or an apprenticeship, despite their often low starting points. Overall, the large majority of study programme learners achieve their vocational qualification at intermediate level and around half of all learners improve their qualification level in English and mathematics.
- Progression to further learning, training and/or employment which is sustained over a period of time has been good over the last three years. Two thirds of study programme learners progress well and almost all of the traineeship learners progress to apprenticeship programmes or paid work.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### require improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment for the 510 learners in the study programme is too variable at this provider overall and across the 12 training centres. Some trainers are not sufficiently experienced and they are sometimes reluctant to challenge learners to improve their work, make more progress and better understand the requirements of the workplace.
- In many lessons the pace of learning is too slow and trainers' expectations of learners are low. Many tutors do not bring variety to learning, and learners become disengaged. They rely almost entirely on asking learners questions as a way of checking whether they have learned a particular point, but they do not sufficiently challenge learners when their responses are incomplete or inaccurate, and so the checking and development of learning is ineffective.
- Although the comprehensive initial assessment identifies effectively learners' support needs and any barriers to learning, many trainers do not use this information well enough to set different tasks to enable all learners, and in particular the most-able ones, to make good progress. Tutors monitor learners' progress but this has not had the desired impact and as a consequence, the proportion of learners who achieve their BTEC or functional skills qualifications, although improved, is not high enough.
- Trainers do not sufficiently apply strategies to improve learners' English and mathematical skills. Spelling and punctuation errors in written work are insufficiently checked and although mathematics work is marked, feedback contains insufficient detail to ensure that learners extend and improve their work.
- Resources available to trainers are of a particularly good standard and include high-quality handouts, presentations and video clips which are used well to enhance learning. Enrichment activities contribute towards the successful development of learners' personal and social skills.

- Work experience placements are carefully matched to the future aspirations of learners. Despite trainers' efforts to promote the employability benefits of undertaking work experience, many learners regard it as an optional activity at the end of their formal training. The provider has rectified this in the current year and two thirds of learners are participating in challenging and worthwhile external work experiences.
- Learners receive comprehensive careers advice and guidance that increases their understanding of progression routes into further education and employment. Trainers' empathy and positive attitude help many learners address difficult personal and social situations in their everyday lives. As a result, many learners are being supported well to keep on track with their learning.
- Learners have a good understanding of e-safety and the potential dangers from social media. Taking part in the discussion of topics such as life in a multicultural environment during lessons increases their understanding of diversity.

## **Traineeships**

## **require improvement**

- Some 38 learners have completed their traineeship programme this year so far and currently 17 trainees are on programme, 13 of which are in work placements.
- Leaders and managers prioritise high-quality work placements for the traineeship programmes. Trainees develop confidence and technical skills well in work placements, but Juniper does not promote the development of work skills sufficiently in other aspects of their programmes. Too often, they over-rely on the work placement experiences for skills acquisition.
- Learners' introduction to their training programme is not tailored well enough to the requirements of their traineeship programme. Furthermore, they do not receive enough planned teaching to ensure that they have a thorough preparation for work. The majority of trainees do not develop study, communication skills and job search skills quickly enough. As a result, not all sustain employment as well as expected.
- Trainees make slow progress in improving their English and mathematical skills. They are slow to gain qualifications and these skills are not reinforced sufficiently in reviews. Staff do not have high enough expectations of the learners' standards of written work. In the work placement diaries, trainees do not proofread their work well enough and their reflections on the skills they develop in the workplace lack detail. They are not encouraged to develop greater fluency in their written work in preparation for progression in the workplace.
- Learners in the traineeship programme are not developing their understanding of equality and diversity well enough. For example, during their progress reviews, they do not expand their knowledge enough on what it means to work with a wide range of different people. This is not preparing them well effectively for making a full and positive contribution to a modern, diverse society in Britain.
- Trainees have a robust initial assessment which identifies clearly their previous learning, work experiences, existing skills and aspirations. The recruitment officers sensitively explore their barriers to progress and negotiate realistic, pertinent targets so that trainees can make effective progress towards appropriate long-term goals.
- Juniper has developed very effective links with local employers who understand well the needs of the trainees. As a result, the large majority of trainees benefit from good work placements. These are carefully matched to their vocational interests and enable them to make good progress in developing positive attitudes to work, technical, interpersonal and essential skills for employment including regular attendance, punctuality and time keeping.
- Trainees receive good advice and guidance. They receive constructive feedback in their regular reviews, including meaningful and constructive contributions from employers. This helps them to identify their strengths and learn about possible future pathways. The large majority have successfully progressed to apprenticeships programmes.
- Trainees learn how to keep safe, develop valued and trusted relationships with staff and their own peers in the training centres and most improve their behaviour.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16–18/19+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	1,136
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Richard Holt
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.junipertraining.co.uk">www.junipertraining.co.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	78	0	432	0	0	0	0	0
<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+	16-18	19+
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	17		0		17			
<b>Number of learners aged 14–16</b>	0							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Maria Navarro, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maxine Mayer	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bryan Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Garai	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Ray Walker	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by a regional performance manager, as nominee. The inspection was a conversion from a scheduled short inspection. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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