

# Joint Learning Partnership Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

8–11 August 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- Achievement rates for apprentices have progressively declined over a three-year period and are very low.
- Less than one third of apprentices complete their programmes by their planned end date.
- Learners' and apprentices' functional skills are poorly developed. Achievement is very low in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Senior leaders and managers have responded too slowly to reverse the decline in achievement rates over three years.
- The governance of the company is inadequate.
- Managers have placed too much emphasis on growth and expansion instead of addressing weak performance.
- High staff turnover, including that of senior managers, has had an adverse impact on learners' achievement rates and progress.
- Leaders' self-assessment is weak and their improvement planning is poor.
- Managers and vocational coaches have failed to ensure that all apprentices have the required time for on- and off-the-job learning.
- Vocational coaches do not routinely identify apprentices' starting points to ensure that learning programmes are designed to meet each apprentice's specific needs.
- The planning and monitoring of learning has been insufficient to halt and reverse the slow progress of apprentices and 16- to 18-year-old learners.
- Too little support has been provided for apprentices and learners to enable them to develop their skills in English, mathematics and ICT.
- Apprentices have been given too few opportunities to broaden their skills and obtain additional qualifications to enhance their employment prospects and personal effectiveness.
- Apprentices' and learners' knowledge of equality, diversity and British values is underdeveloped.
- Leaders have not promoted the 'Prevent' duty well enough. Apprentices and learners are not sufficiently aware of the risks associated with terrorism, radicalisation and extremism.
- Insufficient independent careers advice and guidance has been provided to apprentices to help them to clarify their career options and aspirations.
- Apprentices and learners who progress to the next level of study, obtain sustained employment or gain promotion are not monitored or reported upon in detail and in a meaningful way.

### The provider has the following strengths

- The large number of learners aged 19+ on short 'preparing for work' courses achieve consistently well.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- Joint Learning Partnership Limited (JLP) is a privately owned work-based learning provider. The head office is in Southport, Merseyside and the training centre is in central Liverpool. JLP has been trading for over 16 years. It was taken over by the present owner 10 years ago. The company employs 91 staff. Of these, 54 are vocational coaches who carry out coaching, assessment and reviews in apprentices' workplaces. The company subcontracts with eight training organisations that deliver courses on its behalf.
- In addition to apprenticeships, the company offers 16 to 19 study programmes, traineeships, and classroom-based learning for 16- to 18-year-old learners and learners aged 19+. The company offers training throughout England; over three quarters of learners are in the North West. A wide range of vocational areas are offered, including business administration, health and social care, and warehousing and storage. The Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency fund almost all of the company's training.

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

- Improve overall achievement rates for apprentices and 16- to 18-year-old learners and ensure that they all complete their programmes within their planned time.
- Develop the functional skills provision to:
  - improve significantly the achievement rates for functional English, mathematics and ICT
  - enable apprentices and learners to succeed in passing the tests at their first attempt
  - provide sufficient specialist support for apprentices and learners to enable them to develop their skills in English, mathematics and ICT
  - provide ongoing training for vocational coaches and other tutors to enable them to support apprentices' and learners' functional skills development confidently and competently.
- Senior leaders and managers should:
  - implement appropriate strategies for consolidating the provision and improving its quality
  - take immediate action to minimise staff turnover at all levels
  - strengthen the self-assessment and quality improvement processes, and ensure that they are comprehensive and effective in eliminating the large number of weaknesses that inspectors identified
  - strengthen the observation process by ensuring that actions identified to support vocational coaches and other tutors to improve and develop are recorded clearly and followed up systematically
  - improve governance and increase its effectiveness and impact.
- Ensure that all apprentices have the required time for on- and off-the-job learning in accordance with awarding organisations' requirements and/or those that are defined clearly in 'Specification of apprenticeship standards for England (SASE)'.
- Identify accurately apprentices' starting points and use the information to design individualised learning programmes to meet their specific needs.
- Improve the monitoring of apprentices and learners so that those who progress to the next level of study, obtain sustained employment or gain promotion are reported upon in detail and in a meaningful way.
- Increase opportunities for apprentices to broaden their skills and obtain additional qualifications to enhance their employment prospects and personal effectiveness.
- Increase the availability of independent careers advice and guidance to apprentices and learners to help them clarify their career options and to ensure that their learning programme continues to meet their developing job roles and career aspirations.
- Improve the promotion of:
  - equality and diversity so that apprentices' and learners' knowledge is developed progressively
  - British values, to enable apprentices and learners to distinguish right from wrong and understand the role of democracy in society
  - The 'Prevent' duty, to improve apprentices' and learners' understanding of the risks associated with terrorism, radicalisation and extremism.

- Monitor more rigorously the work of subcontractors and ensure that their provision is of high quality and that apprentices and learners achieve within their planned time.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### is inadequate

- Leaders and managers have failed over a three-year period to arrest and reverse declining achievement rates for apprentices and for 16- to 18-year-old learners. The capacity for securing further improvement, including subcontracted provision, is poor and the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Ineffective management of apprenticeship programmes and a poorly planned strategy to expand the provision have led to a large majority of apprentices not completing the apprenticeship within the planned time and nearly half not completing at all. The achievement rates for 16- to 18-year-old learners are very low. Managers have not evaluated or reported in a meaningful way what learners and apprentices do after they leave the programme.
- Leaders and managers have identified causes for the decline in performance but interventions to improve by changing senior managers have been unsuccessful. The history of failure by senior managers to improve the provision indicates that they do not have the capacity to achieve the required improvement.
- Efforts to improve quality of provision and outcomes for apprentices and 16- to 18-year-old learners through performance management arrangements have been unsuccessful in the past. Although managers have made changes to performance management arrangements, they need to apply greater rigour to the planning and implementation of actions. Their evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment is generally accurate but the actions identified to support vocational coaches and tutors to improve and develop are not recorded clearly and followed up systematically.
- The majority of managers responsible for managing the staff who work directly with apprentices and 16- to 18-year-old learners are new in post. They have begun to improve their teams' performance but this development is at a very early stage. In the past too many apprentices did not receive adequate training and support to make progress. Although schemes of work and planning of training have improved very recently, the impact of this so far is minimal. Current monitoring of compliance with apprenticeship standards for on- and off-the-job learning is weak.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements are not effective. The most recent self-assessment report identifies some areas for improvement; however, managers have not identified the quality and performance of subcontracted provision and low retention rates for 16- to 18-year-old learners as causes for concern. Managers are not analysing the achievement of different groups of learners and users' views through self-assessment. Consequently the improvement plans lack specific actions to improve these aspects of the provision. In addition to these omissions, the current quality improvement plan is a very recent document with very few actions completed so far.
- Partnerships with employers are effective in a minority of cases. However, for a significant number of apprentices over a three-year period these have not had sufficient impact to ensure successful outcomes.
- Senior managers have planned training provision to be responsive to local and national priorities and particularly to priorities in the North West and Merseyside. However, their decision to expand health and social care provision at a time when the provider's performance for that sector was declining led to a further fall in performance. Senior managers unwisely agreed to the funding agency's request to support apprentices who were with an inadequate training company. This adversely affected the organisation's capacity to improve and distracted senior managers from their primary task of ensuring that provision was improved significantly for existing apprentices and other learners.
- Managers' use of data to plan, manage and improve the provision is not strong enough. For example, the monitoring of achievements by different groups of learners and the planning of actions to close any achievement gaps are not evident. Managers have taken insufficient action to monitor and improve the quality of subcontracted provision.
- **The governance of the provider is inadequate**
  - Directors have reacted too slowly to the decline in achievement rates and have not intervened effectively to reverse it.
  - Directors believe they challenge managers sufficiently but although they have changed structures and most of the senior personnel, they have not achieved any improvement.
  - The management information and the self-assessment report do not specify sufficiently the key indicators against which to make decisions about improvement priorities, for example the analysis of users' views or consideration of what happens next for learners who leave.
  - Current board membership limits external scrutiny of the provision at director level.

## ■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Employers and JLP staff promote the importance of safe working practices. Apprentices apply safe practices and know how to take responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
- Two designated safeguarding officers work effectively to apply the safeguarding arrangements throughout the provision; these arrangements are fit for purpose.
- All staff who work with apprentices and other learners are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- Staff training to support the application of safeguarding is adequate, but more is required to support staff to be fully confident in their approach to such matters as teaching learners to better understand the risks of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation.
- Staff have received training to enable them to help apprentices and learners to understand and apply British values. However, the impact of this is weak and managers need to do more to enable staff to reinforce learning points regularly and confidently and to relate the learning more closely to apprentices' and learners' own experiences and contexts.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## is inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies greatly and too much is inadequate. Many apprentices make slow progress which results in them becoming demotivated and not completing their apprenticeship within the planned time.
- Many apprentices and learners have had their progress adversely affected by staff turnover. A large number of staff at all levels, including vocational coaches, have left the company. This has resulted in many apprentices not having an assessor for several months or having a series of different assessors; factors that have contributed to low motivation, poor commitment and slow progress.
- Vocational tutors do not routinely and accurately identify apprentices' starting points. As a result, too many apprentices do not have individual learning programmes that take into account their existing knowledge, skills, interests and aspirations in addition to the requirements of the qualifications for which they are preparing.
- Many tutors' expectations of what apprentices and learners can achieve are too low. Consequently, too few meet or exceed the minimum course requirements. In many cases apprentices do not find the work they are set sufficiently demanding. They find that the pace of learning is often too slow. Too many apprentices learn little, or nothing, that is new to them, and the apprenticeship only confirms their existing knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Target-setting is inadequate. Apprentices are frequently given non-specific targets that lack precision and rigour and which cannot be used reliably for measuring their progress. Targets frequently do not identify clearly what apprentices need to learn and which skills they should be practising. They are focused mainly on the completion of qualification units as opposed to the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, learning is often narrow and not related to the broad range of skills required for employment.
- Progress reviews are weak. Vocational coaches do not always share the outcomes of progress reviews with apprentices and do not routinely involve employers. Too many apprentices who fall behind do not receive effective support to enable them to catch up.
- Apprentices' and learners' functional skills are poorly developed and their progress is too slow. Ineffective use is made of the good range of resources that are available to help apprentices and learners develop their skills in English, mathematics and ICT. There are too few specialist functional skills tutors. Many vocational coaches need further training to ensure that they are confident and competent to support apprentices' and learners' functional skills development.
- Vocational coaches and assessors do not routinely check apprentices' and learners' work for spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Learners often repeat errors which detract from the quality of their written work and delay any improvement.
- Many vocational coaches do not promote equality and diversity, and fundamental British values, adequately. Apprentices' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity are poor. Similarly, they do not have a sufficiently developed understanding of life in modern Britain and are not developing their knowledge of communities beyond their immediate residential or work locations.
- Those apprentices who are making good progress have had their starting points defined clearly, and learning is planned effectively to meet their needs. Their progress can be reliably measured against targets because they are specific, measurable, realistic, challenging and time bound. These apprentices have benefited from greater stability in staffing.

- Many vocational coaches use their occupational knowledge and expertise successfully to establish realistic expectations among apprentices about attitudes to work and practice. For example, in an apprentice's warehousing review, the coach questioned the apprentice successfully about how they would apply what they were learning when on the job. Learners have good access to welcoming learning centres that offer safe and secure environments which they appreciate. Learners feel safe.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** **are inadequate**

- Too many apprentices and 16- to 18-year-old learners make slow progress and fail to complete their courses successfully. Consequently, their vocational and personal development is seriously inhibited and their opportunities to benefit from focused work-related learning are considerably reduced.
- Apprentices who have had too few visits from vocational coaches, or whose progress has been hampered by frequent staff changes, lose interest in their apprenticeship. Their motivation diminishes and their enthusiasm is lost.
- Too few apprentices and learners obtain the knowledge, skills and qualifications – including English, mathematics, and ICT – to achieve their learning aims and to fulfil their career aspirations. Vocational coaches do not routinely encourage learners who already have the minimum required level of English, mathematics and ICT to develop these skills further. Too many apprentices do not appreciate the benefits of preparing for higher-level qualifications whenever opportunities arise.
- Most apprentices do not achieve relevant additional qualifications to enhance their employment prospects and personal effectiveness. Apprentices and learners are not helped, through purposeful enrichment activities, to explore wider social and ethical issues, what makes productive working relationships or how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They have little, if any, knowledge of British values and what these mean in terms of contributing to their community and the wider society.
- Apprentices' and learners' knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty is underdeveloped. Staff do not ensure that learners understand fully the risks associated with terrorism, radicalisation and extremism and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Information, advice and guidance are underdeveloped. A minority of vocational coaches discuss future options with apprentices; this helps them to make clear career plans. However, this practice is not universal and many learners and apprentices do not receive sufficient independent careers advice and guidance to help them clarify their career options and aspirations.
- Vocational coaches usually gain apprentices' respect and trust through their interest in, and understanding of, apprentices' job roles and responsibilities. Apprentices' behaviour is good. They feel confident to take any concerns they may have to their vocational coaches.
- Apprentices and learners who are making good progress are proud of the knowledge and skills, confidence and self-assurance that they are developing. They have had regular and good support from vocational coaches and have not had their learning disrupted by frequent staff changes or infrequent assessor visits. Apprentices who are new to their jobs usually become part of the team at work quickly, which gives them a sense of belonging and a purpose that they did not previously possess. Many employers and JLP celebrate learners' achievements appropriately.
- The standard of work produced by apprentices usually meets the minimum requirements of their qualification. In the more successful professional discussions, apprentices display effective and confident self-evaluation and good communication skills.

## **Outcomes for learners** **are inadequate**

- For the past three years apprentices' achievement rates have progressively declined. They are now very low and considerably below the national rates. In 2015/16 only approximately half of the apprentices completed their apprenticeship successfully. Too many apprentices make slow progress. Managers and vocational coaches have not identified this quickly enough, with the result that apprentices do not complete on or before their planned end date. Less than a third of apprentices completed their programmes by their planned end dates in 2015/16.
- Learners' achievement rates in functional skills are very poor. Only around one quarter of learners who entered for functional skills tests in 2014/15 achieved success. This was, however, an improvement on the previous year's achievement. Achievement rates are particularly low in English and mathematics at level 2.

- Too many 16- to 19-year-old learners on study programmes, traineeships and other employability programmes do not complete their programmes successfully. The number of learners who achieve has risen steadily in the past three years but still considerably less than half are achieving satisfactorily.
- Managers are not monitoring and reviewing in a meaningful way apprentices and learners who progress to the next level of study, obtain sustained employment or gain promotion. They are not evaluating systematically the extent to which learning has enhanced learners' life chances and employment opportunities, and is enabling them to fulfil their ambitions and aspirations.
- The achievement gap between 16- to 18-year-old learners and those over 19 years of age has widened considerably over a three-year period. Managers have taken insufficient action to narrow this gap. They have also taken insufficient action to narrow the gap between those apprentices who achieve on or before their planned end date and those who do not.
- Learners who are over 19 on short 'preparing for work' courses achieve at a very high rate. They have successfully maintained high achievement rates over a three-year period. These learners are highly motivated and are keen to obtain qualifications which they see as passports to success in the world of work.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16–18 and 19+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	4,794
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Holly Tonge
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.Jointlearning.co.uk">www.Jointlearning.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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	213	968	19	515	2	407		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14-16	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ Cornerstones Vocational Training							
	■ Fit UK Training and Education Limited							
	■ Lumar Training Limited							
	■ Mooreskills Limited							
	■ Park Place Training							
	■ Real Skills Training Limited							
	■ Training Strategies Limited							
	■ Wilkinson Welding Academy							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Ken Fisher, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Derrick Spragg	Ofsted Inspector
David Longworth	Ofsted Inspector
Stella Owen	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Price	Ofsted Inspector
Jean Webb	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. 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 learners 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 offered by the provider.



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