

Juniper Training Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

11–14 July 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Traineeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Staff have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is now good. Consequently, learners are motivated to learn and make good progress.
- Staff are highly committed to improving the education and lives of all learners. They give very good support to help learners achieve and gain employment, particularly those who previously have been unsuccessful in education and who have a learning difficulty and/or disability.
- Leaders and managers have implemented effective improvement strategies to remedy the majority of inconsistencies across centres identified in the previous inspection.
- A high proportion of learners now make good progress in developing their vocational skills and achieve their qualifications.
- The proportion of learners gaining functional skills qualifications in mathematics and English has risen and is high.
- Managers have taken positive actions to improve learners' behaviour. As a result, learners behave very well and show respect for each other and for their tutors.
- Managers and staff have developed effective employer partnerships. These enable learners to attend a good variety of work placement and employer taster days and develop their work-related skills well.
- Tutors ensure that each learner studies the appropriate qualifications and attends relevant work placements that help them achieve their individual aspirations.
- A high proportion of learners progress to further education, apprenticeships and employment with training.
- The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve a grade C or above in GCSEs mathematics and English, although increasing, is too low.
- Tutors do not support learners well enough to improve their writing skills. Too often learners' written work contains spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

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, 560 learners are on study programmes and 83 learners are on traineeships. Learners on study programmes work towards a 'work skills' qualification to develop their work-related skills and prepare them for employment. The very large majority of learners who start their training with Juniper have not previously achieved well at school and are disengaged from education. At the time of inspection, over half of the learners had a learning difficulty and/or disability, with a high proportion also coping with personal issues, such as mental health, that affect their learning.
- Juniper operates from 12 centres across the West Midlands, East Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, with its head office based in Wolverhampton. Almost every centre is in a location experiencing significant social deprivation.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Provide effective training for all tutors to enable them to identify the spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' work. Ensure that tutors then give learners clear guidance and information on how to improve the quality of their written work.
- Leaders and managers should continue their successful work with staff to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further, focusing on those centres where achievement rates and attendance are not yet high enough.
- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve a grade C or above in GCSE English and mathematics qualifications.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have established successfully a culture of high expectations that enables most learners to achieve their qualifications and gain valuable work-related skills. Managers and staff have reflected well on the findings from the previous inspection and have responded positively. They have improved learning at Juniper. Current learners make good progress in their studies, achieve their qualifications and progress into work and further training.
- Through a scrutiny of tutors' work and the performance of their learners, managers have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is now good. Staff have clear actions for improvement and understand what they need to do to improve their performance. Staff training and development are plentiful and focus sharply on improving tutors' skills. Tutors work with great commitment to ensure that learners develop the skills and knowledge that they need to gain employment.
- Learners benefit from Juniper's effective partnerships with employers. Managers are skilful in helping employers to understand the barriers to success that many learners face. They work closely and well with employers to plan learning in the workplace that ensures that learners thrive. Centre managers work closely with social services and local referral agencies to help learners to restart their learning.
- Managers and staff use data effectively to monitor learners' progress. They receive regular reports on learners' progress and take swift and effective action when learners fall behind in their studies. Managers have successfully reduced most differences that existed previously in the achievement of different groups of learners, although care leavers still do not achieve as well as their peers.
- Leaders and managers have established an effective strategy to improve learners' English and mathematics skills. Well-qualified English and mathematics specialists teach lessons that are closely matched to learners' current levels of knowledge and competency and challenge them to build on their skills. Tutors and employers ensure that learners have a good understanding of the skills and knowledge they will need at work. While on work experience, tutors ensure that learners know how they will use mathematics and English in their future job roles.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of Juniper's performance is much improved and largely accurate. Staff contribute well to this evaluation. Managers make effective use of the views of learners and employers to improve the quality of learning. For example, they have introduced work taster days and increased the amount of work-related activity that learners do during their programme of study. Managers' action plans for improvement are detailed and monitored closely; however, not all targets set by managers are demanding enough to bring about further rapid and sustained improvement.
- Managers' observation of teaching, learning and assessment is thorough and detailed. Managers have worked hard to align their judgements more closely to learners' achievement; however, they do not consistently focus closely enough on the progress learners make in class and the skills they are developing, or identify fully the adjustments staff need to make to their own practice to improve learning further.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are effective and provide helpful challenge to leaders and managers. Senior leaders have implemented improvements in a timely manner because of this positive scrutiny.
- Leaders' and managers' reports to board members are detailed and comprehensive. The board effectively monitors performance at centre level and, as a result, inconsistencies at centres identified at the previous inspection have reduced.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Well-trained tutors and staff use their knowledge effectively to keep learners safe while in the Juniper centres. Learners develop a good understanding of the potential dangers linked to people who hold extreme views and know how to keep themselves safe when working online and using social media.
- Leaders and managers carry out thorough checks on the suitability of staff, visiting speakers and employers to ensure that they do not pose a threat to the safety of learners. Managers deal well with the concerns learners have and, where necessary, refer learners to relevant external agencies, such as the police and local authorities.
- Learners work harmoniously and well in lessons and behave courteously to staff, their peers and visitors. Through their lessons and interactions with centre staff, they learn how to live successfully within their own communities and understand well the expectations required of living in a modern, democratic society.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, managers have focused successfully on improving the teaching skills of tutors. Effective staff training and the introduction of specialist English and mathematics tutors have resulted in improved teaching, learning and assessment.
- Staff make sure that each learner has a programme of learning and work experience that matches their aspirations. At the start of the programme, teachers accurately assess what learners can do, and identify aspects of their personal circumstances that may be relevant to their learning. Staff use this information well to ensure that learners are on a programme to which they are suited, and at the correct level of learning.
- Tutors plan and teach lessons very well. In the majority of lessons, learners benefit from well-structured teaching that is stimulating, challenging and very relevant. As a result, learners enjoy their learning, remain attentive and make good progress.
- Tutors use a good variety of resources, including information and learning technology, and appropriate techniques to reinforce learning. Resources are well presented, professionally laid out and at the right level for learners. In sessions to develop learners' work-related skills, tutors use stimulating practical activities, such as writing feedback on sticky notes to display on walls, to consolidate learning for all learners.
- Tutors accurately assess and track learners' progress, and provide clear feedback on their performance. Tutors use questioning techniques well to assess learners' knowledge and

understanding and regularly praise learners' achievements in sessions. Feedback on learners' written work is motivating and celebrates achievement well.

- Learners develop good reading, listening and speaking skills. They use these well in the workplace. Learners in care homes read successfully to residents, and learners report increased confidence in their verbal communication, both face-to-face and when dealing with customers on the telephone. However, learners' written work requires improvement. Tutors do not correct learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar consistently, accurately and frequently enough across centres to enable learners to make appropriate improvements to the standard of their work.
- Learners develop good mathematics skills in their lessons and in the workplace. For example, learners who work in garage settings successfully use measurement and volume when servicing cars; in retail settings, learners confidently use mental arithmetic to calculate prices.
- Staff support learners very effectively to overcome the specific barriers they have to learning. A well-qualified learning support specialist carries out a thorough assessment of learners' needs. Tutors receive a detailed report, which they use effectively to plan learning that meets learners' personal needs. For example, learners with autism receive clear and early prior notice of any changes in plans, to reduce their anxiety.
- Tutors' promotion and integration of equality of opportunity and diversity in lessons are good. Learners take part in useful discussions to help them understand discrimination and stereotypes. In functional skills lessons, tutors include topics such as the London Pride event, women in sport and same sex marriage. A session on interview skills supported learners to consider potential discrimination based on age, gender and disability.
- In a minority of sessions, tutors do not take into account the abilities of all learners. When the most able learners complete activities quickly, they have to wait for others to catch up or do time-filling tasks that do not challenge them or extend their knowledge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Staff have made considerable progress since the previous inspection in developing learners' understanding of the importance of work experience. Learners benefit from and attend a wide range of relevant activities outside of their classes, including external work placements with employers, specifically matched to their career choices. As a result, they develop well essential work-related skills such as timekeeping and building positive relationships to support them into jobs.
- Learners develop well the application of English and mathematics skills in the workplace. Tutors work closely with employers to plan activities and duties in the workplace that require learners to use and practise these skills. Learners value the importance of, and recognise the progress they make in, improving their verbal communication, confidence and problem-solving skills.
- Managers and staff have taken effective and positive actions to improve learners' behaviour across all centres. Learners behave very well, engage in their learning and follow instructions readily. Learners are polite and highly respectful of their tutors and their peers.
- Learners receive very effective and useful careers advice and guidance throughout their

programme. These support learners well to make informed decisions about their next steps. Learners attend the well-planned and informative careers days hosted at the centres. At these events, learners gain a good understanding from employers, colleges and training providers of the opportunities available to them when they complete their course.

- Learners benefit from excellent personal support, which helps them to stay on track and achieve their learning goals. Progression coordinators support learners with a range of personal concerns, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, very well. They ensure that learners have access to financial support and external agencies, such as those for housing, when appropriate. Staff go out of their way to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to succeed; for example, they regularly supply learners with clothes for interviews and ensure that they have access to the funds to pay for transport to and from work experience.
- Learners know how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Through the recently introduced 'hot topics' sessions and fitness weeks, learners regularly take part in sporting activities such as cross-country running, rounders and football. Learners enjoy these activities and develop their team-working skills as well as their fitness.
- Learners are rightly very proud of their work and achievements. Managers and staff hold monthly award ceremonies to celebrate learners' achievements. Learners are motivated by the recognition they receive from Juniper staff. Learners who have previously been bullied, left out and/or discriminated against feel they are valued, treated with respect and fully included at Juniper.
- Learners feel safe and know what to do should they have any concerns about their own safety or that of others. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and how to recognise the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Managers have taken effective actions to improve learners' attendance and they monitor this closely. Attendance in all centres has improved and the majority of learners attend regularly. In a minority of centres, although improving, attendance is not yet high enough.
- Learners are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Tutors promote British values effectively through projects such as 'campaign for change', where learners vote on proposed improvements to be made at the centres they attend. Learners demonstrate tolerance of each other and their views and have a good understanding of their rights as a British citizen.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of learners at Juniper Training have had a negative experience, or limited success, at school. Staff have successfully engaged and motivated these learners to study; the proportion of learners staying to the end of their course has improved, and is now high.
- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve their qualifications has improved and is now high. The proportion of traineeship learners who successfully complete their programmes and go on to an apprenticeship, employment or other training is also high.

- Tutors prepare learners very well for their next steps. Learners are carefully matched with employers to develop their work-related skills. Employers speak highly of the well-motivated learners, and a high proportion of employers offer learners apprenticeships at the end of their placements. The majority of learners are successful in gaining an apprenticeship, employment or places on further education courses on completion of their training.
- In 2015/16, just under half of learners achieved functional skills qualifications in mathematics and English. In the current year, the proportion of learners passing their functional skills qualifications has increased and is now high.
- In work skills qualifications and mathematics, learners produce work of a high standard, often above the expectations of the qualification requirements. However, the development of learners' writing skills requires improvement.
- Managers track closely the achievement of different groups of learners and have successfully ensured that learners from different ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as each other. The proportion of care leavers who achieve their qualification compared to their peers, although improving, is not yet high enough.
- The number of learners who achieve a grade C or above GCSE in mathematics and English, although increasing, remains low and requires improvement.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Juniper Training has approximately 560 learners on study programmes across all 12 centres. The vast majority are on a vocational pathway and complete qualifications in work skills at level 1 or level 2.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders, managers and staff have successfully improved the quality of study programmes across all centres. Learners' achievement of their qualifications, including English and mathematics functional skills, has improved in 2016/17 and is now high. The majority of study programme learners make good progress from their starting points.
- Learners benefit from well-planned and individual programmes, which meet the principles of the study programme very well. Through a thorough and detailed assessment of learners' starting points, staff carefully plan programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of learners. As a result, learners remain focused on their studies, and motivated to achieve their goals.
- Learners take part in a good range of meaningful and relevant work experience and other work-related activities, such as external talks and employer taster days. Learners gain valuable work-related skills, for example in time management, workplace behaviour and health and safety requirements.
- Tutors plan a good range of activities, which learners enjoy. Learners work well together, as well as learning how to work more independently. For example, learners use technology well, producing their own presentations to share with the group, detailing their experiences and the benefits of volunteering. In groups, learners discuss how employers use recruitment and selection techniques and how these can vary, depending

on the type of employment. Learners develop a very good understanding of how to be prepared for employment.

- Learners benefit from helpful feedback, coaching and questioning in lessons, which enable them to confirm their understanding of what they have learned. For example, this is particularly effective in GCSE mathematics when learners grasp how to calculate the areas of circles, apply Pythagorean theorem and answer examination-related questions.
- Learners fully understand the value of improving their English and mathematics skills both in their lessons and in the workplace to support their future employment opportunities. Tutors set learners individual targets in English and mathematics; the targets focus on learners' areas for development and indicate how they can achieve them while on work placement.
- Learners benefit from helpful and regular careers advice and guidance, which support them to make informed choices about their future plans. Staff plan carefully employer taster days for learners and put together job-role requirements. Learners have a clear understanding of what is expected in specific industries. Learners attend job clubs held at centres where they update their CVs, apply for jobs and practise their interview skills. As a result, a high proportion of learners successfully move on to an apprenticeship, employment with training, or study at a higher level.

Traineeships

Good

- This year 110 learners have completed their traineeship programme so far; currently 83 learners are on traineeship programmes across 10 of the Juniper centres. A large majority are currently in work placements.
- Leaders and managers have made good progress since the previous inspection in ensuring that trainees develop their study- and work-related skills early on and at every stage of their programme. Traineeships are well managed. Trainees receive very effective training to develop the skills required to support them into work, improve the development of their English and mathematics skills and undertake external work placements.
- Trainees benefit from very individual programmes. These meet their aspirations and prepare them for their specific chosen career. Tutors assess trainees' starting points thoroughly and identify areas for development clearly; as a result, trainees are fully prepared before they attend work placements and develop at a pace which suits their needs.
- Staff develop effective partnerships with a range of local employers to provide high-quality work placements for the large majority of trainees. Trainees develop a good range of skills for specific jobs such as applying retail company systems to sort and pick out stock, and when working with young children, using questioning strategies to develop their number skills. Trainees are confident and develop their communication and customer service skills well.
- Trainees show a good understanding of how they use and develop their English and mathematics skills in the workplace. On starting a placement, the tutor, employer and trainee clearly identify the English and mathematics techniques required for the job role. The majority of trainees apply these skills well and make good progress.

- Trainees receive good advice and guidance throughout their programme. They are clear about their options for progression and the majority gain an apprenticeship, employment or a place on a further education course. In a minority of cases, staff do not include a sufficient range of qualifications in trainees' programmes, such as in health and safety, and information and communication technology; this limits a few learners' chances of gaining jobs.
- Tutors and progression coordinators support trainees very well. They have frequent and productive progress reviews. They set targets that are relevant to each trainee and which trainees understand. Trainees know what they need to do to achieve their goals and overcome barriers that have previously made it difficult for them to progress.
- Trainees have a good understanding of the importance of equality of opportunity and diversity. They recognise they will work with a range of people and understand the laws which protect people in the workplace.
- Trainees behave well and responsibly at centres and in the workplace. They know how to keep themselves safe and what to do should they need to report or respond to health and safety or safeguarding issues.
- Tutors do not accurately identify errors in trainees' written work and give appropriate feedback on how they can improve this. As a result, trainees' written work is not at a high standard and they are unsure of how to make the necessary improvements.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52805
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,519
Managing Director	Lesley Holland
Telephone number	01902 864194
Website	www.junipertraining.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	400	4	226	1	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	83		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality, 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 at the provider.

Inspection team

Jane Hughes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jules Steele	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector
Clive Blanchette	Ofsted Inspector
Jean Webb	Ofsted Inspector

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