



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 1998

JACE Training and Assessment Centre

SUMMARY

JACE Training and Assessment Centre offers good-quality care training. Achievement and progress of trainees are good. Employers are fully involved in the training programme. Trainees' key skills are systematically assessed on entry. Appropriate additional support is given to trainees, when the need is identified. Trainees' progress is frequently reviewed. Equal opportunities work is active, and there is a swift and effective complaints procedure. Trainee support is comprehensive throughout the programme. The on- and off-the-job elements of the training are well co-ordinated. The organisation establishes and maintains good internal and external lines of communication. Management-information systems are currently underdeveloped. The organisation sets measurable individual and business targets. There is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the training provision.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Health, care & public services	2

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	1
Management of training	2
Quality assurance	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ key skills integrated in occupational work
- ◆ wide range of learning opportunities
- ◆ good range of placements
- ◆ high trainee achievement
- ◆ frequent opportunities for trainees' review and assessment
- ◆ good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ measurable individual and business targets set
- ◆ action-planning to improve training provision

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poor-quality handouts
- ◆ underdeveloped business plan
- ◆ targets for reviewing policies and procedures not always met

INTRODUCTION

1. JACE Training and Assessment Centre (JACE) is the training and assessment section of the Jancett Group of Day Nurseries which has six day nurseries and a holiday club for children from three months to 12 years. The first of these nurseries opened in 1969. JACE was established in 1982 by the current owner. The company contracts with three training and enterprise councils (TECs): AZTEC, SOLOTEC and Surrey TEC.

2. The company has 100 employees. The staff of JACE are supported by nursery managers who fulfil the rôle of work-based assessors. The organisation competes for trainees with several other private training providers in the area. At the time of inspection, there were 203 trainees, including five New Deal trainees. JACE has been an accredited centre with several awarding bodies since 1992 and has received funding from SOLOTEC since 1991.

3. The Jancett Group of Day Nurseries' mission outlines its commitment to improving the standard of care and education given to babies and children. It aims to give the best possible service to the users, parents and guardians, in excess of what is required by the Children Act 1989 and current local authority guidelines. JACE's mission outlines its intention to achieve and maintain the highest-quality training and assessment for individuals possible, to enable them to become qualified and competent childcare workers.

4. The organisation's head office and main training facilities are situated in Wallington, Surrey. The training rooms are well equipped and there is a separate computer room. There are further offices and training facilities in Balham, South London. Rooms are also hired in the Surrey area, and further offices in Thornton Heath have been leased, where the company intends to run its information technology training in the future.

5. JACE has trained a large proportion of local nursery staff. The Borough of Sutton has 18 nurseries and 14 of their staff are ex-trainees of JACE, and Croydon has 31 day nurseries and 26 of their staff are JACE-trained. In the Jancett Group of Day Nurseries, 58 staff are ex-trainees. A few JACE trainees also gain employment as private nannies, in community policing, as prison officers, dental nurses and air hostesses.

6. JACE is an accredited centre to offer NVQs in childcare at level 2 and 3; playwork at levels 2 to 4; customer service at levels 2 and 3, key skills, wordpower and numberpower, practical caring skills certificate, food hygiene and first aid certificates and training for assessors and verifiers.

7. Unemployment in 1998 varied across the areas in which JACE operates, from as low as 1.2 per cent in the Surrey TEC area to 5.4 per cent in the SOLOTEC area. In 1997, unemployment in the AZTEC area varied: 5.3 per cent in Kingston to 5.4 per

cent in Merton and 7.1 per cent in Wandsworth.

8. The representation of people from minority ethnic groups across the three TEC areas also varied, from as low as under 3 per cent in Reigate and Banstead to almost 12 per cent in the SOLOTEC area. In the AZTEC area, ethnicity ranged from 9 per cent in Kingston and 16 per cent in Merton to as high as 19 per cent in Wandsworth.

9. The number of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 80 per cent in 1996 for Surrey TEC, 69.1 per cent in 1995 for SOLOTEC and 85 per cent in 1991 for AZTEC.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

10. JACE produced its self-assessment report two months before inspection. The report was put together by the owner, following training and with support from SOLOTEC, with input from staff and trainees from across the organisation. Inspectors agreed with the main findings of the report. Two strengths in quality assurance represented no more than normal practice. Other strengths were understated, particularly in equal opportunities, trainee support and management of training. Three of the five grades awarded by inspectors were higher than those proposed in the self-assessment report. The other two grades remained the same.

11. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at JACE during November 1998. Inspectors examined organisation, TEC and awarding body documents. They interviewed the proprietor, team leaders and administration staff. They visited day nurseries and interviewed staff, trainees, assessors and internal verifiers. They examined assessment records, trainees' work portfolios and observed three training sessions and nine assessments.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Health, care & public services		1	2			3
Total	0	1	2	0	0	3

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Health, care & public services

Grade 2

12. JACE has 203 childcare trainees, of whom 122 are modern apprentices, five are New Deal trainees and 76 are trainees on other government-funded programmes. Trainees work towards either programmes in practical caring skills or towards the early years childcare and education NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Trainees under the age of 18 are not employed, owing to local social services guidelines covering employment of young people. JACE works in partnership with 51 other employers in the Surrey and Croydon areas and uses their day nurseries, play groups and schools, as well as its own six day nurseries for placements. Trainees are either employed or placed as trainees in these facilities, depending on their age. Trainees pursuing NVQs at levels 2 and 3 attend off-the-job training at one of the four training centres, either one day each week, in the evening or on Saturdays. Unemployed trainees fulfil the rôle of trainee assistant nursery nurses and are mentored by a qualified nursery nurse, teacher or supervisor who provide individual on-the-job training. Trainees pursuing NVQs at level 3, many of whom are employed, are offered a programme of workshops at the training centres at various

times. These trainees attend according to their needs. The self-assessment report did not adequately identify all of the strengths and weaknesses for this area. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ regular opportunities for coaching and assessment
- ◆ key skills well integrated in occupational awards
- ◆ trainees encouraged to plan their own assessment
- ◆ wide range of learning opportunities
- ◆ good learning resources
- ◆ realistic targets set for trainees
- ◆ high achievement rates for trainees
- ◆ good teamwork among trainers and employers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poor-quality handouts and visual aids
- ◆ some nursery managers do not understand key skills

13. JACE's staff work well as a team. Trainees are placed in good-quality day nurseries, schools and play groups. Trainees are given every opportunity to enrich their experience by moving to different childcare facilities, eg trainees in schools get day or baby-unit work placements during school holidays. Employers take their responsibility for training very seriously and provide high-quality on-the-job training. There are effective partnerships among employers, placement and JACE's staff.

14. JACE has well-qualified staff with excellent interpersonal skills, focused on trainees' needs. Trainees have the opportunities to achieve additional qualifications which include first aid, food hygiene and a swimming instructor certificate. All trainees have a named assessor and coach who provides on-the-job training. Trainees' progress is regularly reviewed. Trainees, not meeting agreed targets, are encouraged to identify the reasons why, which are then discussed with their assessor and workplace supervisor. Weekly action plans are agreed on and progress towards them monitored. Trainees receive extra attention from their assessor and workplace supervisor until they are back on track. Trainees are assessed on the job every four weeks by either a workplace or peripatetic assessor. New action plans are discussed and agreed on with trainees for the next four weeks. Trainees are encouraged to plan their own assessment. Placement managers arrange any on-the-job training required.

15. Key skills are introduced to trainees at induction and further explored at workshops. Trainees understand and develop these key skills. Trainees complete some work-based projects. One of these involves trainees spending four days work-shadowing their manager, giving them a greater understanding of management's

rôles and responsibilities. Trainees undertake acting-manager rôles and take responsibility for organising trips, which introduces them to purchasing, budgeting and negotiation skills. All key skills, except information technology, are fully integrated in occupational work. Separate information technology workshops are attended by trainees. Some day-nursery managers do not understand key skills. These are managers of those nurseries which have recently started working with JACE, and in these day nurseries key skills are still at a developmental stage.

16. Tutors and trainers develop specialist workshop materials to meet the knowledge requirements of NVQs. These materials are helpful both in training sessions and as revision aids. Training sessions are generally good, although some lack variety in presentation methods. Handouts are too detailed and often poorly photocopied from books. Overhead transparencies are also too complex, and trainees spend too much time copying from them. A wide range of learning materials and an excellent library of books and videos are available for trainees and tutors. JACE's success rate compares extremely well with that of other organisations in the area. For the SOLOTEC area, in 1996, 26.3 per cent of trainees did not complete the programme, but 74.4 per cent of the remaining trainees gained the full award. In 1997, early leavers accounted for 24.7 per cent of trainees and 72.3 per cent achieved their NVQ. In the AZTEC and Surrey TEC areas, early leavers in 1997 represented 33.3 and 27 per cent, respectively, with qualifications gained being 66.7 and 73 per cent respectively for those who remained on programme. To date, the three TECs anticipate 82.6, 74.3 and 66.7 per cent achievement, respectively.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

17. There are 194 female and 9 male trainees registered with JACE, of whom 8 per cent are those with physical disabilities and 13 per cent from minority ethnic groups. JACE has a clear commitment to equal opportunities. The organisation has an equal opportunities policy which meets the requirements of all three TECs. There are also comprehensive complaints and grievance procedures. JACE's staff monitor trainees for disability, ethnicity and gender. The trainees at JACE reflect the ethnic diversity of their local communities. Ten per cent of all candidates have special training needs. The self-assessment report failed to identify all the strengths of this aspect, and inspectors identified additional strengths. The grade awarded is higher than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strong equal opportunities culture
- ◆ active equal opportunities working party
- ◆ targeted marketing initiatives
- ◆ good introduction to equal opportunities at induction

- ◆ equal opportunities promoted by example
- ◆ swift and effective complaints procedures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no follow-up to induction workshop
- ◆ inadequate promotion of equal opportunities in marketing materials
- ◆ poor access to some training rooms

18. The entrance reception area, corridors and training rooms have attractive displays of non-stereotypical, positive images of children and trainees. Good equal opportunities practices are readily seen in all work settings. Staff identify suitable training programmes and work placements for trainees, with account taken of individual backgrounds and needs. Opportunities are provided for trainees to work with children with special educational needs. An active equal opportunities working party monitors, reviews and updates policies and procedures to conform to current legislation. Complaints are dealt with swiftly. The complaints procedure allows 10 days from the start of a complaint to the final stage. At induction, trainees take part in equal opportunities and special educational needs workshops. They also read and sign that they understand and comply with the equal opportunities policy. Successful action is taken to increase the recruitment of people from minority ethnic groups, eg JACE takes part in careers conventions, job fairs and has a stand in local shopping centres. In the last two years, the number of women from minority ethnic groups on training programmes has been increased by nine per cent. Staff with physical disabilities and others from various ethnic groups play important rôles in recruitment and training.

19. Although equal opportunities are embedded in all aspects of training, there is no follow-up to the induction equal opportunities workshop. Trainees' understanding of equal opportunities is not assessed before the workshop. At the time of inspection, staff were planning an equal opportunities workshop which would also be offered as a training programme to groups outside of the company. Some marketing materials strongly promote equality of opportunity, but others present stereotypical images. Wheelchair access to some training rooms is poor. Alternative accommodation is provided, if necessary. Wheelchair access to all nurseries, but one, is good. Ramps are provided to improve access to some placements.

Trainee support

Grade 1

20. JACE has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which includes antidiscriminatory, anti-intrusion, grievance and disciplinary procedures of which trainees are made aware during induction. JACE provides comprehensive and effective support to trainees, from recruitment through induction and training to employment. Trainees receive good guidance. The self-assessment report failed to

identify all of the strengths for this aspect of training. The grade awarded by inspectors is higher than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ trainees' skills systematically assessed on entry
- ◆ appropriate additional support, following assessment
- ◆ thorough induction to on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ support services regularly reviewed
- ◆ strong pastoral support
- ◆ trained counsellor available
- ◆ well-planned careers and progression advice workshops

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inspectors identified no significant weaknesses

21. Trainees attend a short introduction to the childcare courses which JACE offers, to confirm their interest in the vocational area before interview. A three-week induction programme provides a thorough introduction to on- and off-the-job training. During induction, trainees complete diagnostic tests in numeracy, literacy and key skills. Two days are spent in the workplace, during which vocational skills and trainees' attitudes are assessed.

22. Realistic training plans are designed for each trainee. Additional support is provided, depending on trainees' needs. Groups of no more than six trainees are given extra classes in literacy and numeracy at the centre. All training sessions are arranged at times which meet the needs of all trainees. Evening and Saturday workshops are available for those employed trainees who have difficulty attending weekday training sessions. Trainees who have children of their own are offered hours of work to suit their personal circumstances. These trainees have a choice either of full-time training or part- or full-time employment. One trainee was given extra study time and additional help in her own language as she lacked fluency in English.

23. Rooms are rented in a community centre in Redhill, so that from which area can attend portfolio-building classes more easily. Tutors visit trainees in their homes, if they live in rural districts to help them to make progress towards their qualification. A hearing link was provided for a trainee with a hearing impairment. Staff have sought advice from the Dyslexia Institute, to support trainees more effectively with their literacy needs. One trainee presents evidence for assessment in tape-recorded form.

24. Charters for trainees and trainers ensure that all those involved in the assessment process are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Trainees benefit

from the close partnership between work-based supervisors and assessors. Trainees meet their assessors and tutors within five days of starting their training programme. Assessors visit placements fortnightly for the first six weeks of training, to support, action plan and observe trainees. Nursery managers conduct 'guidance and support' reviews with trainees to give positive feedback on their performance every eight weeks for NVQ level 2 and 3 trainees. This is above contractual requirements. Additional monthly reviews by assessors give pastoral and assessment support. The reviews are fully documented, except for some additional individual support which is not always recorded, if confidential. Review sheets are monitored by centre staff to check that the system is working and that appropriate support is being offered.

25. Every three months, trainees evaluate the effectiveness of the support which they receive. Trainees' evaluations are very positive. In the most recent evaluation, 33 per cent of trainees described the support as useful and 67 per cent as very useful. A qualified counsellor is always available during workshops of a sensitive nature and for any follow-up counselling requirements. Some trainees have taken advantage of this facility, while others have been referred to external independent counsellors. During induction, trainees are given a short course on 'managing yourself'. This introduces them to job rôles and responsibilities. JACE has close contacts with two nanny agencies, through which placements and employment opportunities are provided for trainees.

26. Regular news-sheets are sent to trainees which contain information about events and developments which are taking place across the organisation and job vacancies in the organisation. A well-planned careers workshop gives advice on interviews, letters of application and writing curricula vitae. Trainees do not always attend, as they very often secure employment on their own merit before the workshop takes place. Progression from training to employment in the group is very good.

Management of training

Grade 2

27. The organisation is managed by the proprietor, with one deputy responsible for day nurseries and a second who co-ordinates training. A lead trainer monitors fourteen nursery managers, some of whom are also work-based assessors; in addition to this, there are 11 peripatetic assessors. One member of staff leads a team of five administrators. JACE was the winner of the SOLOTEC Business Award for Training and Development in 1996. The organisation achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1998. JACE's self-assessment report underestimated the quality of this aspect. The grade awarded by inspectors was higher than that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive policies and procedures
- ◆ good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

- ◆ excellent staff development opportunities
- ◆ effective internal and external communication

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ underdeveloped business plan

28. Well-written procedures support staff in carrying out their work. All staff have job descriptions and are aware of their rôle and responsibilities. Members of staff's individual strengths and weaknesses are identified, and managers support them in developing new work rôles and achieving personal targets. Staff feel valued and are motivated and committed to the organisation's values, policies and strategies. They are encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions at weekly team meetings, where action points are followed up. During contact time with the senior partner and in annual appraisals, analysis of staff training needs is good, and opportunities for staff training are available.

29. Trainees and staff are enthusiastic about the organisation. Staff turnover is low. Internal and external lines of communication are good. There is careful planning of the off-the-job training, and it links effectively with on-the-job training. All staff are occupationally competent and well qualified. All Jancett Day Nurseries' staff and trainees wear Jancett nursery sweatshirts. This promotes a corporate image and professionalism. JACE's head office and training centre are decorated with informative and colourful posters.

30. Trainees and senior staff discuss issues in action group meetings. These form part of a series of meetings, which allows the flow of information among the proprietor, workplace managers, internal verifiers, trainers and trainees. There is frequent contact between JACE and the wider community, through news-sheets, open-days, childcare exhibitions and contact with a wide range of associations. JACE liaises with external organisations to keep abreast of trends and developments. The centre has been involved in several local, regional and national working groups.

31. Information about attendance, progression and achievement of trainees is collated and used as a basis for decision-making and planning future action. A copy of trainee attendance is given to all nursery managers monthly. At the time of inspection, the business plan was underdeveloped, as the proprietor was attempting to design a plan which would cover a two-year period.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

32. Quality assurance processes are well established and effective, meeting the needs of the TECs and the awarding bodies, including target-setting, monitoring of performance and the use of reviews with staff and trainees. The company also has

comprehensive quality assurance systems for monitoring trainees' attendance, progression and achievements. Comments received from external agencies are used by the team to guide it in making improvements and changes. There is extensive evaluation of all aspects of the training offered. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ extensive documentation of quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ measurable individual and business targets are set
- ◆ rigorous monitoring and evaluation of training
- ◆ action-planning to improve provision
- ◆ wide-ranging consultation for the self-assessment report

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ targets for reviewing policies and procedures not always met

33. There was wide consultation before the compilation of the self-assessment report. Trainees and staff at all levels were involved. Judgements in the self-assessment report were clearly supported by evidence. The quality assurance arrangements are understood by all staff, including those employers which provide placements. The organisation's quality development plan states JACE's commitment to improvement through self-assessment and evaluation. This is shown in the comprehensive range of quality assurance documents over and above those required by TECs. Staff use these to measure the quality of both on- and off-the-job training accurately. The team views these as a positive way to improve training and takes action based on them, ensuring that training is of a high standard across all programmes and on all training sites. Weaknesses or areas for improvement identified by inspections, audits and awarding body visits are used to develop better practice and provision.

34. Individual staff targets for training and development are agreed on and met. The company regularly reviews performance targets, one example being the incentive of the trainee, manager and senior manager of the month awards, where £20, £30 and £35, respectively, is given and a certificate awarded. There are established criteria for this, with a panel of two trainees, one or two of the JACE partners, a senior manager and nursery manager judging achievement against the criteria for eligibility, which includes, for example, attendance, punctuality, appearance and attendance at workshops.

35. Lesson plans which show the objectives for sessions and how activities match the knowledge evidence and key skills were not available for all training sessions. Evaluation of trainees' experience takes place at the end of induction, six weeks after the induction and at the end of each training day. There are good, well-recorded



internal verification practices. Some meetings among assessors and internal verifiers are not documented. JACE monitors the destinations of its trainees.

36. The organisation is aware of the benefits of bringing its quality processes together and instigating a self-assessment process as part of an organisational quality assurance cycle.