

INSPECTION REPORT

JACE Training and Assessment Centre

16 December 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

| SEVEN-POINT SCALE | FIVE-POINT SCALE |
|-------------------|------------------|
| grade 1 | grade 1 |
| grade 2 | |
| grade 3 | grade 2 |
| grade 4 | grade 3 |
| grade 5 | grade 4 |
| grade 6 | grade 5 |
| grade 7 | |

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

JACE Training and Assessment Centre is a private training organisation situated in Wallington, Surrey. It holds contracts with London Central, Sussex, Surrey, and London South Learning and Skills Councils. The lead Learning and Skills Council for the provision of work-based learning for young people is London South. There are currently 321 learners, who are on programmes on health, social care and public services. There are 126 foundation modern apprentices, 177 advanced modern apprentices, and 18 learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes. JACE Training and Assessment Centre also hold contracts with London South, Central, and Sussex Jobcentre Plus areas, but there were too few learners to allow inspection.

Overall judgement

Training provided in health, social care and public services is good. The leadership and management of JACE Training and Assessment Centre are good. Quality assurance and equal opportunities are good. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the needs of those receiving it.

GRADES

| Leadership and management | 2 |
|---------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Equality of opportunity | 2 |
| Quality assurance | 2 |

| Health, social care & public services | 2 |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 2 |

KEY STRENGTHS

- good communications
- effective continuous improvement process
- good implementation of equal opportunities policy
- good support for learners
- good resources

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor framework achievement rates by recently enrolled foundation modern apprentices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more employers involved in reviews

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 28 days inspecting JACE Training and Assessment Centre (JACE) in December 2002. Inspectors conducted 63 interviews with JACE staff, interviewed 74 learners and 13 employers, and visited 20 work placements. Inspectors paid 21 visits to the provider's sites at Wallington, Balham, Merstham, Crawley and Rye. They looked at the portfolios of 53 learners, 51 individual learning plans, company paperwork and other relevant documents.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Health, social care & public services | 0 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Total | 0 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. JACE is the training and assessment section of the Jancett group of day nurseries, which has five day nurseries and four holiday clubs. The first of the nurseries opened in 1969. JACE was established in 1982 as an assessment and training centre by the current owner. It provides training across Surrey, Sussex, and central and south London. Work placements for learners are with nurseries in the Jancett organisation and also with other nurseries across the LSC areas in which it works. JACE employs 26 full-time staff and two part-time staff. There are 321 learners on health, social care and public services programmes, all early years. Of these, 126 are foundation modern apprentices, 177 are advanced modern apprentices and 18 are learners on NVQ programmes.

3. Training programmes are funded through contracts with Surrey, Sussex, London Central, and London South Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). Unemployment rates are close to the national average of 3 per cent in London South (2.9 per cent) and London Central (2.8 per cent) LSC areas, but lower in Sussex (2 per cent), and Surrey (0.8 per cent). In Surrey and Sussex, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is under 3 per cent, according to the 1991 census. This is lower than the national average of 6.2 per cent. It is higher in London South at 10.2 per cent and London Central at 21.8 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 47.9 per cent nationally. The rate for London Central was 40 per cent, for London South was 52 per cent, for Surrey was 58 per cent and for Sussex was 52 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

4. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory for advanced modern apprenticeships and NVQs. However, there has been a decline in achievement over the past three years. Achievement rates for the foundation modern apprenticeship framework were poor in 2000-01. A significant number of learners achieved a NVQ but few achieved the full framework. There are well-equipped training rooms. All sites are attractive and welcoming. There is good on- and off-the-job training for most learners. There is over emphasis on written evidence in some portfolios.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

5. JACE is a private organisation with a main office in Wallington. It provides training across Surrey, Sussex, and south and central London. The organisation has a proprietor, deputy and a regional co-ordinator who manages five area managers. The organisation employs 26 full-time staff and two part-time staff, including four administrative staff and an examinations secretary. JACE has a comprehensive business plan which contains a mission statement, key strategies, and targets.

6. The organisation has an equal opportunities statement and policy, as well as policies relating to areas including quality assurance, health and safety, risk assessment and confidentiality. It has held the Investors in People award since 1998. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. JACE produced its first self-assessment report and action plan in 1998, and these have been produced annually since then. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in November 2002. The report described the management of the organisation and clearly identified strengths and weaknesses.

STRENGTHS

- good communications
- good staff appraisal and development
- good involvement of staff at all levels in business strategy
- effective continuous improvement process
- good implementation of equal opportunities policy

WEAKNESSES

- poor recording on some documentation

7. Communications within JACE are good, linking all staff across the five sites. There is a developing intranet and e-mail system in the head office, which is being extended to all other sites. There is a system for ensuring that mail goes to the right place. Most communication on a day-to-day basis is by telephone, and each member of staff has a mobile phone. There are regular monthly management meetings, which are minuted, and information from them is discussed with staff at their own monthly meetings. In addition, there are regular and effective one-to-one meetings as required for managers. There is a monthly meeting in the evening for all JACE staff, which is used to check progress and plan business strategy. All staff receive a weekly newsletter, a recent issue of which concerned the reluctance of learners to be assessed for key skills and sought suggestions from staff. Staff are well informed and understand current issues. They feel free to contribute to meetings and also to talk to management at other times. All staff have clear job descriptions and understand their role in the organisation. Management

listen to staff and respond positively. Learners also report that they feel well informed and that they are part of the business. There is good communication with employers, who commented that JACE staff are always available for advice and guidance.

8. There is a well-defined annual appraisal system for managers and assessor tutors. Senior managers undergo continuous appraisal and have scheduled individual meetings with their line managers. The appraisal process is well documented and used to identify training needs. There are good opportunities for staff development. Staff attend a variety of internal and external training courses, which help them to maintain occupational competence as well as to acquire new skills. Recent examples include a swimming course and a business excellence course. Some staff have gained qualifications which have helped them to progress to senior positions in JACE.

9. Staff at all levels are involved in planning the business strategy. Communications between the head office, area and nursery managers and assessor tutors are effective and contribute significantly to the success of learners. Area managers and assessor tutors are given well-written and clear training information and material. Good use is made of the intranet system in the head office and between senior managers, to share information on learners' progress and programmes.

10. The management information system is used successfully to monitor and control the effectiveness of the training programmes. Staff are adept in using the system to analyse data on all aspects of the programme, including recruitment, administration, progression, early leavers, budgets and financial control. Data are also used to inform management on the effectiveness of the work-based learning programme.

11. Key information is not adequately recorded on certain documents. Some progress review forms contain no clear targets for learners and no information on progress. Some learners' records and assessment forms are unclear. Some progress review forms do not have employers' signatures and do not contain any employers' comments. The individual learning plans of a number of learners did not show details of changes in work placements and there was missing information on others. Dates and learners' signatures were missing from the assessment documents in a few portfolios.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 2**

12. JACE has a clear and well-defined equal opportunities policy, which states its commitment to preventing bullying and harassment. The policy is covered at each learner review but there is currently no record of this in the review document. The policy identifies that, while the overall responsibility for equal opportunities lies with management, it is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that the policy is implemented. It includes clear guidelines on self-development in equal opportunities for each learner and member of staff. There is a comprehensive induction programme for staff and learners which includes details on equal opportunities. This takes a whole day for learners and involves a good variety of teaching methods. Learners understand the principles of equal opportunities and are able to explain the implications of the principles in practice. There are no subcontractors, and there are well-defined procedures to ensure implementation of equal opportunities with employers. Each employer has to sign a contract specifying that the equal opportunities policy will be followed. Area managers check that JACE has a copy of the employer's policy. Recently there have been two days' training in equal opportunities for senior staff, which were repeated for all staff at a later date. Training for learners consists of additional training modules and a good range of resources is available in the centre.

13. There is an established complaints and grievance procedure, which is understood by learners. Learners are aware that they can speak to anyone in the organisation regarding any problem they may have. There have been few complaints and these have been dealt with effectively. JACE collects, collates and monitors data on gender, ethnicity and disability. The data have led to the redesign of recruitment pamphlets. They clearly indicate that learners from minority ethnic groups are well represented relative to the community in all areas. In London Central, 47 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 22 per cent in the community. In other areas there is a closer match. There is a high proportion of learners (nearly 50 per cent) with particular learning needs, which are being met.

14. Marketing materials have been designed to encourage interest from minority ethnic groups and also from men, who are under-represented in the caring professions. Staff go to careers centres to meet potential learners. This gives them ease of access and makes the learners feel more comfortable. JACE's staff have developed an ice-breaking game for potential learners, which also serves to inform learners about the caring professions and to give an initial assessment of the learner. The game has been effective in giving learners confidence for their interview.

15. The organisation has employers in easy reach of public transport. Most sites have access for learners with restricted mobility. There is no access for wheelchair users at the head office, but all training materials are available and can be used on other premises nearby. There are posters and displays of material relating to diversity, and various other resources, such as toys, in the various centres.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

16. JACE has a clear quality assurance statement that is shared with staff and learners. The quality assurance system effectively reviews and audits all activities of the organisation annually. The schedule provides for a critical review of all aspects of training, assessment, policies, procedures, documentation, training material, resources, and internal verification. The continuous improvement procedures are effective, with auditing activities that are well documented and clearly presented. The internal auditing process has a good sampling strategy. All managers have clear responsibilities for the quality assurance of activities within their areas of control. The organisation has recently recruited a quality assurance officer, with a childcare and training background, to manage the company's quality assurance system, as it seeks accreditation under an international quality assurance standard. A further member of staff provides additional support for one day a week. Staff have attended training on a system of business excellence and are incorporating the principles into the systems that JACE uses for continuous improvement.

17. Extensive evaluation of all aspects of the training programmes is used to improve their effectiveness. There is good use of feedback, from learners, area and nursery managers, assessor tutors and employers, on the effectiveness of programmes. Replies to questionnaires and surveys are analysed in detail to improve course content and training material. There are regular meetings with groups of learners at which they discuss their training and suggest improvements. All staff are encouraged to suggest improvements to training materials, resources and programmes. They are closely involved in developing new approaches and ideas. Any changes to course materials or administrative arrangements are evaluated for their effectiveness. Area managers evaluate training materials and resources during their regular meetings.

18. The most recent self-assessment report was written with the involvement of staff at all levels. Teams worked together on the reports for their areas, which were then reviewed at management meetings and the final report agreed. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses with which the inspectors agreed. The report did not cover achievement and retention rates and some of the strengths in the report represented normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses in the occupational area and in leadership and management. The self-assessment report was used effectively for the production of a development plan. The plan allocates responsibilities for dealing with weaknesses and identifies areas for improvement, with a timetable for completion.

19. The internal verification process is satisfactory. The system for internal verification is adequately planned, with sufficient qualified staff to carry out the verification. The sampling plan covers units of NVQs as well as complete portfolios. Assessors are observed at regular intervals and by different internal verifiers to ensure that the quality of the process is maintained. There has been insufficient action to overcome some deficiencies in assessment practice identified by internal verification.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Grade 2

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 321 | 2 |

20. JACE provides training for its own group of nurseries, and for external nurseries in south London, central London, Surrey and Sussex. One hundred and thirty-five learners out of a total of 321 are employed. The remainder are on work placement either in Jancett nurseries or in external nurseries, playgroups, crèches, after-school groups, schools and holiday clubs. JACE provides foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes in early years care and education at level 2 and 3 NVQ. It also carries out training for local early years and childcare development partnerships. There are 126 learners on foundation programmes, 177 on advanced modern apprenticeship programmes, and 18 on NVQ programmes. These are current figures. The tables overleaf do not reflect more recent recruitment. Learners may join programmes at any time of the year. They are invited to an introduction to training, when they are told about the requirements of the training and given an insight into the demands of working with children. They spend two taster days in a nursery. All learners are assessed formally for basic numeracy, literacy and key skills needs. Those learners identified as having additional learning needs receive extra support. Learners who are not employed receive a five-day induction. JACE trainer/assessors carry out assessment in the workplace and are responsible for delivering off-the-job training. Five area managers co-ordinate the work of the assessors. Where possible, learners attend weekly workshops which cover the knowledge requirements for NVQs and key skills. Training sessions take place at a number of training centres across the areas in which JACE operates. Assessors support learners in the workplace on an individual basis. Assessment for key skills takes place in the workplace and through external tests. Learners' progress is reviewed by the assessors.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

| Work-based learning for young people | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 106 | | 107 | | 92 | | 79 | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 0 | | 56 | 52 | 59 | 64 | 53 | 67 | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 1 | | 8 | 7 | 53 | 58 | 52 | 66 | | | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 71 | | 48 | 45 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | |

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

| Work-based learning for young people | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|-----|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 157 | | 125 | | 118 | | 8 | | | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 0 | | 58 | 46 | 60 | 51 | 8 | 100 | | | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 4 | | 30 | 24 | 51 | 43 | 3 | 38 | | | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 79 | | 20 | 16 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | |

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

| Work-based learning for young people | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|---------|----|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| NVQ Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 | | 2000-01 | | 1999-2000 | | 1998-99 | | 1997-98 | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 28 | | 28 | | 6 | | 61 | | 26 | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 24 | | 20 | 71 | 5 | 83 | 40 | 66 | 25 | 96 | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 6 | | 20 | 71 | 5 | 83 | 35 | 57 | 12 | 46 | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 18 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | |

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good off-the-job training
- good on-the-job training for most learners
- good support for learners
- comprehensive recruitment and induction programmes
- good resources

WEAKNESSES

- too much emphasis on written evidence in some portfolios
- poor rates of achievement of the foundation modern apprenticeship framework in 2000-01

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more employers involved in progress reviews

21. Off-the-job training is good. JACE holds weekly workshops in each of its centres, and in nurseries where there are groups of learners, which cover the full range of knowledge needed for the NVQ and for key skills. For large groups of learners, there are two workshops a week. Learners receive a timetable so that they are aware of the content of each session well in advance. Learners can start at any time of the year. For those who are unable to attend during the week, there are evening and Saturday workshops. Assessors provide individual support for learners during their visits. Learning packs and other resources, including information technology (IT) facilities, are available at each of the centres. Learners receive a certificate for every workshop attended. All learners are expected to attend first aid, food hygiene and child protection training, although this is not currently a requirement for modern apprentices. Extra sessions are held for literacy and numeracy for learners with additional needs.

22. On-the-job training is good for most learners. JACE has drawn up a training checklist, which learners use with their workplace supervisor, to ensure that they achieve competence in a wide range of practical skills. The checklists are used particularly effectively in the training provider's own nurseries. All learners have a supervisor or mentor in the workplace. There is good informal contact between the workplace supervisor and the assessor. Most supervisors receive a copy of each assessment plan and understand what the learners need to provide as evidence. Employers receive a comprehensive information pack on training requirements.

23. Support for learners is good. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Assessors are accessible, helpful and approachable. Trainers are aware of the diverse needs of the learners and tailor their teaching accordingly. Learners receive a thorough five-day induction, covering equal opportunities, health and safety and a detailed introduction to the programme they are following. Employed learners who are unable to attend receive a short induction in their workplace. Supporting paperwork is comprehensive. Learners evaluate every induction session and any issues raised are tackled by staff at the head office. The fortnightly reviews in the first eight weeks of the

programme give learners good support when it is most needed. Assessors continue to review learners' progress frequently, often once a month. But employers are not sufficiently involved in the review process. Short-term action-planning with learners is thorough. The assessor agrees detailed action plans so that learners are clear about what they need to achieve. There is good support for learners with additional learning needs. For example, there is specific support for literacy and numeracy, and a support session for level 1 NVQ and NVQ-only learners, run by a tutor experienced in additional needs. Assessors also give extra support to learners with additional needs. JACE offers drop-in opportunities for learners to talk over problems, and learners are able to contact their assessor or the centre at any time. Counselling is available for learners, and parents are involved if appropriate.

24. Recruitment and induction are comprehensive. Learners are recruited through direct enquiry, jobcentres, careers offices and events, and local and national advertisements. JACE has good contacts with officers in pupil-referral units and with local schools. A preparatory course is effective in attracting applications from learners who wish to investigate further training. All learners have a formal interview, and all staff involved in interviewing learners have good knowledge of modern apprenticeships and NVQs. The applicant is matched to suitable training. All learners complete literacy and numeracy tests. The results are used to identify individual requirements and additional learning needs. Some staff have had training to ensure that this process is carried out effectively.

25. There is a good range of resources. All of JACE's sites are attractive and welcoming, particularly the main site. Training rooms are well equipped. There are good displays of learners' work, which reflect their skills and understanding. In the training centres there is a particularly wide range of learning resources that covers background knowledge and practical aspects of training. There are sufficient learning packs. All centres have modern computers, with staff available to enable learners to use them effectively. Learners have easy access to these resources. Every centre has a full set of teaching notes for tutors. The notes are reviewed and updated annually. There is consistency in the content of what is taught across all centres. Training notes are well presented, although some contain spelling errors. Staff are well qualified for their training and assessing roles. They have a wide range of professional experience.

26. There is a good amount of observation by assessors. But JACE rely too much on written evidence in some portfolios. They are over-complicated, containing large amounts of unnecessary documents. Learners are required to produce written evidence based on comprehensive assessment plans, as well as reflective accounts, evidence logs and scrap books of evidence. The more able learners cope with these requirements, but many learners find the assessment plans complicated, and have difficulty in completing the work. They rely on the assessor's action-planning to break the plans down into manageable activities. Some assessors and learners do not use the assessment plans because they find it easier to plan assessments using the NVQ standards. There is a good amount of observation by assessors. A number of observation log sheets are very brief. Not all assessors plan for assessments, so learners are not always fully aware of

which performance criteria they need to demonstrate during an observation. Some evidence is missed during observations. Not all learners understand how written information provides evidence for NVQs. Some find it difficult to monitor the evidence against the NVQ requirements. New monitoring sheets have been introduced to simplify the procedure. Some learners are slow to achieve complete units.

27. In 2000-01, achievement rates for the foundation modern apprenticeship framework were low. There has been a slight fall in achievement levels for advanced modern apprentices over the past three years. Sixty-seven learners have achieved the NVQ but have not yet passed all the key skills tests. Only 12 have achieved the full framework. Fifty per cent of learners have additional learning needs. They find the tests difficult, especially the application of number, despite receiving additional support. These weaknesses are not recognised in the self-assessment report.

Good Practice

JACE has developed an innovative and effective board game that can be used in a number of different ways with potential applicants for learning programmes. Applicants are involved in a number of activities which help them to determine whether they are suited to dealing with young children. There are no winners or losers and participants can decide their level of involvement. The game provides opportunities for selecting potential learners without tests or interviews. The game can be extended to form a team-building exercise and provides opportunities for learners to develop communication skills.