

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Joint Learning Partnership**

**02 March 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged 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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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.

## Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Joint Learning Partnership**

### **Contents**

#### **Summary**

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for Joint Learning Partnership	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	3
Key Findings	3
What learners like about Joint Learning Partnership	9
What learners think Joint Learning Partnership could improve	9

#### **Detailed inspection findings**

Leadership and management	10
Equality of opportunity	12
Quality improvement	13
Retail and commercial enterprise	15
Preparation for life and work	21
Business administration and law	24

# INSPECTION REPORT

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Joint Learning Partnership (JLP) is a privately owned training provider which was established in 1996. Two directors and a recently employed general manager make up the senior management team. There are four training managers and 14 trainers and assessors who manage the apprenticeship and national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes in administration, customer service, and distribution, business management and the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme. There are six independently employed trainers who manage and assess hospitality and catering, and some administration, customer service and retail NVQ programmes through a joint partnership arrangement.

2. There are 216 apprentices, 49 advanced apprentices, 56 NVQ learners and 17 E2E learners, who are funded by Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and a national contract for a large retail organisation. Merseyside and Greater Manchester Local Education Authority's (LEA's) fund six, year 10 and 11 school pupils through their 'impact programme' to provide an alternative vocational curriculum. Sixty per cent of JLP's learners are employed in Merseyside and the surrounding area.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** JLP's leadership and management and the arrangements for equality of opportunity are good, while the arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. Provision is good in retail and commercial enterprise, preparation for life and work and business administration and law. Provision is satisfactory in hospitality and catering.

4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is partially inclusive. Operational managers and their staff write the report against the Common Inspection Framework. Grades are agreed as part of a validation meeting. However, employers' and learners' views are not included in the report. Few of the judgements in leadership and management match the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspectors. Strengths and weaknesses in occupational areas are repetitive and many are no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified some of the same strengths as those in the self-assessment report, but few of the weaknesses identified by inspectors are included in the report. The development plan is sufficiently detailed and matches the judgements in the self-assessment report. The plan was updated just before inspection and many of the actions are complete.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** JLP has good strategies to promote continuous improvement. All staff and subcontractors have individual accountability targets that are evaluated regularly as part of an effective appraisal and review system. The operational management in all areas of learning is good and is supported by particularly effective employer involvement in teaching and learning. JLP is aware of the insufficiently thorough or standardised approach in monitoring quality policies and procedures, and is currently developing systems to support an organisational

approach to quality improvement.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP:

- improve the retention and achievement reports available to operational managers
- improve the promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace
- continue the development of a 'skills for life' strategy
- improve the learners' review process
- maintain the strong employer involvement in training
- continue the standardisation of quality improvement monitoring

## GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>			<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution</b>		<b>2</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	30	2	
NVQ training for young people	15	2	
<b>Hospitality and catering</b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	74	3	

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>			<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Employability training</b>		<b>2</b>	
Entry to Employment	17	2	

Business administration and law		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Administration</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	41	2
NVQ training for adults	2	2
<b>Customer service</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	120	2
NVQ training for adults	39	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. Provision in retail and commercial enterprise, business administration and law, and preparation for life and work was reported on and graded. JLP's training programmes in information and communications technology were not reported on or graded. Evidence was collected from this area to support judgements in leadership and management.

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	24
Number of learners interviewed	42
Number of staff interviewed	27
Number of employers interviewed	13
Number of subcontractors interviewed	6
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	6

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

**7. Retention and achievements rates are particularly good on NVQs in customer service and warehousing and distribution.** Ninety per cent of learners on NVQs in customer service achieved their qualification during 2003-04, and in 2004-05, 93 per cent achieved the qualification and 3 per cent are still in learning. NVQ warehousing and distribution achievement rates in 2003-04 are 78 per cent, with 11 per cent still in learning.

**8. Learners on the e-NVQ programme in business administration are making very good progress.** The software has effective systems that the learners use to monitor progress, and plan learning and assessments. Learners on hospitality apprenticeship programmes are making good progress towards the full framework. Of the 29 apprentices who should complete the framework in July 2006, 17 are ahead of target and one learner has already completed it. Progression rates for hospitality and catering learners are good. Of the current 29 learners on the level 3 NVQ, 12 have progressed from the level 2 NVQ.

## JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

9. **Progression rates are good for E2E learners.** In 2005-06, 50 per cent of learners have gained a job or have started a further education programme, with 42 per cent still in learning. Achievement rates in key skills communication are good, but none of the learners have achieved the key skills in application of number.

10. **Learners develop good skills in retailing and wholesaling and hospitality and catering.** These adequately meet employers' requirements and learners' needs in their existing employment. Learners work independently and effectively and some are promoted into more demanding job roles. On E2E programmes, learners develop good social and interpersonal skills.

11. Achievement rates for apprentices in business administration and customer service, retailing and wholesaling, warehousing and distribution and hospitality and catering programmes are satisfactory. Achievement rates for business administration are 45 per cent for 2003-04 with a further 3 per cent still in learning. Achievements rates in retailing and wholesaling are 43 per cent for 2003-04, and in hospitality they are 39 per cent, with a further 4 per cent still in learning.

12. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Portfolios contain an appropriate range of evidence which shows that the learners are achieving a good level of competence. The NVQ portfolios in warehousing and distribution demonstrate an understanding of a good range of topics. Learners are motivated to complete good work.

13. **The framework completion rate is low but improving for advanced apprentices.** Between 2002 and 2004, 11 per cent of learners completed the framework and 37 per cent are still in learning.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Retail and commercial enterprise	0	1	1	0	2
Preparation for life and work	0	6	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

14. **Learners benefit from good training.** Schemes of work on the E2E programmes are detailed and identify a broad range of learning activities. Training delivered at employers' premises for apprentices is effectively planned to complement the employers' own training. Assessors use effective practical workplace examples to provide good support and guidance through the NVQ requirements. Employers and JLP's staff work together to deliver some aspects of training.

15. **Assessors provide good coaching during their regular visits to learners.** All assessors on the business administration and customer service programmes have, or are working towards, a coaching module from a level 3 learning and development qualification.

16. **Most employers provide on-the-job training that is well planned.** Employers provide a good level of work experience including job rotation, to ensure that learners can meet all the requirements of the NVQ.



**17. Most of the employers offer very good support for learners and allow time in work for research, tutorials and portfolio work.** Most of the learners have access to some form of learning centre in the workplace for internet research and study. Some employers have a learendirect access point that can be used by the learners.

**18. Learners on all programmes receive particularly good support from the provider.** Staff respond promptly to learners' needs relating to the curriculum as well as personal, social and development needs. Assessors provide particularly good and very flexible arrangements to support learning and assessment. Learners are able to contact assessors by mobile telephone or online. JLP has a good working relationship with employers and with Connexions and uses these to support learners.

**19. Initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs on E2E programmes is particularly good.** Learners complete a variety of diagnostic assessments and are reassessed at key times throughout the programme to measure improvement. Adequate arrangements are in place for the initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and key skills on hospitality and catering, and business administration and customer service programmes. However, initial assessment and additional learning support for learners in retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution is inadequate. Most of the learners have an initial assessment, with the exception of some NVQ learners. Learners who need additional support receive extra help from assessors. However, assessors are not trained to deliver training in literacy, numeracy and language and do not have access to specialist materials.

**20.** Assessors use a sufficient range of assessment methods for the NVQ. Assessment visits are carried out every two weeks and extra visits are offered if needed. Assessments are planned to meet the demands of the workplace and cause minimal disruptions. Assessment in hospitality and catering is planned at times that best suit the industry, many outside the working day.

**21.** Appropriate advice and guidance is given to learners to help them choose the appropriate level of programme. Induction to the business administration, retailing, warehousing and distribution programmes is adequate for most learners, but it is brief and some subjects are covered superficially. Learners find the amount of information difficult to absorb in such a short time.

**22. Review practices are weak in retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution, business administration, and customer service.** There is insufficient clarity between assessment action-planning and the review process. Few employers are involved in the reviews and some have an insufficient understanding of the requirements of the review process.

## **Leadership and management**

**23. JLP has particularly good collaborative partnerships that provide very effective short-term programmes for E2E learners.** In partnership with another local provider, JLP has been successful in gaining European Social Funding to support a 'first steps to employment' programme which is due to start in April 2006. JLP has a number of very effective partnerships with subcontractors to deliver the apprenticeship programmes.

## JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

**24. Very effective business planning sets clear and detailed business objectives.**

Partnership agreements with subcontractors contain very specific achievement targets and expected quality improvement practices. Retention and achievement rates have improved in the past three years.

**25. Programme management is particularly effective in retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution and hospitality and catering.** Staff are particularly enthusiastic and well motivated towards clearly defined aims. Assessors and subcontractors work as a team. Detailed service level agreements between JLP and joint partnership staff give clear guidance on areas of responsibility and performance targets. The co-ordination and management of E2E, business administration and customer service programmes is satisfactory.

**26. Senior managers have developed a very strong culture of shared responsibility and team support.** All aspects of business planning are shared with the operational management team. Staff who work for subcontractors are given the same opportunities for training and development as JLP's staff. JLP has a well-considered work-life balance policy.

**27. Communication between JLP and employers is particularly good.** Training and coaching plans complement the existing employer training in the workplace. Assessors spend time with employers during the frequent assessment visits. Staff are committed to the promotion of good working relationships with employers. Extra-curriculum activities such as 'masterclasses' at a local college, are open to employers.

**28. Staff development is good.** Individual staff training is identified through an annual appraisal system. New staff have a thorough induction to company policies and procedures. Training in health and safety, fire safety and equal opportunities is given in the first few weeks of employment.

**29. JLP's new premises are well designed and resources and facilities are good.** Training rooms are well resourced and comfortable. Learners and staff are encouraged to be environmentally friendly through recycling paper and aluminium cans. Resources for apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory. Most of the learners in large organisations have access to some form of learning centre in the workplace for internet research and study.

**30.** The collection and use of feedback from learners and employers is satisfactory. After the first six weeks on a programme, the employer receives a courtesy call by the marketing team. The member of staff checks that they have had their first visit and have received all the appropriate paperwork. Questionnaires are sent to employers twice a year and learners complete questionnaires after six months and at the end of training. Responses to the questionnaires are good with 85 per cent of employers stating that the training is good.

**31. The collection of data on learners' progress, retention and achievement is not used effectively** to analyse progress towards framework completion. Few reports are generated to help operational managers identify learners' progress against targets. Managers develop reports independently of the system and at times have difficulty recognising and owning the management reports.

**32. The literacy and numeracy and language needs of apprentices and NVQ learners are**

**not adequately supported.** Apprentices who have good results with general certificates of secondary education (GCSE) are not always given literacy and numeracy assessments. Initial assessment of NVQ learners is inadequate, with many not having the opportunity of diagnostic assessment. Occupational specialists are not qualified to offer training in literacy and numeracy. Staff who deliver the E2E programmes are insufficiently qualified in literacy, numeracy and language skills. A planned organisational skills for life strategy will qualify all tutors supporting learners literacy and numeracy development to level 3 key skills.

33. Equality and diversity are very well promoted to learners who attend the training centre. However, **the promotion of equal opportunities to learners in the workplace is insufficient.** The review document does not encourage discussion and uses closed questions that do not extend learners' understanding of applying equality and diversity to their work situation.

34. **The monitoring of practices and procedures is not sufficiently managed,** or thorough enough to support a standard approach across all areas of training. Some aspects of key weaknesses from the previous inspection have not sufficiently improved. JLP has recognised that its quality monitoring processes are insufficient and is developing new audit practices.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- very effective involvement in collaborative partnerships and projects
- particularly good business planning
- particularly strong culture of shared responsibility and team support
- good training centre resources to promote equal opportunities
- good support to enable learners to succeed

### Weaknesses

- poor use of data to monitor learners' progress
- insufficient literacy and numeracy support for learners
- insufficient monitoring of quality procedures
- poor promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace

## Retail and commercial enterprise

### Retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rates on warehousing and distribution programmes
- good standard of training
- strong employer links
- particularly effective programme management

*Weaknesses*

- inadequate arrangements for additional learning support
- weak progress reviews

***Hospitality and catering***

*Strengths*

- good progress on apprenticeship programmes
- particularly good support for learners
- good programme management

*Weaknesses*

- low achievement rates for advanced apprentices
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities during progress reviews

**Preparation for life and work**

***Employability training***

*Strengths*

- good progression rates
- particularly good teaching and learning
- good use of initial assessment results
- particularly effective support for learners

*Weaknesses*

- insufficiently qualified staff for teaching literacy and numeracy skills

**Business administration and law**

*Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement rates for customer service NVQ programmes
- very good progress by e-NVQ learners
- particularly flexible arrangements to support assessment and learning
- good communication with employers

*Weaknesses*

- weak review practices
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP:**

- assessors are good at explaining things and are very patient
- the friendly and approachable staff
- very knowledgeable assessors
- getting a qualification while working
- frequent contact by assessors, sometimes out of hours
- flexible approach by assessors - they are always happy to re-arrange visits to fit in with work pressures
- being treated as an individual
- 'I have improved my confidence and communication skills'
- 'doing an apprenticeship doesn't just help at work, it helps me deal with real life situations'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP COULD IMPROVE:**

- clearer explanation at the beginning of the programme
- 'more information about what else JLP does and what is available to me'
- the website for the e-NVQ is very complicated and can be confusing
- more training in writing
- more group training sessions

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- very effective involvement in collaborative partnerships and projects
- particularly good business planning
- particularly strong culture of shared responsibility and team support
- good training centre resources to promote equal opportunities
- good support to enable learners to succeed

#### Weaknesses

- poor use of data to monitor learners' progress
- insufficient literacy and numeracy support for learners
- insufficient monitoring of quality procedures
- poor promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace

35. JLP has particularly good collaborative partnerships and projects arrangements. In line with JLP's strategic plan of working with disadvantaged groups, a number of very effective short-term partnerships have been formed to run pre-E2E projects. Innovative projects include a company which has a professional editing suite to help learners make short films about social and environmental issues. Learners were part of a television garden project linked to a flower show which was televised locally throughout the week. Current learners are working with an eco-centre, looking at environmental issues and planning exhibitions. In partnership with another local provider, JLP has been successful in gaining European Social Funding to support a 'first steps to employment' programme which is due to start in April 2006. JLP subcontracts a number of apprenticeship programmes to small companies who are located in the same geographical area as the learners. The partnerships are very well managed, with clear and well-established practices and procedures. Learners benefit from assessors being located close to their place of employment, particularly in hospitality, where assessors schedule assessment visits to suit the industry and the learners, often in unsocial hours.

36. Very effective business planning is improving retention and achievement rates. The company has clear and detailed business objectives that are set after careful consideration of external and internal influences. All potential contracts, including the LSC contracts, are set against financial budgets and risk-assessed, using models that predict the funding implications of under- or over-recruitment of learners. Partnership agreements with subcontractors include payments which are linked to achievement targets and quality improvement practices. Other agreements include outcomes such as framework success rates against target, reduction of non-funded learners and reducing average length of stay to initiate bonus payments. Retention and achievement rates have improved in the past three years. Although there is little change in the achievement rates for advanced apprentices, the rates for apprentices have improved from 28 per cent in 2002-03 to 43 per cent in 2003-04. The achievement rates for NVQ programmes have improved from 50

per cent in 2002-03 to 87 per cent in 2004-05. The number of learners leaving their programmes early have reduced on all programmes. Fifteen of the 19 advanced apprentices and 85 of the 102 apprentices who started during 2005-06 are still in learning. All 49 of the NVQ learners are still in learning.

37. Senior managers have developed a very strong culture of shared responsibility and team support. All aspects of business planning are shared with the operational management team. Budgets are open and, where possible, devolved to the operational managers who are responsible for each area of learning. Staff who work for subcontractors are given the same opportunities for training and development as JLP's staff. JLP has a well-considered work-life balance policy that encourages staff to use flexible working to incorporate family and other commitments. A member of staff who has small children heard of JLP's approach to work-life balance and took a drop in salary to work with the company. As a closure to the week, directors supply a light buffet for staff and subcontractors. Staff use this as a drop-in session for social and teambuilding time. It is always well attended.

38. New staff have a thorough induction which includes company policies and procedures. Training in health and safety, fire safety and equal opportunities is given within the first few weeks of employment. Staff performance is monitored through weekly feedback meetings throughout the probationary period of six months. Line managers measure staff performance against an agreed criteria using the job description and individually negotiated performance targets.

39. Staff development is good. The staff development plan outlines the company's annual training to meet the objectives in the business plan. Individual staff training is identified through an annual appraisal system. The company supports all training costs for courses that meet business needs and gives an additional allowance towards other training.

40. Management of health and safety is good. A member of staff is responsible for the management of health and safety and they have externally accredited health and safety qualifications at level 3. All staff have a basic health and safety and risk assessment qualification. A health and safety manual includes health and safety procedures, identifies staff responsibilities and gives good practical guidelines. Accidents and incidents are clearly reported at the training centre and at work placements.

41. Data software is not used effectively to analyse progress towards framework completion for individuals or groups of learners. A very effective management information system is used to comply with the LSC's contract for the apprenticeship programmes. Few reports are generated as standard practice to help operational managers forecast learners' progress against targets. Managers develop reports independently of the system and at times have difficulty recognising and owning the management system reports.

42. The literacy, numeracy and language needs of apprentices and NVQ learners are not adequately supported. Apprentices who have good GCSE results are not always given literacy and numeracy assessments before starting the programme or during induction. Initial assessment for NVQ learners is inadequate, as many do not have their support needs assessed at the beginning of their programme. Literacy and numeracy workbooks are available, but these are kept at the training centre. Without diagnostic assessment, occupational tutors are not fully aware of the specific support required. Occupational



specialists support the literacy and numeracy needs of apprentices in retail and business management, but they are not qualified to do so. Learners in some large companies have additional support as part of the company training or through contracts with other providers. In March 2006, JLP intends to introduce a new strategy for literacy and numeracy that incorporates the regional and national priority targets.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

43. Resources and facilities at the training centre are good and promote equal opportunities to learners and staff. JLP's new premises have been well designed and meet the legislative requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. Well-displayed posters throughout the premises promote equal opportunities, anti-bullying and harassment, and positive behaviour. A 'bullying box' allows learners to report concerns anonymously. JLP's zero tolerance towards bullying is well publicised throughout the premises. Effective use of noticeboards gives learners good information on helplines, such as those on drug misuse, sexual health, pregnancy, alcoholism and binge drinking and homelessness. Facilities for learners are good. A small kitchen is available for learners to make breakfast and the facilities are used to promote independent living skills. Learners have their own common room and vending machine for snacks and drinks. Training rooms are well resourced and comfortable. Learners and staff are encouraged to be environmentally friendly through recycling of paper and aluminium cans.

44. Staff provide good support to help learners succeed. Pastoral support is very effective. An out-of-hours telephone number for learners to use in emergencies is well publicised. Staff frequently attend external meetings with learners to give them support and guidance. The E2E learners who are living independently are taken shopping by staff to help them manage on a budget. Good use is made of the 'cause for concern form', which identifies problems and support mechanisms to help learners continue with and achieve their qualifications. Examples include accelerating the programme for pregnant learners and extending time periods for qualifications where appropriate. On NVQ programmes, the assessor visits the workplace in the evening and at weekends to fit in with the learners' work pattern. Publicity materials are translated into other languages.

45. JLP's equal opportunities policies and procedures are effective. Policies are reviewed and updated annually. Police checks are regularly carried out and reviewed for all staff who work with E2E learners. Risk assessments are carried out on the learners' workplaces and for external visits. However, no risk assessment or procedure is available to cover staff when making home visits to learners. Employers are effectively monitored to ensure that they conform to statutory requirements. Complaints are well recorded and are responded to efficiently and effectively.

46. Staff training is frequent. All staff have participated in internally and externally accredited equality and diversity courses. However, staff training has not sufficiently improved the NVQ learners' experience and understanding of these topics. Equal opportunity data is used effectively to measure success rates by age, gender, ethnicity and recruitment of different groups. Data is compared with regional and national statistics and is used to set improvement targets.

47. Equality and diversity are very well promoted to learners who attend the training centre. However, the promotion of equal opportunities to learners in the workplace is



insufficient. Insufficient emphasis is placed on equality and diversity at progress reviews. The review document does not encourage discussion and uses closed questions that do not extend learners' understanding of applying equality and diversity to their work situation. All learners receive appropriate equality and diversity information at induction.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

48. JLP has well-established quality assurance policies and procedures. Staff and subcontractors have open access to all policies as online documents on the intranet and as hard copies in the centre. Operational managers and their teams evaluate and amend policies and procedures each year as part of the self-assessment process. Senior managers approve all changes.

49. JLP has some good strategies for gathering and using information for quality improvement purposes. Weaknesses in the self-assessment report are collated with business plan objectives to form a quality improvement plan. JLP has developed a software programme that schedules the quality improvement plan by target date, giving managers monthly lists of activities which are due for completion. The system also provides financial forecasts linked to monthly reports on learner numbers. In its present form, the report is overly complex and JLP is currently modifying it to be more useful to operational managers.

50. The collection and use of feedback from learners and employers is satisfactory. Views are gained regularly through formal questionnaires and informal discussions. Learners are asked to complete a questionnaire after the first six months and at the end of the training. All learners who leave before the end of training complete an early leaver questionnaire. Reports from questionnaires are discussed at managers' meetings and, where appropriate, action is taken. After the first six weeks of a learner's programme, the employer receives a courtesy call by the marketing team. The staff member checks that they have had their first visit and received all the appropriate paperwork. The directors visit employers regularly to maintain personal contact and to gather the employers' views on the training provision. Questionnaires are sent to employers twice a year and 85 per cent of employers state that the training is good. However, the questionnaires do not collect sufficiently detailed and useful information. JLP is in the process of rephrasing questions so they are more evaluative and detailed.

51. Internal verification is satisfactory. Verification activities are planned appropriately. Suitable sampling plans include observations of assessors and verification activities in excess of awarding body requirements. Assessor standardisation meetings are frequent and well recorded. Internal verifiers work closely with managers and inform them if learners are making slow progress towards their qualification.

52. Observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Observations include teaching, coaching and reviews and they are carried out at the training centre and in the workplace. The observations are adequately recorded and include recommendation for improvements. However, very few observations are graded and there is no formally monitored action plan to help staff improve their practice.

53. The self-assessment process is satisfactory with all staff appropriately involved. Operational managers write their areas of learning reports in consultation with their staff against the Common Inspection Framework. Grades are agreed as part of a validation meeting involving all levels of management. Some of the content is overly descriptive and

## JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

insufficiently evaluative. Very few judgements in leadership and management match the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection. Strengths and weaknesses in occupational areas are repetitive and many are no more than normal practice. Some of the strengths matched those identified by inspectors, but few of the weaknesses match those in the self-assessment report. The development plan is detailed and matches the self-assessment judgements. The plan was updated just before inspection and many of the actions are complete.

54. The monitoring of practices and procedures is not sufficiently managed or thorough enough to support improvements in quality across all areas of training. Actions have been taken to improve the quality of provision, but some key weaknesses from the previous inspection have not sufficiently improved. For example, short-term target-setting is now good, but there are still weaknesses in the use of long-term targets. Initial and diagnostic assessment is inconsistent and some support needs are not being met. The promotion of equal opportunities was a significant weakness at the previous inspection and it is still a key weakness. Progress reviews are still not promoting equality of opportunity well enough. JLP has recognised that its quality monitoring processes are insufficient and is developing new audit processes.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Retail and commercial enterprise

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	30	2
NVQ training for young people	15	2
<b>Hospitality and catering</b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	74	3

55. In hospitality and catering, JLP offers apprenticeships and NVQ programmes in food and bar service, food preparation and cooking, reception and hospitality supervision at levels 2 and 3 across the Greater Merseyside area. There are 74 learners, of whom 29 are advanced apprentices and 45 are apprentices. The programme is planned and delivered by subcontracted staff working in a joint venture with JLP. JLP recruits directly from the hospitality industry and all learners are employed when they start the programme. Employers who use JLP as their training provider range from restaurants, leisure complexes, clubs, residential care homes, fast food outlets, public houses and hotels. Most of the occupational training is carried out in the workplace by supervisors and managers. Joint Partnership staff visit learners every two weeks in the workplace for assessment and progress reviews. Learners attend a local college to complete the hospitality technical certificate. Some learners attend JLP's premises for additional training and support for the technical certificates and key skills. Initial assessment, induction and key skills development take place at the learners' workplace by JLP's staff. The operational manager responsible for hospitality and catering works with the two JLP assessors and verifiers to quality assure the programmes.

56. JLP provides training and assessment for apprenticeships in retailing and warehousing. They also provide for NVQ-only programmes at levels 2 and 3 in warehousing and distribution. There are 19 apprentices in retailing and 11 in warehousing and distribution. Fifteen learners are on the NVQ-only warehousing and distribution programme. All learners are employed, most by well-known large companies.

57. Employers provide learners with work experience and training. JLP provides small group and individual coaching at employers' premises. Induction is completed at the employer's premises and includes advice and guidance on the appropriate NVQ and the levels and optional units available. All NVQ assessments take place in the workplace. Assessors meet learners every two weeks or more frequently if necessary, to deliver training and carry out assessments. At each visit, a progress review also takes place. An operational team manager, assisted by six assessors, manages the training. One lead internal verifier and one senior assessor provide the internal verification. A subcontractor delivers the retail programme under a joint partnership arrangement. The subcontractor employs one assessor. The internal verification of subcontracted provision is carried out by the subcontractor through the JLP quality assurance process.

## Retailing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution

### Strengths

- good achievement rates on warehousing and distribution programmes
- good standard of training
- strong employer links
- particularly effective programme management

### Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for additional learning support
- weak progress reviews

### Achievement and standards

58. Achievement rates on the warehousing and distribution programmes are good. In 2003-04, there were 62 starts and 90 per cent of those learners completed the programme. In 2004-05, 76 learners started and 93 per cent achieved a qualification, with 3 per cent still in learning. In 2004-05, the achievement rate was 38 per cent, but 30 per cent are still in learning. Many of these learners have nearly completed their programme and are making good progress towards their qualifications. Retailing programmes are satisfactory with a 43 per cent achievement rate in 2003-04. Achievement rates for advanced apprentices have been poor. None of the three advanced apprentices who were recruited in the past two years have completed their training.

59. Learners develop a good range of effective skills in retailing and warehousing skills. These adequately meet employers' requirements and learners' needs in their existing employment. Their skills include maintaining shop stocks at required levels and good manual handling skills in warehousing. Learners are progressing satisfactorily and have increased their confidence and enthusiasm. Learners are well motivated to complete their programmes and wish to progress further. Good evidence is collected from a wide range of activities in the workplace, demonstrating a high level of competence. The good NVQ portfolios reflect the range of training taking place and the learners' skills and motivation.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	14		29		7	100										
Retained*	0		10		2	29										
Successfully completed	0		2		3	43										
Still in learning	13		17		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		14		9											
Retained*	0		11		8											
Successfully completed	0		8		7											
Still in learning	12		2		1											

\*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

## The quality of provision

60. Learners benefit from good training, which meets employers' requirements and learners' needs through a range of flexibly planned activities. Well-planned off-the-job training is delivered by assessors on the employers' premises. This supplements the effective training provided by the employers. Formal lessons are short and very effective with clear objectives. Teaching is good and tutors give clear and concise information. The lessons effectively develop learners' knowledge and understanding of the NVQ and support the achievement of key skills. In one key skills communication lesson, the tutor used work-based practical problems which learners could relate to. These courses are well planned and effectively taught using well-prepared projects and exercises. Assessors also offer good coaching during their regular visits to learners. Most of the employers provide well-planned on-the-job training and learners are required to meet competency standards. Although these standards are those of the employer they are frequently linked to the NVQ. At one large warehouse, the on-the-job training is particularly effective and includes the use of well-designed log books.

61. Strong links are established between JLP and the organisations which employ the learners. The employers are committed to the apprenticeship framework and to the NVQ programmes. The assessors frequently participate in the employers' own training and build very effective partnerships with the employers. Employers provide a good level of work experience, including job rotation, to ensure that learners can meet the NVQ requirements. Employers give assessors good feedback on learners and many comment on the effectiveness of the training. One large warehousing organisation is able to identify the good effect on the company and the learners after changes and improvements made by JLP in the past three years.

62. Induction to the programmes is adequate for most learners, but it is brief and some subjects are only covered superficially. Advice and guidance is effective and meets learners' needs but employers provide most of the personal and pastoral support. Assessment of NVQs is satisfactory. Assessors use a range of assessment methods including direct observation, witness testimonies, personal statements, product evidence and professional discussion.

63. The arrangements for additional learning support are inadequate. Although most of the apprentices have an diagnostic assessment, some are not given the appropriate literacy and numeracy assessments. NVQ learners do not have a diagnostic assessment at all. Learners who need additional support are given extra help by assessors. However, the assessors are not qualified to deliver training in literacy, numeracy and language and do not

have access to specialist training materials.

64. Progress reviews are weak. Assessors complete a review at every visit, but they are brief and take place too frequently to have a significant effect. Employers are not present at the review and are not given a copy of the paperwork. The reviews do not include long-term planning of training and assessment. The individual learning plans are not updated.

### **Leadership and management**

65. The programme management is particularly effective. Staff are enthusiastic and well motivated and have clearly defined aims. Assessors and subcontractors work as a team. Internal and external communications are good. Meetings are very effective and are held at regular intervals. Assessors and learners benefit from sharing good practice. Staff appraisals are carried out every six months and assessors are set demanding and measurable targets. Good development training is arranged to suit individual needs. Subcontracted staff also benefit from JLP's staff training.

66. The internal verification arrangements are effective and ensure consistency between assessors. Well-planned standardisation meetings are held every month. Assessors are encouraged to develop their occupational skills and to become qualified. Assessors do not promote equal opportunities. The learners' understanding of equality is not assessed and there is no formal instruction in this subject except at induction.

### ***Hospitality and catering***

#### *Strengths*

- good progress on apprenticeship programmes
- particularly good support for learners
- good programme management

#### *Weaknesses*

- low achievement rates for advanced apprentices
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities during progress reviews

### **Achievement and standards**

67. Apprentices are making good progress towards completing the full framework. Of the 29 apprentices who are planning to complete the framework in July 2006, 17 are ahead of target and indications are that they will complete well before their planned end date. Progression rates are good. Of the current 29 level 3 learners, 12 have progressed from level 2 qualifications. Retention rates are satisfactory and improving for apprentices. In 2002-03, 75 per cent of apprentices left the programme early without achieving their qualification. Of the 56 apprentices who started in 2004-05, 27 are still in learning and two have achieved the qualification. All of the apprentices who started in 2005-06 are still in learning. The retention rate for advanced apprentices is showing some improvement from an average of 53 per cent leaving their programme early in 2004-05, to 25 per cent for 2005-06. The framework completion rate is historically low for advanced apprentices but it is improving. At the time of the previous inspection, none of the advanced apprentices

had completed the full framework for 1999-2000, although 50 per cent were still in learning. During 2002-04, 11 per cent completed the framework and 37 per cent are still in learning. Apprentice success rates have improved from 20 per cent in 2002-03 to 39 per cent in 2003-04 and 8 per cent are still in learning. All advanced apprentices are making satisfactory to good progress.

68. Many of the learners have good practical skills as well as a full understanding of related theories and principles. Learners work independently and effectively and some have been promoted into more demanding jobs. Learners' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory and contain a range of evidence such as observations, responses to written questions and some good work products.

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

Inspection:

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12		23		17		15									
Retained*	0		12		5		7									
Successfully completed	0		0		1		5									
Still in learning	9		12		5		3									

\*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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	14		56		49		25	100								
Retained*	0		29		24		4	16								
Successfully completed	0		2		19		5	20								
Still in learning	14		27		4		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

## The quality of provision

69. Learners on all programmes receive particularly good support. JLP's staff and employers work exceptionally well as a team to help learners stay in learning and complete their qualifications. Together they have supported learners who have a range of personal, behavioural and learning problems. All learners have immediate access to their tutors and assessors either at JLP's premises, through regular and frequent visits in the workplace or by mobile telephone and e-mail. Employers are involved in the review of learners' progress and the communication between JLP's staff and employers is good.

70. Workplaces offer a supportive environment for personal development and assessment opportunities. Many of the learners are part of a working team and are given challenging, demanding roles and responsibilities that promote confidence and develop skills. Some employers have their own in-house training programmes that are modified to match the



requirements of the qualifications.

71. Planned on-the-job training is satisfactory. Much of the teaching is carried out on an individual basis to meet the needs of the learners. Most learners are given time to develop their portfolios during the working day.

72. Adequate arrangements are in place for the initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and key skills at induction. The tests identify the correct level of qualification for learners. Individual learning needs are identified and JLP's staff give adequate levels of support. Key skills assessments identify the learners' current competence levels and further development is available in the workplace for those who need it. Learners have the option of attending the training centre for individual literacy and numeracy support.

### **Leadership and management**

73. Programme management is very good. Detailed service level agreements give clear guidance on areas of responsibility and performance targets. JLP's staff are well supported by JLP and have access to all JLP's learning resources and support facilities. JLP's staff are invited to all internal and external staff development activities and are included in all staff communications. Management is well structured with clear targets and expectations that do not restrict the flexibility and autonomy of staff to manage the programme for the benefit of learners. For example, staff encourage learners to contact them outside working hours if the matter is urgent. Work-based assessments are completed at times that best suit learners, many of which are during unsocial hours. Staff are committed to developing learners' skills and knowledge while promoting good working relationships with employers. A recent example of this is a series of 'masterclasses' at a local college that were well attended by learners and their employers. Formal and informal communications are good between JLP's operational managers and staff. Retention and achievement targets are set and monitored during the three-monthly progress review meetings. Learners who are at risk of leaving early are discussed and appropriate action is taken. The partnership has developed well in the past seven years and the number of learners has increased.

74. Internal verification is satisfactory. The sampling plan is updated every month and individual units are verified. Assessments and learners' interviews are observed regularly and assessors receive adequate written feedback and action points for improvement.

75. Equality is insufficiently promoted during progress reviews. Bullying, harassment and discrimination are included in discussions, but equality and diversity in the workplace are not further explored.



**Preparation for life and work****Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Employability training</i></b> Entry to Employment	17	<b>2</b> 2

76. JLP has been offering foundation programmes since 2001 and E2E programmes since 2002-03. There are 17 E2E learners. Most learners are on the programme for 22 weeks, but this occasionally varies depending upon the needs of the learner. Learners are referred to the programme by Connexions and the youth offending team. They can join the programme at any time during the year. Learners have an introductory interview, induction and initial assessment to identify their individual learning needs and goals. A foundation manager is supported by one E2E tutor, a support worker and a teaching assistant. A range of key skills qualifications are offered to E2E learners. Additional learning sessions increase personal, vocational and social development of learners as part of the three key strands of E2E.

***Employability training****Strengths*

- good progression rates
- particularly good teaching and learning
- good use of initial assessment results
- particularly effective support for learners

*Weaknesses*

- insufficiently qualified staff for teaching literacy and numeracy skills

**Achievement and standards**

77. Progression rates are good. In 2005-06, 50 per cent of learners have gained a job or started a further education programme, and 42 per cent are still in learning. Progression rates have improved year on year. Achievement rates in key skills communication are good, but none of the learners have achieved key skills in application of number. Learners develop good social and inter-personal skills through a wide range of curriculum activities. The learners' work is good. Most of the learners' portfolios are well structured and show clear evidence of learning. Good feedback is given to learners on how they can improve their work.

## JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

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

Inspection:

LSC funded work-based learning																
Entry to Employment	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	38		73		84	100	22	100								
Progression <sup>1</sup>	11		34		36	43	11	50								
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	13		49		48	57	17	77								
Still in learning	16		1		0	0	0	0								

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

### The quality of provision

78. Teaching and learning are particularly good with well-planned sessions. The scheme of work is detailed and identifies a broad range of initial and extension learning activities to meet a broad range of learning abilities. Handouts and learning materials are well prepared. Practical sessions are clearly linked to key skills coursework. There is a good rapport between learners and tutors. Tutors place good emphasis on staying safe when preparing learners for practical activities. Good account is taken of prior experience and knowledge when planning training sessions. A range of learning activities encourages learners to participate and good use is made of group discussions. Learners confidently contribute their own experiences to discussions which are well managed by the tutor. Learners have developed their own code of behaviour and conduct and this is adhered to. Learners' understanding and learning is checked regularly. Topical video resources are used to start discussions about citizenship, and learning is extended through role-play and group work. Local employers are used effectively to deliver part of the employment preparation sessions. Learners who have left the programme after progressing to employment or further training also take part in learning sessions and are very positive role models.

79. Staff make good use of a variety of initial assessment methods to identify learners' support needs and to set realistic learning goals. Literacy, numeracy and language needs are assessed at induction and the outcomes are discussed with the learner. Learners are re-assessed at key times throughout the programme to measure improvement. A wide range of additional assessment tools are used to identify learning goals. A computerised key skills diagnostic assessment has been in use since December 2005. Nationally recognised assessment tools are used to identify learning styles, and personal and social development needs. JLP is trialling new assessment methods and staff training is planned on recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) in non-accredited learning.

80. Support for learners is particularly effective. Staff respond to curriculum, personal, social and development needs promptly. JLP has good links with external agencies and uses them for specialist support. Support from Connexions personal advisers is well established and the teams work together well. There is strong support for learners who are ex-offenders through close links with the youth offending team. Learners receive excellent support and guidance on a range of issues including homelessness, pregnancy and drug misuse. An out-of-hours telephone support line is available for learners who find

themselves in emergency situations and have no one else to ask for help. A breakfast club is in operation on weekdays to ensure that learners who are living independently can eat before starting training sessions. Staff also provide good practical support for learners. One learner who was living independently was finding it difficult to manage their money. A tutor went shopping with them to help them learn how to manage on a limited budget.

81. The E2E programme meets the needs of learners. Programmes are based on achieving a range of key skills qualifications. Learners are encouraged to take part in social activities that develop their awareness of local, social and environmental issues. Life skills such as healthy eating, basic cookery, financial budgeting and family planning are important aspects of the programme. Effective partnerships with other training providers allows learners' vocational training needs to be met when JLP does not have the relevant facilities.

### **Leadership and management**

82. Communication is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly and meetings are minuted and identify actions to be carried out. The foundation manager has access to data reports and data is used to set improvement targets for the programme and for staff. Partnership arrangements are used effectively to provide good learning and support opportunities for learners. Learning resources are good. A new information technology suite is well used by learners. Learners' facilities are good, with a breakfast club and a comfortable common room.

83. Equality and diversity are promoted well to learners. Materials are displayed throughout the training centre to promote anti-bullying, anti-harassment and positive behaviour. Training sessions on equality and diversity are regular and are taught well. Tutors encourage learners to share their own experiences in group discussions which are sensitively managed. A learner forum is regularly held to ensure learners' views are represented.

84. The self-assessment report identified some of the strengths identified by inspectors, but further strengths and weaknesses were identified at inspection. The self-assessment grade was one grade lower than the inspection grade.

85. Staff are insufficiently qualified to deliver literacy, numeracy and key skills. Tutors are not aware of the range of professional qualifications available to them. Three staff teach key skills but only one is working toward a key skills qualification in communication. None of the staff are qualified teachers. A skills for life strategy is being developed by the provider and this will form part of an organisational approach to support the literacy and numeracy needs of learners. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Plans include all E2E tutors working towards key skills qualifications, however, this is not yet in place. Plans to develop a subject coach in 2005 have been delayed to 2006.

**Business administration and law****Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Administration</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	41	2
NVQ training for adults	2	2
<b>Customer service</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	120	2
NVQ training for adults	39	2

86. JLP has 202 learners in business administration and law, of whom 108 are customer service apprentices, 12 are advanced apprentices, and 39 are working towards NVQs. The remainder are apprentices, advanced apprentices or NVQ learners in business administration. Nine of the learners are following programmes in team leading. All learners are employed and most are recruited by JLP's marketing staff. Some self-refer or they hear about JLP from their employers. All learners have an induction into their learning programme in the workplace. All training is carried out in the workplace either by employers or by JLP's staff to support the technical certificate and key skills. Progress is reviewed at every assessment visit, usually every two weeks. The programme is run by one manager and a co-ordinator who are also internal verifiers. The assessment team is made up of four staff, two self-employed assessors and six Joint Partnership assessors. Five of these are qualified internal verifiers.

*Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement rates for customer service NVQ programmes
- very good progress by e-NVQ learners
- particularly flexible arrangements to support assessment and learning
- good communication with employers

*Weaknesses*

- weak review practices
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace

**Achievement and standards**

87. Achievement rates for NVQ learners in customer service are very high. In 2003-04, there were 62 starts and 90 per cent of learners achieved the qualification. In 2004-05, 76 learners started, 93 per cent achieved the qualification and 3 per cent are still in learning. Retention rates are the same as achievement rates and are also very high. Achievement rates for apprentices are satisfactory at 45 per cent in 2003-04, with a further 3 per cent still in learning. In 2004-05, 12 per cent completed the framework, and a further 39 per cent are still in learning. Advanced apprentices have maintained a satisfactory level of achievement rate at 50 per cent for 2003-04 and 6 per cent for 2004-05, with 41 per cent still in learning. The achievement rates for administration apprentices are also satisfactory overall at between 50 and 60 per cent in the past two years.

88. Learners who are working on the e-NVQ pilot are making very good progress. Two of the current 11 starts have already achieved their qualification and the remainder are ahead of their target achievement dates. Learners are motivated and take full responsibility for monitoring their own progress using the customised computer website. They have a very good understanding of the requirements of the apprenticeship programme and by using the search facility on the computer are fully aware of gaps in their performance evidence. Learners can easily access their electronic portfolios from home, learning centres, at work, or from their local internet café or library. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Portfolios contain an appropriate range of evidence from various sources.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	6		23		10		25	100								
Retained*	0		11		5		18	72								
Successfully completed	0		1		1		9	36								
Still in learning	6		10		4		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	74		206		73		186	100								
Retained*	0		126		40		100	54								
Successfully completed	0		19		33		55	30								
Still in learning	58		81		2		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	37		94		104		4	100								
Retained*	0		89		75		2	50								
Successfully completed	0		86		62		2	50								
Still in learning	37		3		1		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

## The quality of provision

89. Assessors provide particularly good and very flexible arrangements to support learning and assessment. They carry out out-of-hours assessment visits and offer additional constructive support for learners by e-mail or mobile telephone. Assessment visits are

## JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

carried out every two weeks and extra visits are offered if needed. Assessors are very sensitive to the needs of employers and learners. They carefully plan and co-ordinate visits to meet the demands of the workplace and cause minimal disruption. Learners on the electronic assessment method can contact their assessor by e-mail at any time during evenings, weekends and bank holidays. Learners are given appropriate, realistic advice and guidance, particularly when matching them to the appropriate level of programme to suit current job roles. Most of the learners are employed in high-profile organisations where staff are very supportive and allow time for research, tutorials and portfolio work. Induction to the programme is satisfactory overall and includes all the minimum requirements. However, it is brief and some of the level 2 learners find it difficult to absorb a large amount of complicated information in such a short session.

90. Apprentices are offered satisfactory coaching in the workplace. All assessors have, or are working towards, a coaching module from a level 3 learning and development qualification. Assessors are skilled at interpreting the NVQ standards and requirements of technical certificates and key skills. The availability and range of resources and learning support materials are also satisfactory. Most learners have access to some form of learning centre in the workplace for internet research and study. All apprentices are loaned a suitable reference book and CD ROMs to support study for the technical certificates.

91. Additional literacy and numeracy needs are supported mainly by employers through access to learndirect centres in the workplace. All apprentices have the minimum grades required for entry to the programmes and most have previously achieved key skills or their equivalent.

92. Review practices are weak. There is insufficient clarity between assessment action-planning and the review process. Short-term action-planning after NVQ assessment is good. A clear, detailed and thorough plan is left with learners after each assessment visit. At every visit, targets are reviewed and checked, and new targets are set. Long-term targets for achievement of separate parts of the apprenticeship are too vague. All targets often have the same date on individual learning plans and are not amended or changed to reflect progress. The same form is used to record assessment action-planning and progress reviews. Learners do not understand the purpose of the reviews and see them as part of their assessment. Employers have minimal involvement in the reviews and often only read and sign the document. In most cases, they are not routinely given a copy of the paperwork. However, some assessors give employers' representatives a separate update on their learners' progress at intervals throughout the programme. Some employers do not fully understand the requirements of the review process.

### **Leadership and management**

93. Communication between JLP and employers is particularly good. Assessors have worked hard to forge productive and effective working relationships with supervisors and employer representatives. There is good rapport and mutual respect between all parties. JLP is the preferred provider for administration and customer service for many employers. JLP plans the training and coaching carefully to complement the training in the workplace. Assessors spend time with employers during the frequent assessment visits checking the learners' progress. However, there are insufficient formal mechanisms for feedback to JLP's management.

94. Internal verification practices are sound. Assessors are appropriately qualified and

vocationally competent. There is adequate sampling of portfolios, assessor observations, feedback to assessors and interviews. The lead internal verifier holds frequent standardisation meetings. External verifier reports are also satisfactory with no action points.

95. Co-ordination of the programme is satisfactory. Teamwork, communication and staff morale are good. There are regular team meetings that include all Joint Partnership staff and self-employed assessors. Managers hold monthly contractor reviews with self-employed staff to set targets and review performance.

96. Learners' overall understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. However, the knowledge and understanding of the topics relating to the workplace are not checked thoroughly. The team are aware of the limited attention given to this and have already planned to ask questions on equality and diversity topics in the future.

