

# Inspection of JCB Academy

Inspection dates: 8–11 October 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Apprenticeships **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

JCB Academy specialises in engineering and business education for learners aged 13 to 18. The academy delivers apprenticeship training to JCB, an international employer based locally. Of the 258 apprentices, all following standards-based apprenticeships, 57 are on welding programmes at level 2, and 131 and 65 respectively are on level 3 apprenticeships for technical support and engineering fitters. Most apprentices are employees of JCB, with 31 working at five levy-paying employers. During the inspection week, 42 welding apprentices were undergoing their end-point assessment.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Apprentices enjoy learning while earning, with the secure knowledge of a very rewarding career as an engineer after completion of their apprenticeship. They learn from expert tutors and line managers in training centres with excellent learning resources. Apprentices are rightly proud of their achievements. They produce work of a very high standard to the benefit of their employers' businesses.

Apprentices gain strong knowledge of materials, hydraulics, and electrical circuits, and skills such as welding, milling and fitting that they use in their workplaces. They make good progress to complete their qualifications. Apprentices gain confidence and develop a strong work ethic. Employers provide excellent support and a safe working environment where apprentices feel safe.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have established strong partnerships with JCB and other high-profile employers. The result is a bespoke curriculum that meets the needs of JCB and yet is broad enough to meet the need for a skilled workforce in the engineering sector, which suffers from skills shortages. Five levy-paying employers have sought to work with the academy due to its strong reputation for supplying well-trained engineering apprentices. Leaders and managers, employers, staff and apprentices share the vision and purpose of the curriculum.

Managers and employers are clear in their objective to create a well-trained workforce that is ready to use any new developments in the future in sheet-metal manufacturing and CNC (computer numerical control) machining. In close discussions with the employers, training managers design, plan and implement a highly relevant curriculum that meets the needs of the businesses precisely. They arrange the teaching of modules of learning in a logical way to build incrementally on the knowledge of apprentices. By studying modules such as those in mathematics, science principles, welding and CNC for technicians, apprentices gain detailed knowledge that offers them a sound platform for working in the engineering sector.

Training managers conduct a comprehensive assessment of apprentices' starting points. In the first six weeks, training managers refine the findings and devise a challenging individual plan of learning that builds on apprentices' previous knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, after identifying the specific gaps in apprentices' knowledge of mathematics, training managers not only fill the gaps, but also challenge apprentices to work towards securing AS- or A-level mathematics, learning that the employers consider necessary to enable apprentices to progress in their future career.

Training managers plan sessions with clear aims and objectives for each session of the module. Apprentices fully understand the knowledge they will gain during the session and how it will build on what they already know. Knowledgeable training managers share their knowledge of the sector with the apprentices, illustrating with

examples from their own working lives.

Apprentices perfect core skills such as milling, fitting and welding. Training is well planned so that apprentices refresh their memory of the theories behind the engineering concepts, and practise and refine their skills, such as in bending and forming angles, and trying out different welding techniques.

Training managers provide precise feedback to apprentices on their practical and written work. By doing so, they challenge apprentices to explain how they apply the skills learned in the training centre to their workplaces. For example, apprentices used their knowledge of welding techniques and explained how they used laser welding, suggesting new methods of manufacture. This ensures that apprentices retain their knowledge and can apply it to develop new products or processes. Apprentices are adept at applying their knowledge to advanced working practices at their workplaces.

Owing to the thorough preparation and precise delivery of theory and practical training, apprentices make good progress rapidly and achieve good results. All apprentices move into sustained employment. They flourish in their job roles and enjoy significant pay rises. Approximately one in five move to a higher level of study and around a half carry out significantly different roles to diversify their skills and become more valuable to their employers.

A few apprentices find the study of modules of AS- and A-level mathematics too challenging, although they see its relevance to their job role in the second or third year. Although apprentices use English in their workplace to read instructions and manuals to carry out a range of duties, training managers do not promote the ongoing development of English to prepare apprentices for their next steps and longer-term career development.

Apprentices are highly organised, attend well and stay on their programme. They are strongly focused and determined to achieve the highest grades in their apprenticeship and progress to higher levels in their careers. They develop their communication and interpersonal skills through group activities both in lessons and in the projects.

Apprentices are respectful of each other, their training managers and employers. They enjoy fair treatment at work with no reported incidents of bullying and harassment. A small number of female apprentices enjoy learning and achieving equally well alongside male apprentices. The number of minority ethnic apprentices remains very low. Managers have not been proactive in promoting apprenticeships to minority ethnic groups or raising apprentices' awareness of diversity in society. As a result, apprentices are not fully prepared for living and working in modern Britain.

Apprentices receive detailed careers guidance at the start to place them on the right programme. They have good knowledge of career progression and rewarding opportunities with their employers and in the sector. As apprentices switch from frameworks to standards, training managers have not

provided clear guidance to apprentices on how to achieve merits or distinctions.

Senior managers of the employer companies responsible for training and other individuals with relevant expertise provide strong governance to the academy. They hold leaders and managers to account, and provide them with valuable support and challenge to set and maintain high standards for apprenticeship provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have nurtured a strong safeguarding culture throughout the academy and with employers. They conduct rigorous background checks on staff and apprentices. All staff, including support staff, use their knowledge of wide-ranging topics affecting society to identify apprentices at risk. Support for apprentices is exceptionally strong to minimise risks to them. Managers use their strong relationships with agencies to seek support and refer apprentices promptly.

Apprentices take part in a year-long programme of personal, social and health education. They become vigilant of the dangers in society, including radicalisation, e-safety, mental health, homelessness, gangs, domestic violence and drugs. They know how to spot risks to themselves and their colleagues and know the precautions that they can take. They know whom to contact should the need arise. Managers take swift action to identify and deal with any safeguarding incidents.

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

- Identify opportunities for apprentices to develop and practise their English skills to prepare them for their next steps and career development.
- Provide clear guidance on how apprentices may achieve merit or distinction in their end-point assessment.
- Ensure that the apprentices gain a thorough understanding of equality and diversity in society, so that they are better able to interact with diverse groups of people.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2527510
<b>Address</b>	Mill Street Rocester ST14 5JX
<b>Contact number</b>	01889 506107
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://jcbacademy.com/">https://jcbacademy.com/</a>
<b>Principal</b>	Jim Wade
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Harmesh Manghra, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Collett	Her Majesty's Inspector
William Baidoe-Ansah	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019