

Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning)

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Peter Nelson Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Chalky Road
Portslade
BN41 2WS



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning) is an independent learning provider based in Portslade, on the outskirts of Brighton. The provider has recently become part of the Aldridge Education multi academy trust (MAT), which includes 10 schools and academies located across England. Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning) runs a selection of accredited and non-accredited adult courses from its two centres in Portslade for around 1,200 learners each year. It also provides around 17 apprenticeship frameworks at level 3 in spectator safety in Gloucester and Luton, which it delivers via a subcontractor. It also has four level 3 direct-provision learners taking a teaching assistant apprenticeship standard in Hassocks and Ascot.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship and adult learning provision?

Reasonable progress

Managers have designed a valuable curriculum that helps to address developmental and social priorities for adults in Brighton. It includes professional and vocational qualifications such as accounting, access to higher education, GCSE and functional skills English and mathematics, and employability skills. It also includes a broad programme of non-accredited social, relaxation and well-being classes, such as languages, crafts, Pilates and yoga.

Managers and learners benefit from the wider resources and expertise within the MAT. For example, managers attend training on topics such as safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Learners also benefit from attending classes in high-quality accommodation and resources at the Portslade Academy. Since the MAT took over the adult provision, senior leaders in the MAT have identified the need to strengthen governance arrangements for the adult provision. This is to increase the support for managers. They are in the process of implementing these changes.

Managers have good access to detailed and informative management information about the adult learners. They use this information well to track and monitor, for example, the progress and attendance of learners. They also gather detailed information and feedback from learners about their experiences in lessons. This helps inform the thorough quality assurance of the adult provision in Brighton.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the apprenticeship programme, which they introduced comparatively recently, meets the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision. Managers do not have sufficient knowledge or

understanding of how to launch and deliver a high-quality apprenticeship programme. More recently, they have appointed new staff who recognise the shortcomings of the programme. They are starting to address these issues but it is too early to judge the impact of their actions.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? **Insufficient progress**

Managers, teachers and assessors are unclear about how to launch and run apprenticeships. They have not ensured that the programme meets the national requirements for apprenticeships. Subcontracting arrangements are also ineffective. Senior staff at the subcontractor are equally unclear about how to deliver an effective apprenticeship programme.

For example, many of the apprentices on the spectator safety apprenticeship have been in their roles for several years. Prior to enrolling on the apprenticeship programme, they had already acquired most of the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their job roles effectively. The apprentices do not spend enough time each week working as stewards. They are employed on zero-hours contracts and work for around a day a week in their stewarding roles. Apprentices do not receive payment for the time they spend studying for the off-the-job component of the programme. Teaching assistant apprentices also complete a significant proportion of their training in their own time.

Invariably, apprentices are unclear about all the requirements of their apprenticeship programme. For example, they do not recognise or value the English and mathematical components of the programme, and their attitude towards these subjects is poor. Assessors do not ensure that apprentices know what they need to do to prepare for the end-point assessment. As a result, apprentices are vague about the expectations and requirements assessors have of them.

Managers have not implemented effective processes to track and monitor the progress of spectator safety apprentices. Apprentices generally do not engage sufficiently with the online progress-tracking systems. As a result, managers and assessors are unable to track accurately the progress made by apprentices, and therefore cannot take action to address slow progress.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that adult learners benefit from high-quality education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have designed a cross-section of both academic and vocational curriculums. These provide a good range of courses which meet the needs of the local community. Learners value their studies, which help them socialise and engage with others, become more independent and develop their confidence. For example, learners studying British sign language improve their communication skills and communicate more effectively with family members who have hearing impairments.

When learners apply for adult courses at Aldridge, teachers check their prior knowledge and interests. They use this information to help ensure that learners enrol on the correct level of course to meet their requirements. Most teachers also use this information well to design the courses so that they meet learners' developmental needs.

Learners enjoy their learning, and rightly value the expertise, commitment and enthusiasm of their teachers. They willingly engage in lessons, listen carefully to teachers and work enthusiastically in lessons. Teachers identify learners' needs carefully and put support in place to help most learners when they require it.

Most adult learners produce written work to a good standard. Teachers generally provide suitable feedback and advice to learners. However, in a few instances, teachers do not provide enough guidance to learners on how to improve their work.

On non-accredited courses, teachers do not record in sufficient detail learners' targets and goals. Managers are introducing new procedures to improve how teachers set targets and track learners' progress. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Learners and apprentices feel safe. Most learners are suitably familiar with matters relating to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They know whom they should contact if they have any concerns. Managers carry out appropriate health and safety and safeguarding risk assessments. They make suitable alterations to accommodate the needs of learners where required.

Managers benefit from the wider safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty insight and training that are available across the MAT. They follow safer recruitment procedures and complete relevant pre-employment checks when required. Leaders and managers deal appropriately and proportionately with safeguarding concerns when they arise.

Not all teachers create sufficient opportunities in lessons for learners to discuss and extend their understanding of British values and how these have an impact on their daily lives.

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