

Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning)

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Montserrat Pérez-Parent, HMI

Inspection dates: 7–8 October 2020

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Chalky Road
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This provider received a monitoring visit under these arrangements and was found to be making insufficient progress against one or more themes.

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out additional monitoring visits to new providers that were judged to be making insufficient progress against one or more themes at their previous monitoring visit and would have been due their full inspection up to or during the interim phase but have not received it because of the suspension of routine inspections. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements as outlined in the [interim phase operational note for further education and skills](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook and is focused on the themes set out below.

Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning) is an independent learning provider based in Portslade, on the outskirts of Brighton and Hove. The provider is part of the Aldridge Education multi-academy trust (MAT), which includes 10 schools and academies located across England. This monitoring visit only focused on the provider's apprenticeship provision. At the time of the monitoring visit, the provider had fewer than five apprentices studying a level 3 standards-based apprenticeship in supporting teaching and learning.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning) is now an established member of the MAT and leaders and managers benefit positively from having access to the MAT's expertise, talent and governance. Leaders feel supported, and welcome the additional scrutiny they receive.

Leaders took decisive action after the previous monitoring visit and closed down their subcontracted apprenticeship provision. They now have a renewed and clear strategy that focuses on using apprenticeships to provide employment opportunities to local people.

Managers responsible for apprenticeships have sufficient knowledge and understanding to offer standards-based apprenticeships. They have introduced beneficial changes to the monitoring of apprentices' progress and quality assurance of the provision.

Managers confidently use the management information they now gather for apprenticeships at the monthly meetings they hold with tutors. Managers retain oversight of the progress that individual apprentices make, and support tutors with their actions to help any apprentices who may be falling behind.

Leaders coordinate on- and off-the-job training with employers. Managers have agreed flexible arrangements with employers for off-the-job training to meet the needs of the schools where the apprentices work. Apprentices record the duration and description of the off-the-job activities they carry out. Leaders and managers do not monitor off-the-job training records thoroughly enough to reassure themselves that it meets the agreement they have with each employer.

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

Apprentices develop substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours that equip them well for their jobs as teaching assistants. For example, they have learned techniques to manage children's behaviour that enable them to support the class teacher effectively and make a positive impact on the pupils' experiences. As a result, apprentices make a valuable contribution to the schools in which they work.

Apprentices enjoy their learning and can identify clearly the progress they are making, and the communication skills they are developing. For example, apprentices communicate more confidently with parents and carers and now feel knowledgeable enough to have conversations with colleagues about children's progress. Apprentices can relate the theory they have learned to the application of their practical skills.

Tutors are suitably qualified and have extensive expertise in their subject. They successfully use this expertise to help apprentices develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Apprentices benefit from frequent sessions with their tutors where they receive individual support and advice on improving their assignments. Tutors provide constructive and prompt feedback, which enables apprentices to recognise strengths and how to improve further.

Apprentices develop their English skills as part of their programme and take advantage of opportunities to advance their oral and written skills through research, written assignments and presentations. Apprentices develop their mathematics through online mathematics programmes.

Apprentices are highly motivated and proud of what they have achieved. They continued to study and completed online portfolio work while they were furloughed. Since the previous monitoring visit, three quarters of apprentices have achieved their apprenticeship, with a third having achieved a distinction grade.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that all staff and apprentices undertake appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. They have promoted a culture of safeguarding. As a result, apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns if these arise.

Leaders and managers have recently enhanced their safeguarding policies and procedures with the feedback they have received from the MAT's dedicated inclusion staff. However, some of the new processes they have developed to gather more detailed information about the impact of their safeguarding promotion have yet to be introduced to the apprenticeship provision.

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