

# Inspection of Alt Valley Community Trust

Inspection dates:

26 to 29 September 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Adult learning programmes

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Information about this provider

Alt Valley Community Trust (AVCT) is an independent learning provider with its headquarters based in Croxteth, Liverpool. They have training centres in Birkenhead, Fazakerley and Formby. AVCT serves the electoral wards in the north east of Liverpool that have significant social and economic challenges. They offer training in adult education and apprenticeships. AVCT are commencing delivery of education programmes for young people from October 2023.

At the time of the inspection, AVCT had 36 adult learners on levels 3 and 4, with most enrolments in the beauty and dog grooming sectors. There were 21 apprentices on levels 2 to 5 with most studying at level 3. Most apprentices were completing apprenticeships in early years, business and management sectors.

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

Learners and apprentices demonstrate positive and professional attitudes to their learning. They enjoy their training and are motivated to achieve their qualifications and apprenticeships. Learners and apprentices value the respectful and inclusive environments in which they learn. During classroom and practical sessions, they demonstrate high levels of respect for their peers and tutors.

Learners and apprentices develop their confidence as a direct result of the training that they receive. They participate well in classroom discussions. Level 3 business administrator apprentices make client calls and communicate with colleagues effectively at work. Learners on dog grooming courses confidently discuss grooming requirements with clients.

Most learners and apprentices access activities beyond their apprenticeship or qualification. They participate in charity coffee mornings, volunteering and community yoga. Learners studying advanced beauty therapy complete additional qualifications such as skin peel courses. However, a few learners studying level 3 supporting teaching and learning in schools (STLS) do not complete work placements to enable them to enhance their skills and apply their knowledge swiftly.

Attendance for most learners and apprentices is high. However, tutors do not set sufficiently high expectations of attendance to taught sessions on the level 3 STLS and the early years educator (EYE) apprenticeship. This results in most of these learners relying on one-to-one sessions with their tutor rather than attending taught sessions.

Learners and apprentices value the support that they receive from staff. They have access to support sessions, food parcels and bus passes. Staff signpost learners and apprentices to appropriate organisations such as kinship partners and debt advice charities.

Apprentices and learners feel safe. They complete training on topics such as safeguarding, online safety, radicalisation and extremism. However, apprentices and learners do not benefit from ongoing discussions on topics such as how to stay physically and mentally healthy.

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

Leaders and managers provide curriculums to meet local and regional needs in areas of high deprivation and low aspiration. They use the key priorities for the Liverpool City region to ensure that their curriculum meets learners' and apprentices' needs. For example, leaders have introduced dog grooming courses to support local residents into education and training and to support their progression into self-employment.

Tutors sequence the curriculums logically so that most learners and apprentices build their knowledge and skills gradually over time. Level 4 advanced beauty therapy learners learn about health and safety and salon management before moving on to more complex topics such as microdermabrasion and hydrodermabrasion.

Leaders and managers do not have an accurate overview of how many, and which, learners and apprentices have additional learning needs such as dyslexia. Consequently, learners with additional learning needs do not have specific strategies or support in place from the beginning of their learning.

Most learners and apprentices benefit from high-quality education and training, and most make good progress. However, leaders and managers do not ensure that the quality of education provided for learners studying STLS and apprentices who study the level 3 EYE apprenticeship is of a high quality. Learners and apprentices on these programmes make slow progress. The curriculums are not ambitious, and too many learners leave their course or apprenticeship early and do not complete on time.

Tutors are well-qualified and experienced to teach learners and apprentices. They are sector specialists and maintain their vocational currency through industry updates. For example, EYE tutors complete paediatric first-aid courses and team leader or supervisor tutors visit media companies to extend their knowledge of online shopping organisations. As a result, learners and apprentices receive the most up-to-date sector knowledge and skills from their tutors.

A few tutors do not use what learners and apprentices already know and can do before they start their course to plan individualised learning. They do not set learners and apprentices appropriate targets based on this information. A few learners and apprentices are not clear about the progress that they are making in their studies.

Most learners and apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Learners studying dog grooming develop their understanding of different cutting techniques and designs such as Asian fusion for teddy bear styles on wool coated dog breeds. Advanced beauty therapy learners carefully consider clients' medical history, such as asthma, when using titanium dioxide crystals for skin care treatments. They apply this knowledge well when discussing clients' requirements.

Most tutors design and teach curriculums so that learners and apprentices retain knowledge into their long-term memories. Tutors who teach dog grooming are adept at questioning learners during practical grooming sessions and pose challenging scenarios that link to previous learning on detangling the knots in a dog's fur. However, this is less effective for learners and apprentices on the STLS course and the EYE apprenticeship.

Most learners and apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills well. Apprentices studying the level 3 business administrator and level 3 team leader or supervisor apprenticeships benefit from the one-to-one support that they receive early in the curriculum for English and mathematics. As a result, most apprentices achieve their apprenticeship on time. Learners who study dog grooming develop

their mathematical skills well when completing their business plans and acquire good levels of technical terminology.

The quality of feedback that learners and apprentices receive from tutors is inconsistent. Learners who study advanced beauty therapy and dog grooming benefit from helpful feedback that supports them to improve their work and skills. However, tutors do not routinely provide effective developmental feedback to all learners and apprentices. Consequently, learners and apprentices do not always know what they need to do to improve or achieve higher grades.

Leaders and managers are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff are passionate and proud to work at the provider and leaders motivate them to take pride in their work and do their best. They provide 'feel good Fridays', counselling and menopause awareness training for staff. Staff have manageable workloads and have access to hybrid working and flexible working hours.

Careers advice and guidance is effective for most learners and apprentices. They receive ongoing careers education, advice and guidance from their tutors during their course or apprenticeship. Most apprentices and learners are given sufficient information on their next steps such as further education, training and employment opportunities. For example, learners studying dog grooming and advanced beauty therapy receive comprehensive information about self-employment.

Leaders and managers have improved most learners' and apprentices' achievement rates. However, too many apprentices are not aware of the content or grade opportunities available to them for their final assessments. This has resulted in no apprentices achieving high grades in their final assessments.

Leaders and managers quality assurance processes are weak. They have been too slow to rectify all the areas for development since the previous inspection. Leaders and managers have not accurately identified all the areas of weakness identified by the inspection team. Leaders and managers recognise that their quality systems and processes require development to ensure that they have clear oversight of the weaknesses within their provision. As a result, the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive is inconsistent.

Board members are qualified and experienced to undertake their roles. They understand their responsibilities and promote equality throughout the organisation. However, board members do not receive sufficiently detailed and high-quality reports from leaders that enable them to have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Therefore, board members are unable to provide the scrutiny and challenge required to ensure that all learners and apprentices receive high-quality training.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Provide detailed and accurate reports to the board that incorporate all information relevant to adult learners and apprenticeships.
- Implement robust quality assurance processes and procedures and use these to quickly rectify areas of weakness in the quality of education.
- Ensure that tutors provide timely and constructive developmental feedback on apprentices' and adult learners' written work.
- Identify what learners and apprentices already know and can do at the start of their studies and use this information to provide an individualised curriculum that is ambitious for all learners and apprentices.
- Ensure that all learners' and apprentices' additional learning needs are identified swiftly and effective strategies for support are implemented.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58913
<b>Address</b>	Altcross Road Croxteth Liverpool L11 0BS
<b>Contact number</b>	0151 546 5514
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.altvalley.co.uk">www.altvalley.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Phil Knibb
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 to 3 November 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy chief executive, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Suzanne Horner, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bev Barlow	Ofsted Inspector
Emma King	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstie Kohling	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Cameron Brandwood	His Majesty's Inspector

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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)

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