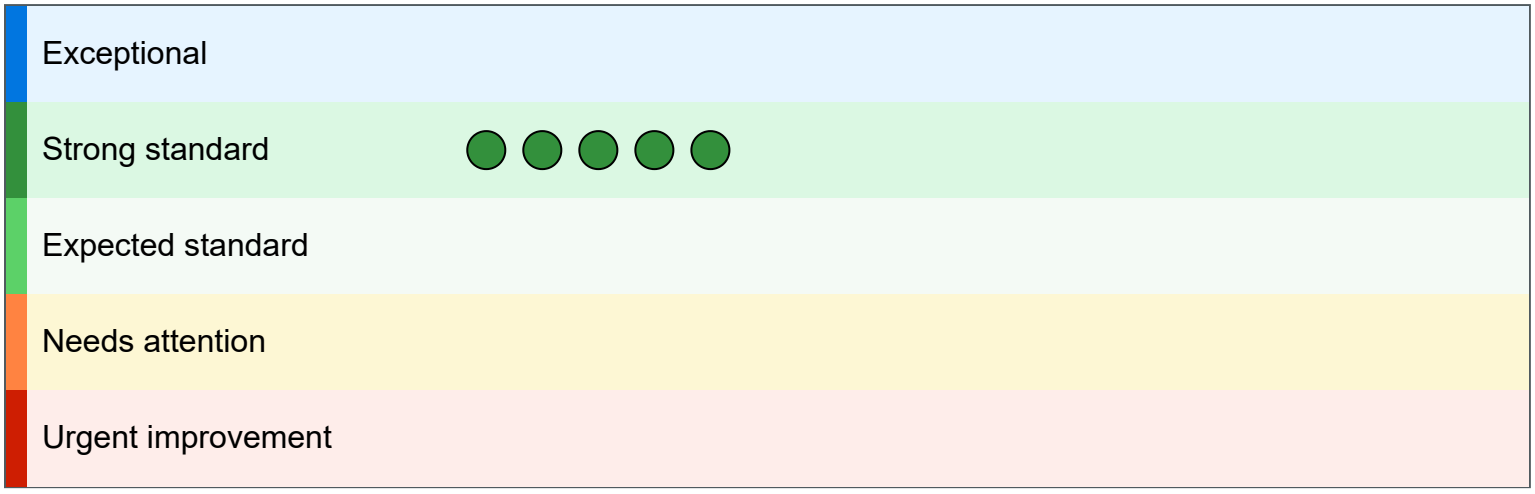
Kleek Apprenticeships Limited

Address: 55 Duke Street, Darlington, DL3 7SD

Unique reference number (URN): 54248

Inspection report: 21 April 2026



Safeguarding standards met

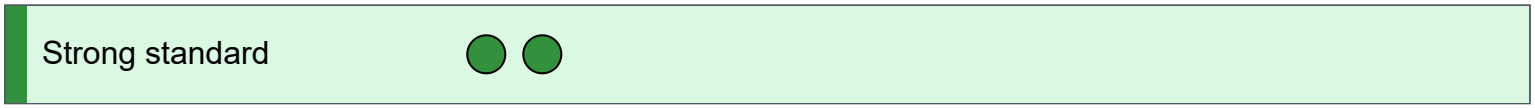
The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance



Strong standard

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have established an inclusive culture that is embedded consistently across all academies and salons. They have a strong commitment to ensure that all apprentices, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported to achieve their full potential. Apprentices with disadvantages and barriers to learning achieve as highly as their peers.

Leaders have recently developed a new inclusion policy, building on already existing strong practices, that more clearly defines apprentices in scope for additional support. Consequently, staff swiftly identity and swiftly support apprentices with a wider range of additional support needs.

Staff at all levels of the organisation are trained very well to implement an assess, plan, do and review approach to their implementation of inclusion practices. They are skilled at escalating support when it is most needed and in gradually withdrawing it when the need has reduced.

Apprentices receive a wide range of valuable support. These include breakfast clubs, small-group sizes, access to laptops for those who struggle with their handwriting and extra time to complete assignments.

Leaders and managers have very effective oversight of the impact of their inclusion practices on apprentices' progress. They intervene rapidly to provide additional support to any apprentices who start to struggle while on an apprenticeship.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Since the previous inspection, leaders have substantially increased their apprenticeship provision through the acquisition of existing training providers. A high proportion of apprentices from these providers had previously made slow progress and their skills development was not of the demanding standard expected at Kleek. Leaders swiftly implemented rigorous actions to support these apprentices and their progress and achievement have improved rapidly.

Leaders have a clear ambition to be a leading provider in the hair and beauty industry which is supported by a well established and excellent reputation with employers. Employers value highly the time dedicated to developing apprentices' communication skills alongside professional technical expertise. Leaders swiftly cease working with employers who do not provide apprentices with on-the-job training that is of a consistently high quality.

Leaders have created a culture of continuous improvement. They have a comprehensive understanding of their strengths and areas for development. They analyse precisely the quality of the curriculum and identify accurately what they do well and what they need to develop. They ensure the actions that they take are highly focused and have a sustained impact on the quality of the curriculums.

Staff are extremely proud to work at Kleek. They are very well supported by managers, who are considerate of their workload and wellbeing. Educators benefit from highly tailored professional learning which ensures that they develop their teaching skills and remain current with the latest hair and beauty techniques.

Governors have significant experience in education and safeguarding. They provide highly effective challenge and support. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development through the frequent quality assurance activities they conduct.

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2. Apprenticeships

Strong standard

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Apprentices, including those who face barriers to learning, develop their vocational and technical knowledge and skills exceptionally well from their individual starting points. Their practical work is consistently completed to a high professional standard.

Educators prepare apprentices for their final assessments very effectively. Their continual reinforcement of high standards and professional values results in many apprentices achieving merit and distinction grades. Apprentices on the level 2 hairdressing professional apprenticeship, which constitutes more than 3 quarters of the total number of apprentices, achieve very highly.

Achievement in level 1 English and mathematics functional skills is high. Apprentices working towards their level 2 qualification make at least expected progress from their starting points.

Almost all apprentices progress to positive destinations. Many remain working in their salons with increased responsibilities. Apprentices have been nominated and performed very well in prestigious national competitions, such as the Hair and Beauty Awards Rising Star and WorldSkills.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders and educators are expertly skilled in the hairdressing and beauty therapy industry. Leaders understand their provision precisely and ensure apprentices benefit from consistently high-quality education and training.

Leaders plan well-structured curriculums at their 6 academies and through work-based training provided at employers' salons across the country. Educators plan learning using accurate assessments of apprentices' starting points to tailor training. They make sure that apprentices have ample opportunities to practise and perfect their hairdressing or beauty therapy skills. Apprentices quickly deepen their knowledge and master practical techniques to a very high level.

Educators skilfully teach apprentices using a range of highly effective strategies. Apprentices use digital microscopes linked to laptops to identify and examine heat-induced damage, dandruff or folliculitis. This develops their analytical skills in providing accurate, well informed client care.

Educators provide helpful feedback to apprentices. Apprentices clearly understand what they have done well and use feedback to refine and improve their work rapidly. Educators successfully develop apprentices' ability to evaluate their own practical skills and independently identify and correct errors. This prepares apprentices very well to work autonomously in salons. While educators highlight most spelling errors in apprentices' notebooks, they do not routinely identify grammatical errors to help apprentices improve these important skills.

Educators demonstrate inclusive practices. Apprentices including those with barriers to learning, benefit from such strategies as learning in small groups, using coloured paper, using fidget devices and having frequent movement breaks. Leaders have planned an accessible functional skills curriculum which includes one-to-one support and digital sessions that extend learning.

Participation and development

Strong standard

Leaders and managers have designed an ambitious wider curriculum beyond the core knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices acquire during their apprenticeships.

Through an intensive induction programme, apprentices complete a wide range of assessed modules on topics such as the risks of radicalisation and extremism, equality of opportunity, and how to apply British values in their personal and working lives. Educators frequently reinforce these topics. Apprentices readily recall their learning which helps them to keep safe.

Staff at all levels both at academies and in workplaces set very high professional and personal standards for apprentices. Apprentices embody these expectations by arriving promptly to lessons and work and treating clients with the utmost professional courtesy and respect.

Apprentices enjoy a wide range of enrichment events. They visit trade shows to see the latest industry products, trends and techniques from top stylists. They enter competitions where they demonstrate their skills, win recognition and build their own, and their salons' brands.

Apprentices receive expert and timely careers advice throughout their training. They discuss their career aspirations at induction and continue to discuss at frequent reviews how they can meet their goals. Educators provide apprentices with information on further

qualifications or other roles in the hair and beauty sector such as barbering or colour expert training.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Apprentices are extremely proud to learn at Kleek. They experience the same high standard of training no matter where they are working or studying with this national provider of hairdressing and beauty therapy. They know that by accomplishing an apprenticeship at Kleek, they will have achieved and mastered the highest level of hairdressing or beauty therapy skills.

Apprentices securely acquire extensive new skills in hairdressing and beauty therapy during their training. They benefit from highly valuable one-to-one support and coaching from expertly qualified and experienced educators. Apprentices establish and retain a loyal clientele in the workplace as they develop and hone their new skills.

Apprentices appreciate the variety of ways in which they can learn. They value the inclusive practices put in place to support them to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours, working at a pace that is individualised to them. Apprentices who have previously had negative experiences of education, including emotionally-based school avoidance, particularly value the opportunity to complete their apprenticeship in employers' salons.

Leaders persistently promote equality and diversity to help all apprentices recognise that everyone is unique. Apprentices quickly feel that they belong and can thrive at Kleek. During Pride month, apprentices demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA+ community by creating hidden rainbow hair-colouring techniques symbolising hidden protected characteristics.

Apprentices develop their sense of citizenship by engaging in charitable projects. They donate equipment, hairdressing products and money to a charity working with children suffering with cancer and alopecia. Apprentices participate in a recycling project to prevent plastic items from salons going to landfill.

Apprentices enjoy opportunities to develop their leadership skills through being selected as Kleek ambassadors. By developing effective marketing and social media skills, ambassadors grow in confidence and are well prepared to promote the hair and beauty industry to local schools and employers.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain their work and continue to further develop and enhance their provision so that the training they provide has a transformational impact on all apprentices' achievement, in particular for apprentices on the level 2 beauty therapy apprenticeship.

- Leaders should ensure that educators routinely identify grammatical errors in apprentices' note books to help them improve these important skills.

About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:
Inspectors spoke with senior leaders, educators, governors, apprentices and employers during the inspection.

Kleek Apprenticeships Limited (Kleek) originally formed in 1999 as Saks Education becoming Kleek in 2023. Kleek provides level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships across England in hairdressing, barbering and beauty therapy. They have academies in Darlington, Maidstone, Colchester, Newcastle, Stockton and London. Around half of apprentices are trained at the academies and half are trained by educators in their salons. Staff work with over a thousand employers.

At the time of the inspection, there were 859 apprentices in learning. Most were studying on hairdressing apprenticeships. There were 624 on the level 2 hairdressing professional apprenticeship and 154 on the level 3 advanced and creative hair professional. There were 25 studying on the level 2 barbering professional, 30 on level 2 beauty therapist, 18 on level 3 advanced beauty therapist and 8 on level 3 wellbeing and holistic therapist.

Three quarters of apprentices were aged 16 to 18 and the remainder were 19 years and over. Around half of apprentices had an identified special educational needs and/or disability, or other barriers to learning. There were 390 apprentices working towards achieving mathematics and/or English functional skills qualifications.

Managing director: Tina Ockerby

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Alison Gray, Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Stork, His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Seaman, His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Iverson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 21 April 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

859

Apprenticeships

859

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Adult learning programmes

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	83	87	Close to average
2024/25	83	87	Close to average

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	71	65	Close to average
2023/24	69	60	Close to average
2022/23	64	55	Close to average

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2024/25	99	98
2023/24	100	98
2022/23	98	97

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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