

Aldridge Education (trading as Aldridge Adult Learning)

Address: Chalky Road, Portslade, East Sussex, BN41 2WS

Unique reference number (URN): 2527747

Inspection report: 17 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ **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

Expected standard



Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed the curriculums to meet the needs of their local community very well. They understand the diverse needs of their learners and apprentices and work effectively to reduce any barriers to learning. Learners and apprentices value the support that they receive, which helps them achieve their goals and aspirations.

Leaders and staff identify apprentices' and learners' support needs well and monitor the support provided. Staff build positive relationships and know their learners and apprentices well. They quickly identify when there may be temporary barriers to attending and learning such as ill health and put thoughtful and helpful measures in place to help learners and apprentices to continue to participate and achieve.

Leaders sensibly use the extensive knowledge and experience from staff across the trust for resources and guidance on inclusive practice and strategies. Staff attend themed national inset days where topics such as adaptive teaching and trauma-informed practice are the focus. Staff use this training to support their learners and apprentices.

Leaders have recently employed a special educational needs and/or disabilities lead to advise and support staff with teaching strategies and to support learners and apprentices, but it is too soon to see the impact of this.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders strive to improve continuously their provision and outcomes for their learners and apprentices. They know their strengths and weaknesses well and take action to remedy the weaknesses. For example, they have developed a system to track and monitor learners' support needs so they can quickly put actions in place to make sure that learners stay on track and achieve.

The experienced trust members and local governors have clear oversight of the provision. They provide appropriate challenge and support for continuous improvement. Governors are proud of the work of the provider to support learners and apprentices to achieve and meet the trust's vision of 'bringing learning to life' and 'leaving no one behind'.

Staff benefit from access to trust-wide training in addition to mandatory training such as safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They value the feedback from leaders in lesson observations to help them improve, although the link between identified development needs and planned professional learning is not yet consistently clear.

Staff feel valued and supported in their roles. Leaders and managers pay appropriate attention to staff wellbeing. Staff benefit from access to useful resources such as mental health support and financial advice. They appreciate the opportunities for flexible working arrangements, which help them balance personal responsibilities with work.

Leaders collaborate effectively with the local job centre and local authority to provide relevant courses for learners and apprentices. They work well with employers to establish their training requirements and to support apprentices to achieve.

2. Adult learning programmes

Strong standard



Expected standard



Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Learners achieve very well. Achievement rates are in line with national rates but have improved markedly over the past two years. Leaders have secured these improvements during a period of substantial growth in learner numbers and while supporting a high proportion of learners who face disadvantage or barriers to learning.

Learners make very strong progress from their starting points. They consistently develop their knowledge and skills over time, particularly on courses in English and English for speakers of other languages, where learners demonstrate significant improvements in their written work, communication and use of specialist vocabulary. The quality of learners' work is consistently very high.

Learners are well prepared for their next steps. Many progress to employment or further study, including some who move on to higher education, often having started with little prior attainment. Learners consistently develop their confidence and self-belief, which supports significant positive change in their life chances and social mobility.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum offer that responds well to local and individual needs, particularly in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), access to higher education and English and mathematics provision. They have aligned the curriculum offer to funding

priorities and use it effectively to support learners, many of whom face significant barriers, to develop personal, social and employability skills. Leaders have an effective understanding of the quality of the curriculums and use appropriate processes, including quality assurance information, to help identify strengths and areas for development.

Teachers plan and sequence learning effectively so that learners build knowledge and skills over time. For example, structured approaches in ESOL and access to higher education courses support learners to develop vocabulary, communication skills and confidence. Tutors use assessment appropriately to identify starting points and monitor progress, including through regular checks on learning and mid-course reviews. Feedback is generally useful and helps learners to improve their work and develop their skills over time.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and deliver purposeful, mostly effective sessions that engage learners. They generally use assessment well and provide meaningful feedback, which supports learners to make significant progress from their starting points

Teachers use questioning to check understanding and adapt their teaching to meet learners needs. However, a few teachers do not consistently use checks on learning to identify and correct misconceptions and misunderstandings.

Participation and development

Expected standard 

Learners benefit from a supportive and inclusive environment in which they feel safe, valued and respected. Staff understand learners' individual needs and provide effective support that helps learners overcome personal and educational barriers. This supports learners, including those who have had previous negative experiences of education, to engage positively and participate well in their learning. Attendance is generally high and, when needed, learners are supported to catch up on missed work.

Learners develop confidence, resilience and wider knowledge through their programmes. They gain a useful understanding of British values, health and wellbeing and life in the United Kingdom, which supports their ability to participate effectively in society. Many learners build confidence in communicating with others, develop independence and raise their aspirations, including considering opportunities they had not previously thought possible.

Leaders provide useful and effective careers information and guidance through tutor support, links with external services and opportunities such as engagement with partners and curriculum content. This helps to ensure that most learners have a good understanding of the possible progression routes available to them.

3. Apprenticeships

Strong standard



Expected standard



Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Apprentices achieve very well. Achievements rates are high, and a significant proportion of apprentices achieve the highest grades.

Apprentices make very good progress from their starting points. They develop a secure and thorough understanding of key concepts and occupational behaviours, which they apply confidently in the workplace.

The quality of apprentices' work is consistently high. Apprentices develop the English, mathematics and digital skills required in their daily practice and job roles well, such as composing letters to statutory bodies or shift planning for staff.

Apprentices are well prepared for their next steps. Almost all continue in employment, gain promotion or additional responsibilities or progress to the next level qualification.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have developed high-quality curriculums which respond to local employer priorities and needs and national skills gaps. Staff work closely with employers to align training seamlessly, so apprentices have frequent opportunities to practise and master their skills. Leaders use effective processes to identify strengths and to develop the curriculums further.

Teachers sequence learning very effectively which helps apprentices build knowledge, skills and professional behaviours consistently over time. They skilfully develop apprentices' foundational knowledge before moving to more advanced content. For example, early years educator apprentices learn about fixed and growth mindsets and then apply this to their own professional practice and attitudes at work.

Expert teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies to support apprentices skilfully in tackling difficult topics or challenging content. For example, they use interactive study approaches, projects and holistic observations on their routine work practices which help apprentices quickly gain and build the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to succeed in the sector.

Teachers consistently use probing questions and systematically check apprentices' understanding, such as how the '6 Cs' in care settings impact on their duty of care. Apprentices develop strategies to remember what they learn long term.

Teachers consider apprentices' starting points to plan and individualise programmes of learning skilfully. They carefully monitor apprentices' progress in review meetings. Where apprentices have barriers to learning such as anxiety or ill health, teachers provide additional sessions and make well-considered adjustments.

Expected standard ●

Participation and development

Expected standard ●

Apprentices enjoy their learning. They attend and participate in activities well. Apprentices understand and apply British values in their everyday lives and demonstrate them through the professional behaviours required in the workplace.

Apprentices value the respectful learning environments that teachers create. They feel safe when learning and at work. They know who to report any concerns to and know that these would be dealt with swiftly.

Apprentices benefit from discussions and useful resources that help them learn about positive lifestyle choices. For example, they learn about mental health, wellbeing and the benefits of positive physical health. Teachers sensitively raise awareness about maintaining healthy relationships by, for example, providing information about consent and healthy workplace relationships.

Apprentices learn about staying safe online, such as avoiding suspicious websites and using privacy settings on social media. Apprentices are well informed about signs of possible grooming and are aware of the risks of exposure to extremism or radicalisation.

Most apprentices benefit from advice and guidance on their next steps throughout their learning. However, many apprentices are not clear about the full range of career opportunities available to them.

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

Apprentices and adult learners typically experience a supportive and inclusive environment where they feel safe, valued and well cared for. Many join with significant barriers to learning, including previous negative experiences of education, and they quickly gain confidence and engage positively in their studies. They attend well, participate actively in sessions and value the individualised support that they receive from staff, which helps them to remain on programme and make progress.

Apprentices and adult learners develop their knowledge and skills over time and achieve well. For example, on courses in English and English for speakers of other languages, learners improve their communication skills and gain confidence in using specialist vocabulary. Lead adult care worker apprentices develop their knowledge and skills of safe

working practices so they are confident when working with clients. Apprentices and learners consistently produce high-quality work and make steady improvements as they gain confidence and experience. They are well prepared for their next steps, with many progressing to further study, employment or higher education.

Apprentices and adult learners benefit from a curriculum that helps them to understand life in the United Kingdom, including British values, health and wellbeing and how to participate in and contribute to society. They feel part of a welcoming community and develop resilience and self-belief.

Most apprentices and learners begin to consider their future goals, although opportunities to explore career pathways in detail are not yet consistently developed across all courses.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that all staff have planned professional development that enables them to develop their teaching skills.
 - Leaders should ensure that careers advice and guidance is well planned to enable all apprentices and learners to gain a detailed knowledge of their potential future pathways.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching on adult learning programmes is of a consistently high quality.
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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 leaders and managers, learners, apprentices, teachers, employers and members of the trust board during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the provider:

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, which includes schools and academies located across England.

At the time of inspection, Aldridge Adult Learning had 62 apprentices in learning. There were 13 apprentices aged 16 to 18 and 49 were over 19. The majority of apprentices are studying apprenticeships at level 3, including early years educator and teaching assistant. There are 19 apprentices who have a declared learning disability or difficulty. Based on their home postcode, approximately 50% of apprentices are from the 2 lowest quintiles of social deprivation measures.

There are currently 113 adults in learning on a range of courses, including English for speakers of other languages, access to higher education and GCSE English and mathematics. There are currently 24 learners on Skills Bootcamps, including digital and health and social care courses.

Principal: Nick Fenn

Lead inspector:

Jo-Ann Henderson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jaswant Mann, Ofsted Inspector

Paul James, His Majesty's Inspector

Christopher Dearnley, 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 17 March 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

299

Adult learning programmes

237

Apprenticeships

62

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	46	61	Below
2022/23	56	55	Close to average
2021/22	S	53	S

'This provider' and 'national average' figures are taken from the publicly available DfE achievement rates. Where the DfE have suppressed the figures, usually due to small cohorts, this has been mirrored in the Report Card and will be shown by an 'S'.

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2023/24	100	98
2022/23	100	97
2021/22	S	98

'This provider' and 'national average' figures are taken from the publicly available DfE achievement rates. Where the DfE have suppressed the figures, usually due to small cohorts, this has been mirrored in the Report Card and will be shown by an 'S'.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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