



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on the further education provision of**

**Cardiff and Vale College  
City Centre Campus  
Dumballs Road  
Cardiff  
CF10 5BF**

**Date of inspection: November 2018**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Cardiff and Vale College

Cardiff and Vale College was established in August 2011 following the merger of Barry College and Coleg Glan Hafren. It provides further education at eight locations between Trowbridge in East Cardiff and Rhoose in the Vale of Glamorgan. The college's Cardiff city centre campus opened in September 2015 and was extended in 2018.

The college has approximately 9,000 learners, of whom around 5,000 study full-time further education courses. Sixty-nine per cent of the main qualifications learners study at the college are vocational, with 31% being academic. The college's courses range from entry level to level 5 and its provision covers nearly all subject sector areas. The areas accounting for the largest proportion of provision are arts, media and publishing; health, public services and care; and science and mathematics.

Cardiff and Vale College serves a diverse region that includes areas of significant deprivation. A minority of learners live in some of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales as indicated by the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. Thirty per cent of the college's learners do not have English as their first language. Approximately 30% of the college population are black, Asian or minority ethnic learners.

For further education, the college has an annual turnover of £56m and employs over 600 staff. The college itself is part of a wider Cardiff and Vale College Group that includes large work-based learning providers.

## Summary

The senior leadership team is highly focused on meeting the education, training and business needs of the region. The college strongly supports local community groups, and successfully engages learners who are hard to reach in education and training. Leaders have adopted a clear and strategic approach to provision in order to develop skilled and employable learners.

The college provides a wide range of courses and enrichment activities that are tailored well to the needs of learners, the community and employers. The college supports learners well, particularly those with additional learning needs and the very few learners of school age.

Many learners from a diverse range of backgrounds make good progress at the college and a high proportion of learners successfully complete their short courses, essential skills and GCSE qualifications. However, the proportion of learners who successfully complete their main qualifications has been below national comparators for two of the last three years. Many learners engage well with an extensive range of work-related opportunities. Through these they develop valuable skills and behaviours that support their career aspirations well.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve learners' main qualification outcomes
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching so that every teacher engages and challenges all learners to achieve their full potential
- R3 Ensure that all learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills and achieve relevant qualifications
- R4 Strengthen self-evaluation practices to inform planning for improvement

## **What happens next**

The provider will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing learners' professionalism and leadership skills through enrichment and real work experiences.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

People from a diverse range of backgrounds engage successfully with learning opportunities provided by the college's broad provision. Many of these learners make strong progress relative to their starting points.

Most learners make sound progress in lessons, producing work of a suitable standard. A minority of learners make strong progress. Many learners recall prior learning well and apply this to new contexts effectively. For example, as part of their work for the skills challenge certificate, level 3 learners are able to discuss and carefully consider the data needed to support their research. Level 2 music learners make rapid progress in developing their theory knowledge and use this to develop their practical skills well. Across the college, many learners acquire new knowledge and skills successfully. A few learners demonstrate strong analytical skills and in-depth understanding of a range of important concepts. For example, AS chemistry learners use their knowledge of mass spectrometry to determine atomic structure successfully. However, a few learners are not sufficiently aware of the progress they are making towards achieving their main qualifications and what they need to do to improve.

Many vocational learners develop valuable practical skills. For example, learners in hairdressing and theatrical make-up demonstrate strong creativity and produce practical work of a consistently high standard. Nearly all catering and bakery learners work skilfully and critically assess their own practical work effectively.

Across a range of vocational areas, many learners solve problems and apply their number skills well. For example, learners calculate proportion and scale accurately for design illustrations, and confidently take fine measurements in tiling sessions.

Many learners write well for a range of purposes. They structure their work clearly using secure spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many learners improve their speaking and listening skills successfully. A majority of learners respond well to teachers' questions and provide articulate responses. They participate actively in discussions and explain their ideas clearly. However, a minority are reluctant to contribute to group discussions.

Many learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses make significant progress in their English literacy skills. A minority of ESOL learners demonstrate a high standard of spoken English which they use to express their opinions confidently. A few Welsh speaking learners actively develop their use of the language, and these are supported well by their teachers. For example, beauty learners give bilingual presentations at evening events and healthcare learners undertake work experience on a Welsh-medium hospital ward. In a very few sessions, Welsh speaking learners help their peers acquire key terminology and practice their pronunciation. However, overall, only very few learners use their Welsh language skills regularly in lessons.

A majority of learners take part in skills competitions across a wide range of vocational and academic disciplines. A very few exhibit exceptional knowledge, analytical and practical skills and go on to compete at national and international level.

In health, public services and care, learners successfully complete their main qualifications at rates that are consistently above national comparators. Overall, a high proportion of learners successfully complete their short courses, essential skills and GCSE qualifications. However, over the last two years to 2017, the proportion of learners who successfully complete their main qualifications has been below national comparators across the majority of learning areas. The proportion of learners who successfully complete their level 3 and level 2 diploma courses has declined over the last three years to 2017. The rates at which learners successfully complete their AS and A level courses has been below national comparators for the last three years to 2017. Where learners study for graded qualifications, the strength of learner grade attainment varies too much across the college.

Successful completion rates for main qualifications, including vocational diplomas, AS and A levels have improved, and in 2017-2018 are in line with the national comparators.

Learners from deprived backgrounds, learners with disabilities and learners from most minority ethnic groups successfully achieve their qualifications in line with the overall performance of learners at the college.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent**

Many learners develop highly effective work skills and behaviours that support their career aspirations. They engage enthusiastically with an extensive range of work-related opportunities including 'live brief' tasks developed in collaboration with employers. Many learners appreciate and value the impact that work-related activities have on their employability skills. Learners participating in external placements develop very strong work-related problem-solving skills and resilience that support their progression into employment.

A majority of learners develop valuable leadership skills through peer tutoring, engagement in activities such as enterprise projects, or by undertaking leadership roles such as IT champion. A few learners demonstrate exceptional leadership skills through their participation in a wide range of worthwhile activities. These include undertaking student ambassador and course representative roles, as well as wider enrichment opportunities. Through these activities they develop confidence, decision-making and wider employability skills.

Most learners are proud to be students at the college. Learners take a leading role in promoting the wellbeing of other learners through a range of initiatives, such as the wellbeing week, the mental health campaign and 'here to help' days. Many learners feel that their views are valued and that they have meaningful opportunities to engage in the democratic process through the selection of course representatives and elections for the Wales Youth Parliament. However, a few learners are unsure how their concerns are listened to and acted upon by the college.

Many learners thrive on involvement in new and challenging experiences. Through engagement in a wide range of skills competitions and enrichment activities, the majority of learners develop determination, adaptability and professionalism. For example, independent living skills learners improve their self-esteem and ambition through beneficial engagement with the college's bespoke work experience programme 'Project Search'. Learners appreciate how these experiences broaden their horizons and help develop their readiness for further learning and work.

Nearly all learners feel safe and free from harassment and bullying at the college. They know how to access support with any concerns they may have. They are confident that college-wide practices are effective in supporting their wellbeing. Most learners have a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are aware of healthy eating options available at college food outlets. A few learners have contributed to activities that improve the range of healthy eating options on offer, such as involvement in tasting sessions.

During their time at the college, many learners develop a beneficial understanding of ethical, global and moral issues. They are highly supportive of one another and they respect diversity. This contributes significantly to the inclusive ethos of the college. Many learners engage positively with college-wide activities that enable them to explore moral issues in a sensitive and inclusive way. For example, the LGBT conference enabled learners to consider important issues in a supportive forum. The majority of learners participate in a diverse range of community and charity activities that reflect local needs. For example, ESOL learners organise food collections for local food banks. Hair and beauty learners provide treatments for patients at a local hospital.

Most learners work purposefully, using learning resources effectively. A minority of learners demonstrate an exemplary work-ethic. For example, learners on accelerated learning hair and beauty courses have exceptional drive and determination and develop very strong professional skills.

A few learners across the college, including those following programmes such as ESOL demonstrate a strong determination to succeed, even when they are faced with considerable challenges. Junior apprenticeship learners, aged 14 to 16, who were at risk of disengaging with education, develop their self-esteem, confidence and wider skills well. This helps them to progress successfully into further education, training or employment.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

The college has a very clear and strategic approach to its provision, with the aim of developing skilled and employable learners. This aim is reflected very well in the college's curriculum planning and development processes, which draw on strong links with employers, detailed use of labour market intelligence and close contact with its community.

The outcome of this approach is a broad range of courses that are tailored to the needs of learners, the community and employers well. Many courses offer useful work experience, either with employers, at the college's own facilities or through live briefs. For example, partnerships with the media industry give learners worthwhile

experiences in recording live music for the radio. Learners benefit from useful work-focused experiences, such as information technology learners developing a mobile phone application to access college systems. In hospitality and catering, professional chefs offer masterclasses to learners in the college restaurant. In hair and beauty, stylists and therapists from local hotels work with learners in the college's salon to improve their skills and increase their awareness of a commercial environment.

The college has worked well with local partners to reorganise ESOL provision for the community. As a result, waiting times for enrolment onto ESOL courses have significantly reduced.

Nearly all teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge and experience. In practical and theory sessions, most teachers use a range of resources, including electronic resources, well. In practical vocational sessions, many teachers challenge learners to develop industry specific and wider employability skills well. Many teachers link vocational and theory elements effectively. For example, in public services, teachers carefully structure lessons so that learners can practise and apply leadership skills in realistic fitness training scenarios.

Many teachers plan their lessons well, allowing learners to build on their previous knowledge and develop their skills. However, in a minority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow and a few learners are passive in their learning. A majority of teachers use questioning well to assess knowledge and monitor learners' progress. A minority of teachers do not use questioning sufficiently well to stretch and challenge learners or to promote deeper understanding.

Many teachers explain tasks and topics well. They engage and motivate learners, for example, by using topical legal cases to illustrate changes in the law. In ESOL, nearly all teachers provide sound support for learners in developing their English language skills.

Many teachers provide learners with valuable oral feedback and a majority set useful targets for learners. However, where teachers use written feedback, a minority do not give learners effective guidance to help them improve their work. A minority of learners are not sufficiently involved in setting or monitoring their own targets, and as a result these learners are unclear of what they need to do improve. Only a few learners are aware of short term targets to improve their literacy or numeracy skills, and teachers do not monitor progress against such targets regularly enough.

The college has a clear strategy for how to develop and improve Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. The college works well with regional and national partners to support this strategy and provide opportunities for learners to develop and use their Welsh language skills, for example, through hosting bilingual subject conferences for learners. Over the last few years, the number of activities carried out bilingually or through the medium of Welsh has increased and the college offers useful 'laith ar Waith' courses for learners in selected areas. However, in general only a few teachers actively plan opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills routinely through their vocational programmes.

The college has appropriate curriculum pathways for learners wishing to resit mathematics and English GCSE qualifications, or to attain essential skills Wales qualifications. In GCSE resit classes many teachers structure lessons appropriately although, in a few lessons, the pace of teaching is too fast for all learners to keep up. The college offers a useful GCSE mathematics course specifically for those ESOL learners who have relatively strong mathematical skills but do not have a mathematics qualification.

In vocational programmes, a majority of teachers provide useful opportunities for learners to practise and develop digital skills. In vocational classes or through live briefs, a majority of teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for learners to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. However, this is not planned systematically and, as a result, opportunities for learners to practise these skills are too inconsistent. Too few teachers give useful feedback on how learners can improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The college does not evaluate the extent to which learners develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills through their vocational programmes well enough.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The college has effective arrangements to help potential learners understand the opportunities that the college offers and how their support needs will be met. For example, teachers have established dedicated classes for ESOL learners with limited hearing.

Staff have developed very strong links with schools, enabling them to identify early any learners with statements of special educational need who are likely to progress to college. They make careful use of the information they receive about learners to make specialist arrangements and provide assistive technology to help learners, including those with very complex needs, to settle and develop at college. For example, the college has purchased a customised chair for one learner and provides a dedicated support worker to help another learner with limited mobility. It also provides a sign language interpreter to assist a learner with limited hearing within automotive sessions. Specialist hubs offer good learning and support resources for learners with additional learning needs.

Staff track the progress of learners with additional learning needs closely on a weekly basis. This enables the college to respond promptly to these learners' changing support needs.

The wellbeing centres across the college offer a wide range of worthwhile and easily accessible services to support all learners. Teaching staff and wellbeing staff communicate and work well with each other to provide effective support for learners.

Staff provide effective support to the very few college learners of school age, nearly all of whom were at risk of disengaging with education. Many of these learners come from areas of deprivation. Nearly all staff take good account of these learners' individual development needs when planning sessions, enabling them to flourish within their courses.

The college's work with local community groups is highly effective. This enables staff to engage learners who are hard to reach. For example, the college delivers dedicated provision within minority ethnic communities. It provides beneficial sessions to improve parents' numeracy skills so that they can better support their children. The college has strengthened its admission procedures to better identify young carers. It has developed worthwhile links with community groups to help young carers access targeted support.

Many learners have opportunities to engage with a comprehensive range of relevant personal enrichment activities. More able and talented learners benefit from challenging enrichment and extension activities. These activities enable them to broaden their experience and gain leadership skills. Learners from minority ethnic groups take good advantage of enrichment activities. For example, around a quarter of the college's participants in the Seren programme for more able and talented learners are black, Asian or minority ethnic learners. Many learners on Career Ready courses access employment early and the college's 'careers and ideas' team provide a wide range of useful activities to support learners.

A majority of learners and staff make regular use of the online attendance, target setting and tracking system. A minority of staff make full use of it to drive forward learners' progress. However, only a few learners are aware of its potential personal development benefits beyond attendance monitoring. The college's approach to, and quality of, target setting for learners' personal development is inconsistent.

The college's e-tutorial programme is comprehensive in its coverage of healthy lifestyle, equality and diversity and developing the values of tolerance and respect. However only a minority of learners routinely complete the e-tutorial programme in a timely manner.

The college manages safeguarding matters appropriately. Safeguarding topics such as radicalisation are part of learners' induction and tutorial programme and discussed with local community groups. However, around a half of learners' understanding of radicalisation is underdeveloped.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The college has revised its senior leadership structure to ensure clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The chief executive officer together with the principal provide effective strategic leadership. They are supported well by senior leaders who have a clear vision that is highly focused on meeting the education, training and business needs of the local community and city region. This vision is supported by a clear three-year strategic plan that underpins the culture, behaviours and ethos of the college well.

The college has established exceptional partnership arrangements with a wide range of key stakeholders. These include high profile employers, local authorities, schools and community groups. As a result, the college is instrumental in supporting economic growth and skills development within the region and meeting Welsh Government priorities.

Senior leaders have made significant changes to the college's middle leadership team that are beginning to have a positive impact on performance. Middle leaders have received beneficial training to help them undertake their roles more effectively. For example, where departments were previously not performing well, middle leaders have addressed this underperformance.

The governing body fulfils its duty of challenge, scrutiny and support effectively. It rigorously reviews the college's progress against its key risks, aims and strategic objectives.

Communication across the college is strong, with leaders and staff at all levels receiving regular and useful updates on a wide range of college matters. Leaders and staff undertake regular meetings that provide beneficial opportunities to share ideas, best practice and to contribute to the strategic development of the college.

The college has appropriate processes in place for self-evaluation. These form part of the annual quality cycle, which draws on a wide range of first-hand evidence. Many departments' evaluations demonstrate a sound understanding of strengths and general areas for development. However, college-wide self-evaluation does not draw on evidence from departmental evaluations well enough. The college's quality development plans are detailed, but lack specific and measurable targets to drive improvement. The college has a strong understanding of its strengths, but fails to recognise the impact of a few areas for development.

The college has a wide range of practices to support the professional learning of its staff. These include valuable college-wide development activities and tailored programmes for individual staff. The college has identified its key priorities for professional learning as leadership, inspiring teachers and commercial business support. Leaders evaluate the impact of their staff development work appropriately to ensure it meets business needs. All staff undertake an annual appraisal, during which professional learning needs are identified.

Senior managers demonstrate a strong understanding of resource planning, the funding pressures facing the college and the cost of provision. They demonstrate a detailed understanding of the importance of risk management processes and employ these effectively in day-to-day management and decision-making. The college has sound arrangements to regularly monitor budget spend and income at departmental level.

The college has demonstrated the ability to make very strong progress with the delivery of its ambitious estates strategy. This has included working in partnership with both public and private sector organisations to achieve significant capital investments. As a result, the college has made significant improvements to its facilities and resources for learners, for example at the city centre campus, Eastern High Community College and the Leckwith sports facility.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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