Quality and standards in education and training in Wales

A re-inspection report on the quality of further education

in

Pembrokeshire College

October 2008

by

Estyn, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities (LAs);
- primary schools;
- secondary schools;
- special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- independent schools;
- further education;
- adult community-based learning;
- youth support services;
- youth and community work training;
- LAs;
- teacher education and training;
- work-based learning;
- careers companies;
- offender learning; and
- the education, guidance and training elements of the Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

Estyn also:

- provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh)

© Crown Copyright 2008: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.
**Introduction**

Pembrokeshire College was re-inspected in part as a follow-up to an earlier inspection in May 2007. The purpose of re-inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in order that the college may improve the quality of education and training offered and raise the standards achieved by learners. Inspection is also designed to give learners more information about the quality of providers of further education.

All inspections conducted under the arrangements apply the following principles:

- the use of a common framework which is common to all sectors of education and training in Wales;
- an emphasis on the college’s evaluation of its work;
- the involvement of a provider nominee who worked with the inspection team; and
- the inspection of a sample of provision.

The inspection took place from 6 October 2008 to 9 October 2008.

**Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations**

The words and phrases used in the left-hand column below are those that we use to describe our evaluations. The phrases in the right-hand column are the more precise explanations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nearly all</th>
<th>with very few exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>most</td>
<td>90% or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many</td>
<td>70% or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a majority</td>
<td>over 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>half/around half</td>
<td>close to 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a minority</td>
<td>below 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
<td>below 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very few</td>
<td>less than 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade descriptions**

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

- **Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- **Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
- **Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- **Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- **Grade 5** many important shortcomings
The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires the college to prepare a written statement of the action that they propose to take to address the recommendations in the inspection report and the timescales for completing the proposed actions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards achieved by learners in learning areas inspected</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History, Philosophy and Theology/Social Sciences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider’s response to the report findings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 The evidence base of the re-inspection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2 The inspection team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A re-inspection report on the quality of further education in
Pembrokeshire College, October 2008

**Context**

**The nature of the provider**

1. Pembrokeshire College is a general college of further education offering a range of further, higher, adult community-based learning and work-based education and training programmes. It provides most courses on the main campus in Haverfordwest, but it also has around 40 outreach locations across the county. It runs marine engineering as well as some carpentry and computing courses from the Marine and Information Technology Centre (MITEC) at Milford Haven.

2. In 2007-2008, the college enrolled 1,792 full-time FE learners and 5,815 part-time FE learners. The college draws learners from across a wide geographical area, including Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. About 9% of learners are fluent Welsh speakers while about half the learners have no Welsh language skills.

3. The college’s mission is ‘to provide the highest quality of education, training and support services to all its learners’. It has identified five strategic goals to support the vision, values and ethos of the college. These relate to the promotion of effective collaborative partnerships, responsiveness to stakeholders, offering sustainability and value for money, outstanding quality of learning programmes and support services, and a management culture that values and invests in staff to achieve quality and efficiency.

**Outcomes of the inspection in May 2007**

The standards achieved in each of the areas inspected were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning areas</th>
<th>Grade awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health, Public Services and Care</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Manufacturing technologies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, Planning and the Built Environ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair and Beauty</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, Philosophy and Theology/Social Sciences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, Literature and Culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Grade awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How well do learners achieve?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How effective are teaching, training and assessment?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

4 The standards achieved at re-inspection by learners in History, Philosophy and Theology/Social Sciences have good features that outweigh shortcomings. The number of learners who achieve their qualification aims has improved since the last inspection. Most of the current learners are making good progress. However, too many learners do not complete their qualifications in AS sociology and A2 history. Attendance rates have improved since the last inspection, but they remain too low.

Summary of grades in re-inspected areas

| Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| History, Philosophy and Theology/Social Sciences | 3 |
In order to improve, the staff and governing body need to:

R1 improve completion and attainment grades in AS sociology;

R2 improve completion rates in A level history;

R3 improve attendance rates; and

R4 continue to develop the teaching programme recently put in place for sociology courses at the college.
Standards achieved by the learners in the areas re-inspected

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

History, Philosophy and Theology/Social Sciences

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Summary of provision

6 At the time of the inspection in May 2007, the college provided AS and A level courses in history, geography and sociology. In September 2007, a federation of provision by the college and two local secondary schools resulted in the schools providing AS geography, history and sociology while the college continued to provide A2 geography, history and sociology courses. In 2008-2009, the schools deliver AS and A2 level geography, history and sociology, but, due to the numbers wishing to study sociology, the college also offers an AS sociology course.

Success in attaining agreed learning goals

7 Overall, learners achieve well. Many organise their work effectively and present it to a high standard. In general, learners gain good knowledge and show a sound understanding of the subjects they study. They produce concise notes and summaries as well as more extended written work that displays their knowledge and understanding well. Learners also produce a good range of diagrams and charts that reflect a good grasp of issues and concepts studied.

8 In AS sociology classes, learners discuss and think through issues, and they make regular presentations to the rest of the class. All the learners in this course are new to the study of the subject and these lessons help them to gain confidence in their capacity to succeed. Contributions to class discussion, along with presentations to the rest of the class, vary in quality. The best presentations are of good quality, but too many are superficial.

9 In geography, learners produce well-researched case studies on a wide variety of topics, including earthquakes and the location of Japanese manufacturing in the United Kingdom in the 1980s. These case studies have a clear narrative and a good focus on causation and explanation. Learners have a very good understanding of geographical terminology and they apply their geographical skills well in producing a wide variety of maps, charts and diagrams. The shortcomings in the work centre mainly on a lack of depth and detail in supporting good outline explanations. Occasionally, learners focus their explanations too narrowly on one issue.

10 In history, learners comprehend and evaluate historical sources well and produce thoughtful and generally well-balanced explanations. The best work focuses on social, cultural and economic issues. In questions drawing on a number of historical sources, many learners skilfully cross-reference to present well-argued and substantiated conclusions. The main shortcomings arise from extended writing that loses its focus or does not support conclusions with sufficient depth. A few factual
inaccuracies are also consistently evident in learners’ work. The main ones are the references to ‘Russia’ instead of the Soviet Union or the USSR in work about the Second World War, and a view that wartime evacuation was exclusively to rural areas.

11 There are examples of high quality work in A2 level sociology. This results from well-organised, clear and sustained analysis of topics. Learners show good understanding of sociological theories, issues and methods. They apply subject terminology very well and make good use of up-to-date sources for work on topics such as capitalism and globalisation. Most learners develop thoughtful explanations but these are on occasions too simplistic.

12 The rates at which learners complete their courses and attain qualifications has improved a great deal since the last inspection. More learners now complete their AS and A2 courses in all subjects. However, a significant minority of learners on AS sociology and A2 history courses do not complete their qualification.

13 Value-added data shows that many learners who successfully complete their qualifications achieve above, and sometimes well above, the level expected of them based on their previous GCSE grades.

Progress in learning

14 Many learners make good progress in their studies. In all subjects, learners move appropriately from making factual summaries and writing short accounts in the early stages of AS courses to much more extended and analytical work as their course progresses.

15 Learners participate well in lessons which offer a range of stimulating and challenging learning activities. Overall, most learners in other courses develop a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Development of personal, social and learning skills

16 Learners’ rates of attendance and punctuality have improved on nearly all courses, but attendance rates are too low overall. Transport problems between sites lead to college learners missing parts of a few lessons in schools.

17 Many learners work hard and are well-motivated. They keep their files in good order and meet deadlines for assignments. A minority read widely and have a very strong commitment to their studies. Most work well in small groups. They work at a good pace and listen carefully to advice and guidance from their teachers. Many learners use the internet well to carry out research. They take a lot of care in planning group presentations. Nonetheless, many learners are too hesitant to contribute to whole-class discussion.

18 A minority of learners make little headway in some tasks either because they have not had enough time or, in some cases, because teachers do not give enough focused guidance on how to tackle them. For example, there is some work in pairs on tasks that are much too open-ended and for which insufficient time is given for learners to think in depth about their answers.
Provider’s response to the report findings

The College is pleased that the Estyn re-inspection of Social Sciences/History, Philosophy and Theology acknowledges the provision to be above the quality threshold and recognises the improvement in learner performance.

A lot of effort and planning had been put in place following the disappointment of the previous inspection report. It was extremely pleasing to see that the changes made to the curriculum offer and development of a team teaching approach in one of the subjects were fully recognised and that these are improving the quality of learning.

The self-assessment was closely allied to the Estyn findings and the College appreciates the need to continue to develop the teaching programme put in place for sociology courses at the College.

The College has carefully analysed the text and recommendations of the report and will respond with vigour to ensure further improvements are made to raise standards and student performance within these areas.
Appendix 1

The evidence base of the re-inspection

One inspector spent a total of four inspector days at the college:

The inspector visited three classes and a personal, social and health education event organised by the college in conjunction with partner agencies.

The inspector held meetings with:

- the principal;
- a range of senior and middle managers;
- a range of teaching staff;
- learners in the learning areas inspected; and
- representatives of the Pembrokeshire 14-19 Strategic Board.

The inspector also considered:

- a selection of learners’ work in the learning area inspected; and
- comprehensive documentation provided by the college both before and during the inspection.
## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alun Morgan HMI</td>
<td>Reporting Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Davies</td>
<td>Provider nominee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>