



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

A report on

**Coleg Cambria
Grove Park Road
Wrexham
LL12 7AA**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

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

About Coleg Cambria

The provider was established in August 2013 as a result of the merger of Deeside College and Yale College. Coleg Cambria and its partners, in north and mid Wales are the fifth largest provider of apprenticeships in Wales accounting for approximately 8% of the delivery. Currently there are approximately 2,300 learners on Welsh Government funded programmes. The college is the main delivery partner and currently delivers approximately 66% of programmes. The provider works with delivery partners who have sector-specific expertise.

The current Welsh Government contract value is approximately £9.2M. The provider delivers programmes from traineeship to higher apprenticeship level 5.

The provider works with the following partners

Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Ltd
Mid and North Wales Training
NACRO
NLTG
Pendine Park Care Organisation Ltd
Plato Training
Progression Training
Total People
Wrexham ITeC

The provider and its partners deliver training programmes in

Construction, planning and the built environment
Engineering & manufacturing technologies
Business administration and law
Upholstery
Health and social care
Retail and customer service
Education and training
Hair and beauty
Hospitality & catering
Information and communication technology

Summary

Most learners make good progress developing practical skills and theory knowledge that is closely matched to their workplace role. A few learners develop more complex work-related skills that enable them to develop higher level knowledge and practical competence. Many learners develop independent learning and thinking skills which they use well when carrying out daily tasks in the workplace. Across programmes, learners are motivated and enthusiastic, and many are keen to progress to the next level of training. The rates at which learners achieve their apprenticeship frameworks and most other training programmes are consistently strong.

Across partners, assessors plan assessments and off-the-job sessions well and many provide effective teaching, training and assessment to learners. The provider works particularly well with a wide range of employers delivering programmes across many learning areas.

The provider's senior managers provide clear strategic direction for the delivery of its work-based learning contract. Senior managers have been effective in supporting and developing their work-based learning team. The provider's self-evaluation processes are highly effective and these have a clear focus on improving learner outcomes and experiences. The provider has formed outstanding working relationships with the broad range of employers it works with. As a result, outcomes have remained consistently high over the last three years and learners develop the level of practical skills and theory knowledge that enable them to sustain employment.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Reduce the number of learners who take longer to complete their programmes than scheduled
- R2 Evaluate the impact of the work undertaken on radicalisation and extremism to inform future planning
- R3 Increase the use of Welsh as a workplace skill

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 partnership working with a wide range of employers, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most learners develop a wide range of practical skills and theory knowledge that are closely matched to their work roles. As a result, they settle well into employment and, as their skills develop, become valued members of their employer's workforce.

Most learners are making sound progress both in the development of their practical skills and in achieving their training frameworks. They are confident in applying their vocational skills in their workplaces and most are clear about the skills they have developed since starting their programme. Many learners are clear about the progress they are making. A very few rely too much on the support of their assessors when setting and agreeing assessment targets. As a result, these learners do not take ownership of their programmes and develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Higher apprenticeship learners develop their existing skills well when undertaking a wide range of work-related tasks. These include learners demonstrating competence and understanding when using specialist computer software and machinery to design and manufacture components. Business learners apply projects well to their workplaces.

Many foundation and apprenticeship learners develop a wide range of practical skills. A few learners develop higher level practical skills. For example, engineering learners develop their understanding and competence when programming manufacturing robotic equipment. A few learners develop higher level thinking skills and are able to apply new concepts and technologies to their job roles well.

In traineeship programmes, learners develop a beneficial range of skills that enables them to overcome barriers to learning and employment. Many improve their confidence and self-esteem and re-engage with education and training. These learners improve their speaking and listening skills relative to their starting points and are soon able to adapt their approach to dealing with different people and situations.

Most learners are motivated and enthusiastic about their programmes. Nearly all learners work well with their assessors and employers and are confident when communicating and responding to questions.

Most learners develop sound communication skills and many produce written work at a level appropriate to their programme. In many cases, learners benefit from written feedback on their written work. The majority of learners are aware of what they need to do to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Most learners make positive progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills development, through effective use of the Wales Essential Skills Toolkit, including learners who have exemptions. Many learners undertake Essential Skills Wales qualifications in digital literacy in addition to their framework requirements. A very few Welsh language speakers choose to undertake assessments through the medium of Welsh. Many learners do not always recognise the benefits of the Welsh language as an employability skill.

The overall rates at which learners achieve their apprenticeship and foundation apprenticeship frameworks and other qualifications are strong and have generally been at or above the sector average over the last three years. Learners perform particularly well in engineering and manufacturing technologies and business administration and law programmes. Learners with additional learning needs progress and achieve well.

Over the last three years success rates in higher apprenticeship programmes are above the sector average. Success rates across other programmes, including flexible learning, traineeships and engagement, have been variable and inconsistent.

Framework success rates across delivery partners and in a few vocational routes have varied. A few learners complete their essential skills qualifications at levels above their framework requirement. Across the provision a minority of learners complete their frameworks later than their scheduled completion date.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all learners enjoy their learning and demonstrate a strong and positive work ethic. Nearly all learners feel safe in their workplace and have a sense of belonging which makes them feel valued by their employer. Nearly all learners have a good rapport with their assessors, teachers and employers.

During progress reviews learners routinely discuss the benefits of healthy eating and lifestyles. They discuss the benefits of physical activity, the dangers of drugs and over indulgence in alcohol with their learners. However, a few learners do not discuss or develop an understanding of radicalisation and extremism in their reviews with a few assessors.

Many learners develop independent learning and thinking skills. They use them well when carrying out daily tasks in the workplace. Nearly all learners are confident, articulate and understand their job role and responsibilities well. Many learners develop strong employability skills and manage their time well. They work well under pressure. For example a level 2 hospitality apprentice responds efficiently to busy restaurant service, and a level 4 management apprentice describes in an articulate manner how they have project planned a relocation of production between two sites, rescheduling deadlines and dealing with staffing issues to meet business need.

Nearly all learners have a secure understanding of health and safety in the workplace. Most learners demonstrate a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and whom to contact should problems arise at work, in the training centre or at college.

Nearly all learners on the college traineeship programme benefit from valuable additional support provided by a resilience coach. Learners develop improved self-confidence, resilience and the majority improve their behaviour and attitude to learning. Learners access support from external agencies such as mental health organisations and social services when required. As a result, learners settle in to their training programme quickly and the number leaving their programme early due to well-being or mental health issues has been reduced. Nearly all traineeship learners attend off the job training sessions at college regularly.

In construction, learners participate in the college skills Olympics competition, which teaches work based and further education learners to work together and learn different skills. Learners who have participated in the past competitions are effective role models and inspire other learners to get involved.

There are many good examples in engineering and construction where learners participate in a range of community projects and charity events. For example, learners have built a play pen in a local hospital, an outdoor classroom at a local school, and have worked with the National Trust on a walled garden project. Many learners develop strong citizenship and team working skills and they often overcome any personal challenges they may face.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Most teachers and assessors provide well-planned and structured sessions that develop learners' technical competence and understanding well. They focus learners on the occupational relevance of the skills they are learning. For example, carpentry apprentices practise measuring and cutting roof truss joints, and developing basic hand tool skills, before progressing on to the power tools used onsite. In traineeship classes, teachers explain clearly the information contained on a payslip and what learners can expect to pay in tax and national insurance when they start work. They make thought-provoking connections between tax and the role of government which lead learners into worthwhile discussions about the democratic process. In off-the-job sessions, teachers use high quality resources well to engage learners and create stimulating sessions. For example, many teachers use tablet computers and web-based tools to create interactive quizzes and tasks. For apprentices in the advanced manufacturing industries, teachers use industry standard equipment to give learners realistic work-focussed tasks, such as operating robotic arms, or using computer aided design technology.

In on-the-job training, nearly all assessors keep regular contact with learners. They track and help learners plan their progress through their qualifications effectively, through the use of individual learning plans and contact logs. They give clear feedback to help them improve. On occasion however, assessors set targets that are too focussed on assessment outcomes and not sufficiently focussed on what learners need to learn. Nearly all assessors have relevant and up-to-date industrial experience, which they draw on well in discussing learners' work and helping them reflect on their learning. For example, in hospitality, an assessor helps a trainee chef in the preparation of complex dishes. In electro-technical engineering, an assessor draws on their own knowledge of the most recent wiring regulations in discussing a learner's electrical plant maintenance plan.

Many assessors set high expectations for learners and use questioning well to challenge learners to reflect on their learning and extend their understanding. However, in a very few cases, assessors ask questions which are too leading, and do not challenge learners to think for themselves enough. In a very few cases, assessors do not plan and monitor learners' progress well enough and in these cases, a very few learners do not develop their skills at the rates expected.

The provider is particularly responsive to the needs of its employer base and to the regional economy. It draws well on the resources of the college to add value to

learners' experiences. For example, through significant investment in its engineering facilities, the provider is able to provide additional bespoke learning to apprentices in the advanced manufacturing industries in the area, such as aerospace and vehicle manufacture. Learners in the food manufacturing sector whose first language is not English or Welsh benefit from English as a second language provision at their employer's premises.

In its traineeship programmes, the provider has developed useful progression pathways with employers for learners to enter into apprenticeships, for example into the fire service or into a local furniture manufacturer. These routes into further training and employment are motivating to learners who might otherwise lack focus.

Most assessors encourage learners to use the Wales Essential Skills Toolkit to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills or to take additional essential skills qualifications, although in on-the-job reviews a few assessors do not take naturally occurring opportunities to develop learners' skills though their job roles.

Assessors offer learners the opportunity to be assessed through the medium of Welsh, and the provider has suitable provision for those that take up this offer. However, few Welsh speaking learners complete units of assessment or undertake aspects of their programme through the medium of Welsh. In on-the-job review meetings only a few assessors include opportunities for learners to use, practise or develop their Welsh skills.

Where Welsh language development is a requirement of a learner's setting, such as business administration apprentices in a local council, the provider offers useful Welsh language classes, which are well tailored to the learners' vocational needs. The provider is working well to develop the Welsh language skills of its staff, for example, through the Iaith Gwaith programme.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provider has comprehensive arrangements to identify learners' support needs and monitors support appropriately. The provider's learner support team offer a range of valuable services including learning support, counselling and advice and guidance. Nearly all learners, including those with delivery partners, receive a useful learning support guide and smartphone application enabling accessing to specialist support. However, for learners at delivery partners the arrangements are less effective.

Specialist support tutors work well with assessors to implement learning strategies for learners with additional learning needs, helping them to overcome potential barriers to learning. The resilience coach assigned to traineeship learners at the lead provider plays a key role in supporting learners with complex emotional needs, helping them maintain their engagement with learning. However, few apprenticeship learners with additional learning needs engage with the provider's support services.

Many learners progress well and receive beneficial support from assessors to achieve their programmes on time. However, in a few cases, the identification of learning support needs has been too late in the programme and learners make slower progress as a result.

In many cases, assessors support the equality and diversity of learners well. Support materials available through the provider's resource hub, helps assessors to support learners to become active, responsible citizens. They routinely discuss equality, diversity, the values of tolerance and respect and online safety.

The provider is successful in promoting engagement by work-based learners, employers and staff members in a range of community and fundraising activities. For example work-based learners recently built an outdoor learning environment for a local school using materials donated by their employers.

The provider's monitoring and self-assessment of its safeguarding arrangements, including its provision for Prevent and anti-radicalisation, is appropriate to inform improvement planning. For example, recent improvements have been made to learning resources on Prevent, British values and protecting against radicalisation. However, the impact of these improvements on learners' understanding of these issues is too variable. There are no significant concerns about safeguarding arising from the provider's provision.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The provider has a clear strategic vision which it communicates effectively to staff and partners. The strategic plan aligns provision to the needs of employers, regional economic development and the increase in the number of higher and degree apprenticeships. The plan is currently being refreshed to take account of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The chief executive officer has very strong links with employers and key strategic groups. This enables the provider to develop customised, responsive provision which meets employer needs and plays a valuable strategic role in the regional economy. Senior leaders provide clear direction and oversight of work-based learning. Leadership is directed by a well-embedded set of behaviours. Leaders and managers have shaped an engaged and empowered team to deliver work-based learning. The provider has helpful strategies to mentor staff to progress to more senior roles, which enables succession planning.

Governors are very well informed and fully involved in determining strategic priorities. They have a detailed understanding of strengths, areas for improvement and planning priorities. Governors scrutinise performance reports and challenge senior leaders effectively.

Leaders and staff understand the providers' strengths and areas for improvement, based on a broad range of data and evidence. The provider identifies its own and partners' underperformance effectively and uses appropriately targeted action plans to address shortcomings. The frequency of monitoring is scaled according to the level of underperformance. Underperformance in construction (plumbing and electro-technical) was tackled robustly and has resulted in strong improvement in learner outcomes.

The provider evaluates the impact of quality improvement initiatives well. There are effective quality monitoring processes across the partnership with robust systems to support partners' improvement where necessary. The provider makes very good use

of data and first hand evidence in judging the quality of its and partners' provision. Termly conferences with staff and partners discuss quality improvement and performance and share good practice. Procedures and processes for self-evaluation are strong. Partners are fully involved in self-evaluation. Self-evaluation focuses well on improving learner outcomes and experiences and identifies clear areas and targets for development.

The provider has made effective progress in addressing most of the recommendations from the two previous inspections. It recognises that it still needs to develop provision for Welsh speakers further.

The provider has a strong ethos of professional learning. Its comprehensive and highly detailed training plan is based on systematic assessment of staff skills and on the outcomes of managers' appraisal discussions with staff. It takes particularly effective account of individual and strategic training needs. Managers review the plan regularly. Partner organisations have full access to the training programme. Most staff maintain useful, reflective records of their skill development. Nearly all assessors undertake highly beneficial annual vocational placements, ensuring that their expertise is current. One engineering assessor found that learners were using innovative equipment. His placement enabled him to learn to use the equipment so that he could better support and advise learners. New staff receive comprehensive training, covering such areas as safeguarding and radicalisation. The provider supports all new assessors well to gain their assessor and teaching qualification.

Effective arrangements to share training opportunities with partners take account of needs that partners identify. Update sessions in the termly conference are informed by partners' feedback.

The provider has a clear finance strategy. Financial performance is reported regularly to governors. Managers monitor financial performance closely. The provider's ambitious estate strategy has enabled many learners to access high quality, modern learning resources, such as in construction or aeronautical engineering. The strategy takes good account of regional development plans and has led to the construction of learning facilities to support the electricity generation industry.

The provider undertakes due diligence checks when preparing to work with new partners. It manages risk accordingly by offering new partners small initial contracts.

The provider has developed outstanding and highly effective links with a very broad range of employers. Nearly all workplaces offer learners rich environments that enhance their learning and vocational skills. These partnerships have supported the provider to secure consistently high levels of learner outcomes over time, with learners accessing high quality opportunities to develop their practical competence and theory knowledge.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

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