



**Annual monitoring inspection report on:**

**Plas Dwbl**

**Date of inspection: January 2014**

**by**

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

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## Context

Plas Dwbl Farm College is a hill farm of one hundred acres at the base of the Preseli Mountains in Pembrokeshire. The land consists of pasture, woodland and extensive gardens for horticulture. The college has a range of livestock, in small numbers, that are tended by the students. Many of the vegetables grown at the college are used in the College kitchen and surplus stock is sold at a local shop.

The college provides land-based training opportunities in biodynamic agriculture and horticulture. The curriculum covers a wide range of practical and craft activities in specific workshops, the forge, the farm kitchen and on the land.

The college caters for up to 25 residential or day students, with a range of learning difficulties including autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The college principal has responsibility for education at both the Plas Dwbl and the Ruskin Mill sites. The students are accommodated locally in houses that are managed by Ruskin Mill Trust and they attend the college on a daily basis.

The Trust has improved and refurbished a number of farm buildings and there are plans in place to continue the renovation work over the next few years.

The Trust has recently registered with CSSIW for the care element of the provision.

## Main findings

### Strengths

#### **The college's strengths are that:**

- learners have good opportunities to experience a wide range of traditional crafts and gain skills and knowledge in biodynamic agriculture and horticulture;
- many learners achieve qualifications that are relevant to the skills they develop in workshops and through working on the land;
- learners feel very safe and well supported at the college;
- learners develop positive attitudes towards work and employment;
- the college has carried out a useful exercise to identify where literacy and numeracy skills can be developed within the vocational contexts; and
- the college self-evaluation report is evaluative and the quality improvement plan sets clear targets for improvement.

## Areas for development

### The college's areas for development are that:

- the college's safeguarding policy is a generic policy for the Ruskin Mill Trust and is not specific enough to Plas Dwbl. It does not provide staff with a clear process and contact details for reporting issues at this site;
- targets on individual learning plans are not short and specific enough to be measured easily. They do not allow tutors and learners to track progress in small steps of learning;
- lesson planning, across all subjects, does not focus well enough on developing individual learners' literacy and numeracy skills systematically to ensure appropriate progression; and
- links with other providers are improving, although it is too early to see the impact of these new initiatives on learner outcomes.

## Recommendations

- R1** Revise the safeguarding policy to include specific reporting information and procedures for Plas Dwbl
- R2** Use initial assessment information to set short literacy and numeracy targets that allow learners to progress individually in small steps of learning
- R3** Make sure that all lessons are planned well enough to assess learner progress and achievement
- R4** Measure the impact of partnership work on learner achievements and outcomes

## Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

### **Recommendation 1:** Use data to inform improvement in raising pupils' standards

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

All students at the college undertake an initial assessment of their skills at the start of their learning. The college has appointed a literacy and numeracy tutor and has carried out a useful exercise to identify literacy and numeracy learning opportunities in vocational subjects. However, information from the initial assessment is not used well enough to plan learners' skills development individually and across all subjects.

The college records information about learner achievement appropriately.

### **Recommendation 2:** Make sure that all staff focus on the development of literacy and numeracy, and plan the work carefully to enable progression

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The literacy and numeracy tutor supports learners well, in a few sessions, by working alongside the vocational tutor. Other learners have useful opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills on a one-to-one basis in discrete skills classes. However, staff do not plan learning sessions well enough to include specific literacy and numeracy skills targets that are relevant to the learner and reflect the findings of their initial assessment. Planning does not enable learners to develop skills over time.

### **Recommendation 3:** Introduce a formal programme of sex and relationship education with an emphasis on students' safety

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The college has introduced an Asdan qualification in order to provide a planned programme of sex and relationships education. Staff enhance the programme through specific support for individual learners as required.

### **Recommendation 4:** Continue to work with other partners in the local community and in Wales

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college has identified a small number of new partners to deliver craft skills. These effectively extend the opportunities available to learners. The college has carried out staff exchange visits with another independent specialist college during staff training days to share best practice. There are suitable plans to improve the links with a local further education college. However, these are in the early stages of development and it is too early to see the impact on learner outcomes and achievement.

Inspectors' judgements on this annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

### School information

<b>College</b>	Plas Dwbl Farm College
<b>College number</b>	F0006004
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	Annual monitoring inspection
<b>Date of visit</b>	7 and 8 January 2014
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ruskin Mill Trust
<b>Staff</b>	Tutors: 8 (including part-time) Tutor assistant: 1 Care and support staff: 16 residential, 7 day (includes part-time) Managers and administrative staff: 5 (includes part-time), 2 residential
<b>Number of learners</b>	8
<b>Provision</b>	Day and residential placements
<b>Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the college</b>	Mental health issues, autistic spectrum disorder, moderate learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
<b>Last Section 163 inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Last annual monitoring inspection</b>	5 and 6 February 2013
<b>Last CSSIW inspection</b>	N/A

### Team information

<b>Reporting Inspector</b>	Gill Sims
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