



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
LL11 7AA**

Date of inspection: November 2015

by

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the provider's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement 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:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.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 2016: 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.

Publication date: 05/02/2016

Context

Coleg Cambria, in North East Wales, is one of the UK's largest colleges, with over 6,500 full-time and 15,000 part-time students. The college has international links covering four continents. The college was established in August 2013 as a result of the merger of Deeside College and Yale College.

Coleg Cambria serves three local authority areas: Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire, with a total population of almost 400,000. The college works in partnership with over 1,000 employers.

The college is the third largest in Wales in terms of enrolment numbers. In 2013-2014, the college had 14,675 learners with 36,984 enrolments. Of these learners, 6,520 were on full time courses and 8,155 on part-time courses.

The college has 46% male learners and 54% female. Seventy-six percent of learners on full-time courses are aged 16 to 18 years. Fifty-one per cent of learners on part-time courses are aged 25-49 years.

The Welsh Index of Multiple deprivation (WIMD) data for the percentage of lower level super output areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% of Wales shows 2.8% in Flintshire and 5.1% in Wrexham.

The number of learners with approved applications for EMA in Wrexham in 2013-2014 was 920 and in Flintshire was 924. The number of approved applications in further education colleges in Wales for that year was 19,483 in total. The number of Year 11 school leavers in Wrexham who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2014 was 22 and in Flintshire was 21 against the Wales total of 1,040.

Summary

The provider's current performance	Excellent
The provider's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

The college is excellent because:

- Success rates for substantial courses (those that are equal to, or greater than, 150 guided learning hours) are excellent and place the college in the top quartile of all colleges in Wales
- Around three-quarters of learning areas are in the top two quartiles compared with those in other colleges in Wales
- Success rates for all courses and substantial courses show an upward trend over the last three years
- Many learners progress well in classes
- Most learners set their own learning targets and improve their literacy skills very effectively
- Most learners use technology very effectively to support and enhance their learning at the college
- Nearly all learners feel very safe and secure at the college
- Learner behaviour around the college is exemplary

Prospects for improvement

The college's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- The principal and governing body provide the college with strong, clear and effective leadership
- The leadership team have very quickly established a new college with a single coherent identity, ethos and brand
- The college three year strategic plan is used effectively to bring about improvement
- Staff at all levels across the college use the electronic dashboard very effectively to plan for improvement
- The college's partnerships are extensive and enhance the work of the college

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all learners make the progress of which they are capable
- R2 Increase the pace and challenge in teaching
- R3 Ensure that quality processes focus equally on learners' progress and standards as well as the quality of teaching

What happens next?

The college will incorporate actions into its quality development plan, showing clearly how it is going to address the recommendations made in this report. Progress against these recommendations will be monitored periodically by the college Estyn link inspector. Estyn will invite the college to prepare written case studies, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.'

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Overall, the college success rate for substantial courses (those that are equal to or greater than 150 guided learning hours) is 84%. This is five percentage points above the national average of 79% and places the college in the top quartile of all colleges in Wales.

All subject sector areas with large numbers of enrolments are performing around or above national comparator for successful completion of substantial courses. Around three-quarters of all subject sector areas are in the top two quartiles compared to those of other colleges in Wales. The success rates of around half of subject sector areas are more than five percentage points above the national comparators. Hair and beauty, engineering, hospitality and catering, performing arts, and education and training are performing well above the national averages.

The successful completion rate for substantial courses has shown a steady improvement over the last three years, from 77% in 2011-2012 to 84% in 2013-2014.

The college success rate for all courses in 2013-2014 is 88% and is three percentage points above the national comparator. This places the college in the top quartile for all colleges in Wales. Successful completion for a minority of subject sector areas is well above the national average. However, successful completion for construction and the built environment is 10 percentage points below the national comparator and for information and communication technology (ICT) is five percentage points below the national comparator. Across the last three years, the college success rate for all courses has shown an improvement of two percentage points with a slight dip in 2012-2013 at the point of merger.

The college unpublished data for 2014-2015 shows an early indication that trends across nearly all measures and nearly all subject sector areas are improving.

Learners from the most deprived areas of the three local authorities, those with a declared disability and learners from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in their learning at a rate equal to, or greater than, their peers.

The college value added data shows that learners on A level courses and BTEC courses generally attain their qualifications in line with expectations based on their previous attainments. There has been a consistent improving trend in these measures across the last three years. However, BTEC courses remain below the average score and too few learners on AS and A2 courses achieve their qualifications at higher levels than expected.

Many learners across most learning areas progress well in lessons. They take a pride in their work and display it well. Most learners in practical lessons develop their skills very well. For example, learners in hospitality and catering learn new skills in

food preparation and practise these skills in a structured service kitchen environment. Learners in plastering learn new techniques for patching and repairing. However, a few learners across all learning areas make limited progress in classes. A minority of more able learners do not make the progress in classes that they are capable of achieving.

Many learners recall prior learning well and apply their skills in new contexts effectively. Many learners complete their course work assignments on time and are on target to achieve their qualifications.

Nearly all learners participate very well in setting their own targets for learning, skills and personal progress. This helps them to develop their learning skills, to take ownership of their learning and to focus their learning on the areas they need to improve. However, a few of these targets are too generic and learners are not able to track and monitor their progress against them easily or, for a very few learners, to achieve the outcome.

Most learners speak clearly and with confidence. They express their ideas well and support their opinions with robust explanations. They explain processes with a clear and appropriate structure and use a range of vocabulary appropriate to the situation and to their ability. Most learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills well in skills development programmes (SkillsBoost) and GCSE classes. They particularly improve the technical literacy skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar and practise these skills in their writing and assignments. Many learners show a sound competence in numerical calculations and practise existing skills in a range of contexts and situations. For example, learners in engineering use a range of measurements accurately to produce machine parts that meet industry specifications.

Nearly all learners who speak Welsh use their Welsh language skills consistently around the Llysfasi campus. A few learners at the Yale campus choose to take their Welsh Baccalaureate qualifications through the medium of Welsh. A few learners across all campuses of the college take part in the Urdd Eisteddfod. However, overall, learners' development, practice and use of the Welsh language vary both between subject departments and between college campuses.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Overall, most learners at the college feel safe and know whom to talk to if they have concerns. A majority of learners have a thorough understanding of how to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Most learners attend college well. Attendance last year rose to almost 90% and there are no significant differences in attendance between groups of learners.

The behaviour of nearly all learners around the college is exemplary and the behaviour of many learners in lessons is very good. On all sites, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Most learners have positive and well-motivated attitudes to their work. They are courteous and respectful of each other, staff and visitors to the college and they support each other very well.

Learners participate very effectively in decision-making at the college through regular questionnaires, focus groups, campus councils and the student parliament. They are confident that senior leaders listen to them, consider their views and respond appropriately. Course representatives provide very useful feedback to tutors about aspects of the provision and work constructively with college staff to improve the learning experiences of all learners.

Nearly all learners make exceptional contributions to the life of the college and the community through voluntary work and fundraising activities. Many of these activities are initiated by learners and are in addition to those planned by teachers to meet qualification requirements. For example, entry level learners make craft products to sell at Christmas markets and A level ICT learners volunteer at a drugs and alcohol rehabilitation centre in Wrexham.

Many learners participate enthusiastically in an extensive range of activities to develop their employability and enterprise skills. Learners have achieved significant successes whilst representing their college in national and international competitions. The progress that learners make in the development of their entrepreneurial and employability skills is sector leading.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Excellent
---	------------------

Learning experiences: Excellent

The college has a comprehensive range of provision that meets the needs of learners and employers well. This includes vocational courses that are enhanced by strong links with a wide range of employers.

The college makes good use of detailed and well-analysed labour market information to identify the skills needs of employers, including identifying potential gaps. Examples of this include provision tailored to the needs of employers in manufacturing, construction and care. These programmes are effective in meeting the specific needs of employers.

Overall, the college has adapted and rationalised its curriculum well to meet the needs of learners at all levels. For example, learners at entry level are initially enrolled on a traineeship programme that includes vocational work experience, basic skills and personal development. This programme meets the needs of learners who would not normally be able to access college provision. Progression routes within further education and work-based learning are planned well, enabling learners to progress to higher level qualifications in nearly all areas.

There are very good links with employers in most areas, which leads to a high quality and relevant work experience for learners in many areas. For example, in hospitality and catering, learners benefit from industrial experiences in Europe and prestigious sporting events.

The college has an exemplary strategy and highly effective practice to develop literacy and numeracy skills for learners at the most appropriate level. The college uses its extensive range of technology innovatively to ensure that learners develop

their ICT skills exceptionally well in vocational and academic classes. The opportunities for learners to develop these high level ICT skills are embedded in all aspects of the curriculum.

The college strategy for capturing learner destination data is underdeveloped and the college has recently enhanced its systems for tracking destinations. However it is too early to see the impact of this development.

The college provision for Welsh language across all campuses meets the needs of many learners well. At Llysfasi it is promoted particularly effectively.

Learners have good opportunities to develop their awareness of sustainability and global citizenship through the Welsh Baccalaureate and tutorial programme.

Teaching: Good

Most teachers demonstrate good subject and technical knowledge. Many teachers plan theory and practical sessions well and set clear expectations for their learners.

In many classes, teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning strategies that stimulate and challenge learners well. They provide an extensive range of resources that maintain learners' interest and develop their thinking skills systematically. In practical vocational sessions they challenge learners well to develop skills that meet industry standards and prepare them well for future employment.

In the few classes where teaching is less effective, the pace of the lesson is too slow and teachers do not effectively challenge learners well enough to make the progress of which they are capable. In these classes, learners are not fully engaged in their learning.

Nearly all teachers plan schemes of learning that clearly identify opportunities for learners to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in level 3, sports teachers provide learners with useful opportunities to practise their numeracy skills by recording events and outcomes at schools' sports events. However, a minority of teachers across all subjects do not expand on these opportunities to allow learners to develop higher numeracy skills and extended literacy skills.

Nearly all teachers and learning support assistants create an environment of mutual trust and respect between themselves and learners. Teachers and learners have a good rapport and learners are encouraged to ask questions to extend their knowledge. Teachers use the college's digital learning environment very effectively to share information with learners.

Many teachers plan well for assessment for learning. They use a suitable range of questions effectively to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. They give useful verbal feedback to provide learners with advice on their progress and how to improve their work further. However, in a few classes, there are missed opportunities to use extended questioning to draw out expanded answers and enhance learners' thinking skills.

Most teachers mark learners' work promptly and provide them with useful feedback on what they need to do to develop their work further. Learners use this feedback well to set their own targets for improvement and teachers review these appropriately during individual tutorials.

The college provides learners, parents and employers with formal progress reports at suitable times during the college year. It uses an extensive range of communication options including written, face-to-face and digital technologies very effectively to meet the needs of all.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The college has a range of appropriate policies and procedures in place that focus well on the health and wellbeing of learners. The college offers an appropriate range of enrichment activities, including sports and culture, and these encourage learners to develop their social skills.

A wide range of online-based curriculum materials are available to all learners. These are generally accessed during tutorial sessions and provide learners with important information on a range of issues, including how to keep safe and healthy eating and drinking. In addition, they provide valuable advice to learners when they join the college, including how to use the college services and facilities, initial course reviews and initial screening for any additional needs they may have. These measures are effective in ensuring that learners have made the right course choice and that their needs are identified clearly.

The college offers a wide range of appropriate materials and opportunities for prospective and existing learners to make informed choices. Course information provided on the college's website is clear and consistent. The website is easy to use and provides comprehensive information on the support services available.

The total care, support and guidance package provided by the college is sector leading.

The student support department provides a particularly valuable service to all learners at the college. On the Deeside campus the department has a prominent and visible location in the main foyer. Across all campuses, the department provides a useful range of services such as identifying and supporting vulnerable learners, a contraception service, and financial and careers advice. The admissions process for mainstream learners wishing to enroll on full-time courses has recently been streamlined. Learner interviews are now carried out by the student services department. As a result, there is an improved focus on matching the career intentions of learners with the courses they wish to pursue and their on-entry qualifications.

The college has very effective systems to identify the wider needs, including the additional learning needs, of learners. As a result, learners are able to access a wide range of support that is matched very well to their needs. Learning support staff are well qualified and deployed effectively to support the additional learning needs of learners. The provision of specialist support is consistent across all campuses.

Study support tutors are allocated effectively to vocational areas. This ensures that staff get to know the learners well and provides a robust continuity of support for them.

The college liaises very well with a range of relevant external agencies. It is particularly effective in supporting learners during times of personal crisis. The college's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Excellent

In a very short space of time the new college has established an exceptionally positive ethos and culture that is evident across all campuses. This inclusive and tolerant culture enables learners and staff to feel confident and safe.

College leaders in consultation with learners, staff and governors have developed a set of 10 behaviours. These provide a clear strategic guide and underpin relationships and the decision-making processes of the college. The behaviours are used particularly well to promote equality and diversity within the college and to challenge stereotypes. As a result, all learners, regardless of ethnicity or background, feel safe and well supported within the college environment.

The college used extensive research of best practice both within and outside Wales to enable them to develop their new and existing learning environments. College leaders used the findings very well to create a stimulating and inspirational environment for all learners and staff. Nearly all accommodation is maintained to an exceptional standard. Learners have access to high quality learning resources and equipment, which in many cases meet and exceed industry standards.

The college's digital learning environment enables learners and staff to access a wide range of digital tools and applications. Learners and staff use these facilities very well to further increase their skills, work collaboratively and embrace all aspects of digital technology. This environment gives outstanding opportunities for the use of blended learning and flexibility in the use of resources and classrooms across all campuses.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Excellent
--	------------------

Leadership: Excellent

The principal and governing body provide the college with strong, clear and effective leadership. Since the formation of Coleg Cambria in August 2013 they have made very strong progress in establishing a single coherent identity, ethos and brand to the new college.

The college three year strategic vision sets out 15 targets and priorities that run effectively through the college's planning and quality improvement processes. This allows the college to measure its progress effectively and to develop simple key results. The college has identified 10 behaviours that contribute well to the college's ethos and form part of the staff appraisal process. Leaders at all levels model these behaviours well.

The principal and senior managers form an effective team, have well defined areas of responsibility and take active and effective lead roles across the organisation. The senior leadership team understand their roles and responsibilities well. They have worked quickly and coherently to establish the ethos and culture of the new college and have a clear focus on improving outcomes for learners. Most learning area deputy directors know their areas well and carry out their roles effectively. Managers at all levels are rigorously held to account by senior leaders and the governing body.

The college has developed a clear communications strategy that allows the college to communicate very effectively. This is used well by senior leaders, middle managers, tutors and learners to keep in touch, pass on information and share good practice. In particular, the use of electronic media and online communities is very strong and is used to good effect. For example, the principal communicates weekly updates to all staff through the staff intranet, teachers share lesson materials effectively with learners through interactive electronic classrooms, and teachers and support staff have set up online communities, using these to exchange ideas and information and share reflections on their own practice.

The college has a strong governing board with a clear focus on raising standards for learners. The board has made a significant contribution to the creation of the new college from its legacy colleges. Board membership represents a wide range of expertise and includes representation from across the communities that the college serves. The chair of the board carries out annual appraisals with board members to identify their strengths, areas for improvement and development needs. As a result, the board uses the skills of its members very well. Governors hold college leaders to account very well. In particular, governors take a prominent role in scrutinising the performance of courses and contributing to the college's quality assurance and self-assessment processes.

Learners make a strong contribution to governance through learner governors and through regular campus councils. Campus councils produce useful reports that feed into committees of the main governing body and lead to beneficial changes to college practices.

The principal and governing body have positioned the college well to respond to regional and national strategic developments, including a new sixth form hub at the Deeside campus, collaborations with Swansea University in aerospace engineering and other regional infrastructure developments.

Improving quality: Excellent

The college has very effective processes in place to monitor and improve the quality of its provision. It clearly demonstrates consistent improvement in the quality of the learner experience and a continued upward trend in outcomes during a time of considerable change.

The college has very effective systems in place to gather learners' views and prioritise actions. This includes a five-tier system for listening to learners. The college makes very effective use of information from learners to inform improvement planning.

Staff across the college make excellent use of data from a range of sources to review their performance effectively against national benchmarks and college targets. The college uses a comprehensive dashboard system very well to present performance data at different levels in a clear, comprehensive and user friendly way. This provides a single point for staff to access a wide range of college data that is personalised for individual users. As a result, all staff have a very clear understanding of how they contribute to the strategic aims of the college.

Overall, leaders and managers have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement across the college. There is a robust self-assessment process that is informed by feedback from staff and learners. The outcomes of self-assessment are subject to a rigorous validation process that is attended by a member of the governing body. However, self-assessment does not always focus well enough on learners' progress and achievement within lessons. In addition, a majority of sections of the self-assessment document provided for the inspection were not a fully accurate reflection of the college.

Subject area action plans combine well into a whole college improvement plan, which is monitored regularly and reviewed by the governing body. Courses that are underperforming against the college's expectation are subject to a detailed and forensic analysis to enable accurate identification of key issues.

Data reported to the governing body is comprehensive and transparent and uses national comparator data well to enable a suitable balance of support and challenge. The college and the governing body challenge themselves well to ensure high quality provision within a culture of continual improvement.

The college's quality process integrates well with the arrangements for the performance management of staff. Managers hold regular reviews with their staff, and these are supported by information from the college's quality systems, which drive quality improvement. Staff are clear about the performance measures against which they are held accountable.

Partnership working: Excellent

The college has excellent, strategic partnerships at local, regional, national and industrial level, which enhance the curriculum offer for learners.

The college is actively involved in a broad range of strategic groups that encourage leaders and managers to look outward when comparing performance with that of other providers and in seeking innovation. College leaders build relationships well with key partners. This enables the college to take a central role in supporting industry and commerce in the area and to be responsive to the emerging needs of the economy. Staff participation is reviewed and evaluated by senior managers on an annual basis to ensure that the partnerships the college supports are beneficial to learners and the institution.

The Principal chairs the Deeside Enterprise Zone Board, whose senior industrialists from multi-national companies support the growth of the manufacturing sector. This ensures that the college is in an excellent position to be responsive to industry's

needs. The college has started to work with the Mersey Dee Alliance to map progression opportunities and skill gaps across the West Cheshire, Wirral and North East Wales area.

The college's highly effective links with Airbus have enriched learning opportunities for college learners and staff. The college's investment in this partnership demonstrates well its long-term commitment to supporting industry. To provide the highest quality support and to develop progression opportunities further for learners, it has developed a partnership with Swansea University that has led to the building of a new manufacturing centre on the campus.

The Principal is a board member of Landex (Land based Colleges Aspiring for Excellence). This has enabled land-based staff to access high quality training to improve the quality of their teaching and vocational skills.

In response to the Welsh Government-commissioned independent review of learning delivered by further education colleges and the relevance of that delivery in supporting farm businesses in Wales, good partnerships with other land-based colleges have led to a strategic role being established for the Llysfasi campus and farm.

The college's excellent relationships with local authorities have enabled it to secure a grant to refurbish premises on the Yale campus, in order to use it as a Welsh Language Skills in the Workplace Centre.

The college, in partnership with Flintshire County Council, has worked well to gain the trust and agreement of local schools to enable the construction of a new sixth form hub on the Deeside Campus.

Resource management: Excellent

The college manages its resources very well. Financial planning is astute, with good contingency planning. It ensures very good quality resources for learners, and prioritises the protection of funding that enhances teaching and learning. There is a clear finance strategy in place with ambitious targets and performance indicators, which leaders manage well. Financial performance is reported regularly to governors.

The college's bold, well-managed programme of investment focuses strongly on improving facilities. Investment, funded from college reserves, has revitalised the Northop Campus and created an inspiring learning environment in Llysfasi for agriculture learners on a highly advanced, modern farm. The college uses existing building stock well, investing in modernising and improving buildings, to improve the learner experience. The college's investment in ICT has led to innovative developments in the way that learners access and share high quality learning materials and manage their own learning.

The college uses external and partnership funding very well for projects such as the sixth form hub.

Departmental managers have devolved budgets, which they manage well. In addition, staff can make a bid to the college innovation fund to provide specialist equipment to improve learner experiences. This has enabled them and their learners to benefit from state-of-the-art equipment. For example, motor vehicle learners have gained modern diagnostic equipment, while agriculture learners have improved their analysis of milk yield by purchasing wireless rumination collars for cattle.

Appraisal, performance management and quality improvement systems inform staff development planning well. The college has a strong commitment to developing staff, recently doubling the proportion of its budget allocated to staff development. It pays good attention to developing staff's teaching skills and their use of ICT to support learning, and also gives staff very good opportunities to update their specialist vocational expertise. It evaluates training programmes well. Managers have good access to training to develop their management and leadership skills.

Learning Area reports

Literacy

Learning area context

Literacy at the college is taught through learner support, Essential Skills Wales classes, Welsh Baccalaureate classes, GCSE classes and Adult Basic Education (ABE). During this inspection we did not inspect ABE as part of this learning area.

The college uses a standard initial and diagnostic assessment tool to identify learners' skills needs. Outcomes of initial assessment for 2014-2015 show the following literacy results:

0.22% of learners are pre-entry

2.14% of learners are entry 1

10.97% of learners are entry 2

32.68% of learners are entry 3

20.78% of learners are level 1

33.21% of learners are level 2

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Ensure that learners at all levels develop their writing for a wide range of relevant purposes, particularly in vocational contexts
- R2 Ensure that all learners have a planned progression route on to GCSE English resit programmes
- R3 Improve the consistency of provision for literacy in context in a few areas so that it matches that of the best

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

In 2013-2014, success rates in Essential Skills Wales (ESW) communication were well above the national comparator and showing a three year rising trend. This places the learning area in the top quartile in comparison with other colleges in Wales.

Nearly all learners' literacy levels are assessed on entry and learners use their assessment outcomes to set targets based on their initial assessment. Nearly all know their targets well. Most learners review their targets effectively and take responsibility for their progress. As a consequence, most learners make rapid progress in improving their literacy skills. However, learners with additional learning needs in a very few learning areas do not know their targets, or what they need to do to improve.

In nearly all skills lessons, learners practise literacy skills effectively and most develop new skills well. Nearly all learners practise their skills in beneficial ways across their areas of study.

Nearly all learners speak confidently in a range of situations. They adapt their messages well to suit audience, and explain their thoughts and reasoning coherently. When speaking, most use subject specific vocabulary competently. They recall events well and recount experiences clearly, in sequence and with appropriate tone and inflection. Many work well in groups to discuss and develop ideas and reach consensus.

In the best learning areas, learners display very good literacy skills, including very good active listening, and important communication skills in dealing with customers, for example in Hair and Beauty.

Most learners read fluently at a level appropriate to their ability. Many are able to scan texts effectively to extract information. They show good understanding of the texts that they read.

Given their starting points, many learners write well-constructed texts for an appropriate range of purposes and have a secure sense of audience. A few learners make frequent spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes in their writing. However, many take good account of their literacy targets when drafting and redrafting and this improves the quality of their written work. Many level 3 learners write high quality, extended texts.

A few learners do not write well for a wide enough range of purposes, particularly in vocational contexts.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

Information from baseline assessments and learners' outcomes in national qualifications is used well to allocate most learners to discrete skills lessons on one of three tiered programmes. These programmes are tailored effectively to the individual profiles of the learners.

All learners with a grade D in English GCSE follow a valuable GCSE resit programme that takes good account of external examination requirements. Discrete basic skills provision for those not following the GCSE pathway is well planned and provides beneficial support with communication skills, research, and improving the

accuracy and structure of learners' writing. The programme allows for appropriate progression on to the next level or to a GCSE qualification route.

In a minority of vocational learning areas, learners take literacy classes leading to appropriate ESW communication qualifications. While this allows a more flexible and contextualised approach to delivering literacy skills, it does not offer a clear, planned progression route to GCSE English resits for all learners.

Nearly all subject schemes of learning identify appropriate opportunities for literacy development. Many subject schemes of learning are specific about addressing the literacy demands of their subject and their goals for learners. The very best identify clearly how learners will be supported when practising existing skills and developing new ones in naturally occurring and relevant, rich contexts.

Nearly all skills teachers know their learners well. They have good subject knowledge and are good language role models. They keep detailed records of learners' literacy needs and the progress that they make.

In many discrete literacy lessons, teachers have high expectations and lessons challenge learners. These lessons are well planned, and teachers deploy a wide range of resources including digital resources very well to improve learners' skills. For example, teachers use digital technology successfully to broaden learners' vocabulary choices, share resources and develop ideas.

Most teachers provide valuable individual feedback and support to learners. This helps learners to make progress. Many teachers use open questioning techniques well to develop thinking and to encourage learners to expand on their responses. Learners have useful opportunities to assess their own work and the work of others in many lessons.

In around half of discrete literacy lessons, teachers link learning appropriately to learners' main areas of study, in order to ensure that learning is relevant and engaging for the learner.

Most subject sessions use a wide range of activities to develop learners' understanding and spelling of subject specific vocabulary. Many subject areas provide valuable opportunities and beneficial support for the writing demands of their subjects.

However, in a few areas, support for writing for a range of purposes that is relevant to learners' subject needs is less well developed. In a few lessons, teachers do not make full use of opportunities to stretch and challenge learners to develop their literacy skills further.

The college has a valuable marking policy and this is used consistently by many teachers. Most teachers use learners' targets well to give appropriate attention to the technical accuracy of learners' work. Close monitoring of achievement of targets by personal tutors ensures that most learners make good progress. For a very few learners, provision for developing their literacy skills is underdeveloped and target setting is inconsistent.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Excellent

Senior leaders have a clear strategic vision for improving outcomes and provision for literacy. This is understood by leaders and tutors at all levels.

The college has a comprehensive and coherent literacy strategy. Leaders and all staff are committed to ensuring that learners have the skills and qualifications to progress confidently and competently to the next stage of learning or to employment. At the strategy's core is a one-college approach to promoting a high level of consistency in improving the literacy levels of all learners.

The strategy clearly defines the role and responsibilities that leaders at all levels, subject areas, tutors and support staff have in improving learners' literacy levels.

As part of the strategy, leaders have developed wide-ranging resources and professional development activities for staff to enhance their own literacy skills and to enable tutors to develop the skills of learners in effective and engaging ways across all subjects. This professional development includes face-to-face training, effective conversion courses for teachers teaching on the GCSE and skills boost programmes and exhaustive online resources.

Leaders have been proactive in adapting to national priorities and have reviewed staffing and curriculum provision effectively and resourcefully to increase the numbers of learners who take GCSE English.

The relevance of testing, target setting, focused assessment and review of progress is understood by nearly all learners and tutors. This is having a significant impact on learners' literacy skills in mainstream provision.

An outstanding feature of the strategy is the way that leaders have encouraged nearly all tutors across the college fully to embrace new technologies in order to promote innovative ways to develop their teaching and learners' skills further and as a platform for tutors to share best practice in the teaching of skills across the college.

The college has a regular and rigorous programme of self-evaluation that focuses on literacy and numeracy and draws effectively on an wide range of first-hand evidence. Recent reviews have provided clear evaluations of standards and quality of provision. As a consequence, leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development of literacy across the college and are working actively to ensure that the progress already made is sustained and continues.

Numeracy

Learning area context

Numeracy at the college is taught through learner support, Essential Skills Wales classes, Welsh Baccalaureate classes, GCSE classes and ABE. During this inspection we did not inspect ABE as part of this learning area.

The college uses a standard initial and diagnostic assessment tool to identify learners' skills needs. Outcomes of initial assessment for 2014-2015 show the following numeracy results:

0.17% of learners are pre-entry

1.77% of learners are entry 1

8.80% of learners are entry 2

39.65% of learners are entry 3

40.43% of learners are level 1

9.18% of learners are level 2

Learning area recommendations

R1 Ensure that there are planned progression routes for all learners into GCSE mathematics resit courses

R2 Ensure that all learners can learn, practise and develop challenging numeracy skills through their subject or vocational classes

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

In 2013-2014, success rates in Essential Skills Wales (ESW) Application of Number (AoN) were well above the national comparator, showing a three year rising trend and ranked in the top quartile in comparison with results of other colleges in Wales.

Nearly all learners take an appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment. Most learners understand their strengths and areas for development well and speak fluently about their own progress in numeracy. A few learners make particularly good use of the resources contained within the college's diagnostic assessment tool and work independently to periodically check their own progress against their targets.

Nearly all learners set relevant targets based on their initial assessment to help them improve their numeracy skills. Most learners use the college's learner management software highly effectively to monitor their targets regularly and track their own progress. Learners speak with their tutors regularly about their progress in numeracy.

Where the opportunity to use numeracy skills occurs naturally through their programmes, most learners develop and use their existing numeracy skills well in their subject and vocational classes.

A majority of learners make good progress in improving their numeracy skills through their subject and vocational classes where they are able to learn new applications of numeracy relevant to their areas. For example, joinery learners calculate measurements from scale drawings, work out angles to make complex joints, measure using rules and tape measures and use the 3,4,5 rule (Pythagoras) to square-off work. A-level sociology learners compare published statistics, interpret their meaning and draw inferences to support their arguments. Catering learners calculate quantities for recipes for varying number of portions. Agriculture learners calculate suitable stocking ratios of rams and ewes to ensure efficient lambing.

In timetabled GCSE mathematics classes, numeracy development programmes (SkillsBoost) and ESW AoN classes, many learners make good progress in learning. They practise and develop new and existing numeracy skills in preparation for exams, to progress onto the GCSE courses or to complete controlled assessments.

Most learners use the electronic resources shared by their tutors confidently. They regularly use notebook computers in their classes and access a range of applications, websites and electronic media naturally as part of their learning.

However, in a few learning areas, a minority of learners are not sufficiently challenged and do not develop their numeracy skills or learn new skills through their subjects or vocational programmes at a fast enough rate. In a very few cases, learners with additional learning needs are not aware of their starting points or the areas that they need to meet to improve.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The college has planned well for the national changes to the provision of literacy and numeracy. There is a coherent structure to enable learners in all learning areas to develop, enhance and practise their numeracy and mathematics.

In a majority of learning areas, learners with lower grade GCSEs, or those who have been identified as having less well-developed mathematics skills, are allocated to specific classes that enable them to work towards a GCSE resit over time.

In a minority of learning areas, specifically construction, motor vehicle and engineering, learners take numeracy classes leading to ESW application of number qualifications. These are at a level appropriate to their ability and programme. While this allows a more flexible and contextualised approach to delivering numeracy skills, it does not offer a clear planned progression route to GCSE mathematics resits for all learners.

Learners with GCSE mathematics at grades A*-C set targets with their tutors to improve their numeracy skills and are enrolled to complete ESW in application of number at level 3.

Nearly all teachers know the initial and diagnostic assessment outcomes for their learners. They use the college's electronic learner management programme very

effectively to help learners set numeracy targets and to monitor their progress regularly. Teachers in course teams communicate with each other very well. This results in a cohesive approach to developing learners' skills and to identifying and supporting learners who are at risk of falling behind. In a very few cases, teachers in subject or vocational classes use their knowledge of their learners' numeracy abilities to design differentiated activities to stretch the numeracy skills of learners with a range of abilities.

In GSCE mathematics, SkillsBoost and application of number classes, teachers plan their lessons well. They use a variety of activities to keep learners engaged, promote understanding and pace their lessons well. They give learners individual attention where required and explain mathematical concepts well, recognising that learners may use a range of valid processes to solve mathematical problems. They mark learners' work regularly and effectively and give helpful annotations to show how to improve.

In subject and vocational classes, nearly all teachers plan schemes of learning that allow learners to practise their existing numeracy skills in a range of contexts. However, around half of teachers do not plan well enough to expand those opportunities into ways that learners can learn new numeracy skills. In subject or vocational classes, a minority of teachers miss opportunities to use questioning to stretch and challenge all learners to develop their numeracy skills. A minority of teachers do not explain the numeracy concepts that occur in their lessons well enough, with the effect that not all learners are able to apply the skill effectively.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

Senior leaders have clearly set out the importance of developing numeracy skills as a college priority. This message is consistent across all levels of management and teaching staff at the college. As a result, learners are clear about the value of their skills development and take their target setting seriously.

Leaders have planned coherently for the national changes to the numeracy curriculum and have implemented a curriculum model which accommodates a large increase in the number of learners doing GCSE resits and SkillsBoost programmes. This has included significant deployment of resources and retraining of staff.

Senior leaders are clear on the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision of numeracy across the college and have planned staff training accordingly. The college has organised a range of useful staff development activities, which have developed the capacity of teachers to teach numeracy more effectively. Teachers delivering discrete numeracy provision have undertaken conversion training to prepare them better for their new roles. Many teachers in subject and vocational areas have attended staff development events on how to include numeracy into schemes of learning and lesson planning.

The impact of teachers' professional development for numeracy is evident in the way that teachers plan and deliver lessons in specific numeracy classes. However, in

vocational and subject classes this is underdeveloped and too few learners have an opportunity to learn, practise and develop their numeracy skills in the context of their main programmes of study.

Hair and Beauty

Learning area context

The hair and beauty department provides approximately 6.4% of Coleg Cambria provision. In 2013-2014, courses were delivered across the three campuses of Yale, Deeside and Wrexham Training. From 2015-2016, courses are only offered on the Yale and Deeside campuses.

The department delivers a wide range of full time courses from entry level to level 3. Currently the provision delivers courses in hairdressing, beauty therapy, spa therapy, nail services and theatrical and media makeup.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Develop a robust and meaningful work experience programme for all learners
- R2 Review current management strategies to improve learners' attendance rates
- R3 Ensure that the self-assessment report accurately reflects the current practice in the learning area

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Excellent

In 2013-2014, the success rate for the learning area was higher than national averages for both substantial courses and all courses. The learning area places the college in the top quartile of all colleges in Wales and trends over the last three years have been consistently upwards.

Learners at all levels achieve above the national comparators and a few courses perform significantly higher.

Learners successfully achieve regardless of their background and those requiring specific support achieve the same high standards as their peers. At all levels, nearly all learners achieve their Essential Skills Wales qualifications in application of number, ICT and communication.

Nearly all hairdressing and beauty therapy learners develop high quality professional skills in their practical work. In the commercial salons on both sites, nearly all hairdressing and beauty therapy learners show exemplary levels of independent working and highly effective communication skills. Learners show high levels of understanding when they are in consultation with their clients. This means that

nearly all learners identify and use a wide range of professionally complex skills. This is complemented by learners developing strong retail skills enhanced through monthly targets, which are set according to their ability and skills base.

Following initial assessment, nearly all learners make consistent progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills in the context of their course. For example, level 2 learners can explain confidently the use of angles when styling to shape hair. Learners set their own targets on electronic individual learning plans and monitor their individual progress and attainment. They show high levels of confidence and well-developed skills when using on-line resources.

A few learners participate well in local, national and international competitions. Through these opportunities, learners develop skills that are innovative and beneficial to their future employment and progression opportunities.

Fluent Welsh speaking learners use their language skills to communicate with Welsh speaking clients and help their peers in the development of Welsh language skills. A few learners use bilingual consultation sheets that enhance their Welsh technical terminology

Nearly all learners feel safe and enjoy their learning at college. Learners are well behaved and respectful to teachers and each other. Most learners engage well in their learning and actively contribute to lessons. Most use technology exceptionally well to support and enhance their learning experience.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Excellent

Overall, the college shows a strong commitment to meeting the needs of the learners. The learning area promotes the benefits of healthy lifestyles and personal wellbeing effectively and ensures the safety of all learners in their learning environments.

Managers use labour market intelligence well to inform curriculum planning. The learning area offers learners the opportunity to study from entry level through to level 3 and many learners progress well, and in some cases very well, through these levels.

Learners are offered useful opportunities to attend work placements in local salons and also within the college commercial salons at both the Yale and Deeside campuses. However, the planning for work placements varies between courses and campuses.

Nearly all teachers plan lessons well. They use a range of stimulating and challenging teaching and training strategies that engage nearly all learners. However, in a very few sessions, teachers do not select the most appropriate teaching strategies to enable them to meet the needs of all learners

Most teachers make very effective links back to previous lessons to establish a context for learning new skills. Nearly all teachers and assessors use up-to-date subject and technical knowledge exceptionally well. This enhances the learner experience and enables learners to demonstrate a high standard of work in nearly all sessions.

Nearly all teachers use digital resources and programmes exceptionally well to promote learning, support assessment and track and monitor progress. Many of the resources are highly effective and the innovative use of the on-line community resource positively improves the learning experience of nearly all learners. However, in a few lessons there is an over-use of digital resources. This means that a few learners do not learn to use a broad range of materials to support their learning.

Nearly all teachers use questioning techniques effectively throughout the lesson to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. However, in a few lessons, questions did not provide learners with sufficient stretch and challenge.

Nearly all teachers use valuable naturally occurring evidence and opportunities to develop and assess learners' literacy, numeracy and digital competence. Nearly all teachers plan realistic practical assessments and provide learners with well-written feedback that ensures that they progress and achieve their qualifications.

The learning area provides high quality care, support and guidance. Learners who require additional support are supported well through an extensive range of support options.

The learning area promotes equality and diversity well on both sites by developing an inclusive environment. Learners enjoy working within the commercial areas on clients from many different backgrounds. Commercial areas at both sites are well equipped and support the learners in working to a very high professional standard.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Excellent

The director and deputy directors of the learning area are highly effective in providing clear direction and promoting high standards that improve teaching, learning and the learner experience. Deputy directors monitor key performance indicators on a weekly basis and access this information easily through the management information systems.

Roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers are clear and there is very good communication between the deputy directors on the different sites.

The director, deputy directors and teachers have very strong and successful relationships with employers and branded hair and beauty companies. They use these extensively to enhance the learners' commercial experience and to promote the learning area's work and direction.

Staff morale, motivation and enthusiasm are very good and the learning area generally meets most performance targets. Course team meetings are scheduled

appropriately throughout the year and teachers use data effectively to set course objectives and targets.

The learning area has highly effective partnerships with a wide range of providers and these have a positive impact on the learning experience and learner outcomes. Managers work very effectively with partners to shape the college's curriculum. The learning area has carried out consultations with employers to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to the local sector needs. Curriculum planning takes into account employer priorities and this ensures that learners are highly skilled.

The management team communicate very well and are committed to improving the quality of the provision. Managers make good use of benchmarking data to set challenging targets that have a positive impact on learner outcomes.

Most staff are committed to quality improvement, this is particularly evident in the upward trend in performance. Most staff make highly effective use of the college dashboard to monitor course performance. The learning area's self-assessment report is a comprehensive document. However, it does not always reflect accurately the current practice in the learning area.

Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care

Learning area context

The College offers eight land based areas on two campuses. The Llysfasi campus offers land based courses in agriculture, animal care, land based engineering and forestry and conservation. The Northop campus offers land based courses in animal care, equine, horticulture and floristry. As the largest land based further education provider in Wales, course success rates will have a significant statistical influence on national comparators.

The inspection of this learning area includes courses in agriculture, equine and small animal care only.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Further improve rates of completion, attainment and success
- R2 Ensure that all teachers include numeracy learning opportunities that challenge all learners
- R3 Ensure that the quality improvement plan contains interim targets that will help managers to monitor progress towards the intended outcomes

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

Success rates in substantial courses in agriculture, horticulture and animal care were 78% in 2013-2014, matching the national comparator. The college is in the second quartile compared to other colleges in Wales. Over the three years of data analysed, success rates dipped at the point of merger and then recovered.

Most learners progress well towards their learning targets, which they set and agree with tutors. Nearly all are clear about their progress, which they track, using the college data monitoring tool. In a few classes, a few learners peer assess each other's practical work and class work, which helps them to improve the quality of their assignments. Nearly all learners' work folders contain work of a good standard.

Most learners develop their practical skills well. Experienced learners provide useful demonstration to their peers, such as when ear-tagging sheep. All learners handle animals with competence, confidence and respect. Equine learners demonstrate good riding skills and make an enthusiastic contribution to yard duties that ensures the welfare of the horses.

Many learners take part in competitions and events organised or supported by the college, where they further extend their skills. Examples include equestrian events and sheep shearing competitions.

The commercial farm and equestrian centre focus learners' understanding of the business context of their studies. Learners' progression into higher education is good.

All learners are aware of their current level of literacy and numeracy skills. Learners set their own targets to develop spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many learners improve their vocabulary and use of technical terminology in classes. Learners' use of technology in class and for assignments has a positive impact on their digital literacy skills.

Most learners benefit from bilingual learning materials and displays. In agriculture, incidental Welsh is common during class exercises and practical sessions, and many learners attend bilingual classes. In many other courses, learners are encouraged to develop Welsh language skills through the use of incidental Welsh or key Welsh phrase.

Learners feel safe in the college and have a good understanding of health and safety. They act responsibly during vocational activities and identify easily what personal protection equipment (PPE) they need. Most learners attend regularly and participate well in lessons and enjoy their work. Learners' behaviour is excellent.

Learners focus well on tasks and take pride in their work. They support each other well and show exemplary behaviour towards each other, to staff and to animals.

They are confident and communicate well. They treat their facilities with respect and are proud of their college.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The learning area offers a good range of courses that meet the needs of learners, land based employers and the community. Teachers plan the curriculum well to allow learners to follow courses that appropriately match their needs. They make sure that there are good opportunities for learners to progress onto different courses.

Literacy and numeracy, Welsh language and the Welsh dimension, and education for sustainable development and global citizenship are generally planned across the curriculum well. Teachers at Llysfasi provide learners with extensive opportunities to develop Welsh language skills. However, a few teachers miss opportunities for the further development of skills and the Welsh language within the curriculum.

Induction procedures for learners are comprehensive. On-going advice, guidance and support are consistent and learners are aware of where to access help. Safeguarding procedures are robust, and learners are well supported through the tutorial system. Specialist support for learners with additional learning needs is effective and all learners have suitable access to additional support to develop their skills.

The learning area provides a safe, inclusive environment of which the learners are proud. The college estate is well resourced with a few examples of industry leading facilities, for example the farm milk dairy

Many teachers plan sessions well with clear objectives and include activities that engage and challenge learners of all levels. Teachers deliver many sessions at a good pace with appropriately timed activities that motivate learners and develop their skills. Many teachers use a variety of teaching and learning methods well to reinforce learning. Most teachers use a range of learning resources effectively, including ICT, within the classroom and practical sessions to progress learning.

Many teachers use up-to-date subject and technical knowledge well. However, teachers in a minority of sessions do not fully exploit questioning techniques to stretch, challenge and include all learners. In many sessions, teachers use constructive feedback well to improve learners' work and improve their grades. Learning plans show that many teachers focus appropriately on developing literacy skills. However, a few informal written assessments do not fully exploit literacy development opportunities. Most teachers develop learners' numeracy skills well. However, a few miss opportunities to stretch learners to their full potential. Nearly all teachers have useful pen pictures of learners that have details of learners' learning needs, but a few do not fully utilise them when planning their teaching.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

Good leadership, vision and strategic direction have influenced the development of high quality learning provision at the Llysfasi and Northop campuses. Extensive investment has improved the quality of teaching and learning resources. A good management structure provides a clear focus to support the further development of Northop and Llysfasi campuses.

All staff share a robust understanding of the strategic aims of Coleg Cambria and are clear about how they contribute to developing the provision further. They have a strong commitment to the ethos of the college and to the behaviours that the college aims to promote in staff. Staff roles are defined clearly. Effective performance management systems inform the planning of staff development. There are good procedures in place to support staff who have had prolonged absences to return to work.

The development of an internet based learning platform has positively influenced staff motivation, their development and the sharing of high quality resources and a cohesive approach to teaching.

Managers have recently strengthened the design of the curriculum to improve learners' ability to succeed and gain qualifications. Selection procedures have been strengthened in equine and agriculture courses to improve learners' awareness of the demands of the courses, with a view to improving retention rates. Managers have promoted an improved focus on early monitoring of learners to reduce the chances of them dropping out of learning.

Staff review and discuss learners' performance regularly in team meetings, making good use of the management information system dashboard to monitor learners' performance.

The learning area's useful involvement in the Landex group of land-based colleges has enabled it to access good quality training events, which many staff have used to improve their teaching skills and the currency of their vocational skills.

The college has well-established strategic partnerships with other Welsh land-based provision to support the Welsh Government priorities for the development of learning delivered by further education colleges, and the relevance of that delivery in supporting farm businesses in Wales.

The college has good links with local land-based industries. These enable learners to gain productive work experience and beneficial progression opportunities.

There are effective links with higher education institutions that improve learners' awareness of progression and raise their aspirations.

Investment in the land-based campuses has improved the range and quality of facilities available to staff and learners.

Health, Public Services and Care

Learning area context

Coleg Cambria delivers health and social care courses at its Deeside and Yale campuses. There are nearly 600 full-time learners at a variety of levels, which include:

- 1 Level 1 Diploma in Introduction to Health and Social Care
- 2 Level 2 Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care
- 3 Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Health and Social Care
- 4 Level 3 Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care
- 5 Access to H.E. Diploma Health Care

The inspection of this learning area included health and social care courses and access courses. However, the inspection did not include courses in childcare and public services.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all targets for learners are consistently specific and challenging
- R2 Make sure that all teachers use a range of teaching strategies to engage and challenge all learners
- R3 Improve the use of specific and measurable targets in the learning area quality improvement plan

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

Overall, in 2013-2014, success rates for learners on substantial courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 are equal to, or around, the national comparators. The success rate for the Access to HE Diploma for Health Care course is very high at 95%.

Trends in data, across all measures, show a consistently stable pattern, although there was a slight dip in 2012-2013 at the point of merger. The learning area places the college consistently in the second quartile compared to all colleges in Wales.

A minority of learners progress well from level 1 to level 2 and from level 2 to level 3. Around half of level 3 learners progress to higher education.

Most learners set themselves a wide range of useful learning targets. These targets help them to progress and develop their skills within their programmes of study. However, a minority of learners set targets that are not specific or challenging enough to enhance their progress and to help them in achieving to the best of their ability.

Most learners attend well-planned literacy and numeracy classes specific to their individual need and ability. These allow learners to progress from the previous qualifications they have gained. Nearly all learners use ICT very effectively within their learning.

Many learners listen attentively in lessons and complete all tasks and activities planned for them. However, a few learners are not engaged fully in lessons. This means that they sometimes make little progress toward the lesson aims.

Most learners feel safe in the college and are positive about their college experience. Most learners know how to report any concerns or issues about their wellbeing. Most learners use the college on-line systems very well for communicating with their teachers, particularly for reporting absences.

Most learners attend well and are aware of the college's attendance monitoring procedures. Nearly all learners behave well. They show a high level of respect for their peers, staff and the college environment.

Nearly all learners at levels 2 and 3 undertake valuable work experience within the sector. This helps them to develop their sector specific skills as well as skills in employability and citizenship. Most learners participate in charity and community work very enthusiastically.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

Overall, the curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for learners at all levels. Progression routes for learners to higher levels of learning are well planned. The curriculum offer includes useful opportunities for learners to gain sector relevant skills such as first aid qualifications.

Teachers and managers plan the curriculum very effectively to allow learners to follow specialist pathways. This enhances their learning and meets the needs of the community, employers and learners well.

The learning area plans well to make sure that specific literacy and numeracy lessons are appropriate to meet individual learner needs. However, in too many vocational lessons, teachers do not plan well enough for learners to develop these skills within the context of their course.

In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of activities well to provide a stimulating lesson that allows learners to take an active role in their learning. However in a minority of lessons, teachers do not make sufficient use of a wide

range of strategies to motivate and engage learners. In these classes, learners do not take an active part in their learning and a few make little progress.

In a majority of classes, teachers have high expectations of learners. They plan well for individual abilities and learners progress well. However, in a few classes, the pace of lessons is not sufficient to engage and challenge learners, particularly those that are more able.

Most teachers are good language role models. They use challenging and vocationally relevant vocabulary fluently and have appropriately high expectations that their learners will do the same. In a majority of classes, teachers use questions very effectively to challenge learners to achieve to the best of their ability.

Most teachers use the college electronic technology very effectively to monitor and track learner progress. However, a few teachers do not provide learners with detailed written feedback that guides them well enough to improve the standard of their work.

The college provides very effective support and guidance to all learners. This means learners are clear about progression opportunities at the end of their course. Tutorials are very effective in helping learners to assess their progress and to remain up-to-date with their course work. The college supports learners with additional learning needs very well.

The learning area offers an appropriate physical environment that is conducive to learning and instils pride in the learning area. Wall displays are diverse, inclusive and relevant to the learners.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

Overall, the director and the assistant and deputy directors provide positive leadership for the learning area. The assistant and deputy directors are new in post, although they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The learning area self-assessment report is a comprehensive document. However, it is overly positive and, in parts, it does not reflect the learning area well enough. The quality improvement plan clearly identifies relevant areas for improvement. However, it does not identify the steps to be taken to achieve and monitor the set targets well enough.

Learning area meetings are held regularly and follow a useful set agenda. Managers and teachers communicate very effectively across the two campuses by making extensive use of the college electronic communication systems to keep in touch. However, planning to share best practice between the two campuses is underdeveloped.

The learning area has developed a wide range of effective partnerships with local employers and higher education institutions. Managers and teachers use these

partnerships well to make sure that they respond effectively to the sector needs and developments. An effective working partnership with the local community ensures that learners experience high quality work-placed education and beneficial progression opportunities for employment and further study.

The director and the assistant and deputy directors plan well for the quality assurance of lessons through a detailed lesson observation process and annual appraisals. They have a thorough understanding of performance management and make sure that measures for improvement are instigated as necessary. They implement the college core values and '10 behaviours' very well. They identify and plan professional development opportunities for all staff, which are matched well to individual needs.

Learning area managers ensure that teachers and learners at both campuses benefit from sufficient, high quality resources to enhance the learning experience.

Information and Communication Technology

Learning area context

The area provides a range of courses, including AS and A levels in ICT and computing, BTEC diplomas and extended diplomas at levels 1, 2 and 3. The area also has a strong industry IT course portfolio, delivering a suite of courses for businesses, as well as bespoke training solutions.

In November 2015, there were approximately 370 full-time learners and 85 part-time learners. All ICT provision is based on the Deeside and Yale sites of the college.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Improve the rate at which all learners successfully complete their qualifications
- R2 Ensure that teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage, stretch and challenge learners of all abilities
- R3 Develop further ways of using ILT within teaching sessions
- R4 Give learners whose first language is Welsh, or who have studied through the medium of Welsh pre-16, the opportunity to continue to use their Welsh language skills

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Adequate

Overall, for 2013-2014, successful completion of substantial courses is one percentage point below the national average. Successful completion for all courses is also below national averages and trends over the last three years have been

inconsistent. In general, the data within the learning area shows an inconsistent picture both between levels and between courses.

In 2013-2014, learners at level 1 successfully completed their qualifications at a rate higher than the national comparator. However, successful completion rates of learners at level 2 fell significantly below the national comparator.

Successful completion of AS and A level qualifications has remained consistently around national comparators since 2011-2012.

In 2013-2014, the BTEC level 3 extended diploma had a success rate well above the national comparator. However, BTEC level 3 diploma qualifications show a three-year declining trend in successful completion, with the 2013-2014 data showing a dip of 10 percentage points below national comparator.

Overall, vocational and A Level learners are achieving around their predicted levels, based on their previous GSCE attainment.

Many learners make good progress on their courses. Most learners are engaged and motivated and make the achievement and progress expected of them. Many learners are able to recall previous learning, develop their thinking skills, acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills and apply these in their learning. Around half contribute well to class discussions. However, only a few learners are able to expand on their contributions when questioned.

Full-time learners undertake a useful initial and diagnostic assessment at the start of their course and use the results effectively to set their own literacy and numeracy targets.

Nearly all learners are aware of the grades they require for successful completion of their courses and what they need to do to improve.

Learners feel safe at college. They have a positive attitude to their learning and attendance in all classes is good. Most learners are punctual. Learners have a good rapport with their teachers and are helpful and supportive to their peers. At levels 1 and 2, learners use peer assessment to support their literacy development. For example, they proofread each other's assignments before submission. Learners work well and effectively in groups and pairs. All learners display a respectful attitude to their peers, their teachers and visitors to the college.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The curriculum provides clear progression routes to higher courses within the learning area and to higher education.

The learning area has developed strong links with employers to offer apprenticeship opportunities to its learners. Schemes of learning are comprehensive and available to learners through an electronic classroom support programme.

The learning area has a clear focus on education for sustainable development and global citizenship. However, a few teachers miss opportunities to promote these areas on all courses.

Nearly all classrooms display bilingual posters and terminology and learners have useful access to a digital bilingual glossary of terms. However, there is very little provision made for extending the Welsh language skills of learners. Learners progressing from Welsh medium secondary schools have limited opportunity to use their Welsh language skills on their course.

Nearly all teachers have up-to-date subject and technical knowledge. Nearly all teachers plan well to provide opportunities for individual and group work. A few teachers make very effective use of the interactive features of the whiteboard to provide stimulating lessons. However, overall, teachers make limited innovative use of interactive facilities in their teaching.

In most sessions teachers use pace and challenge appropriately to engage the learners. However, in a few sessions, the pace is too slow and there is a lack of challenge. This means that many learners do not make the progress they are capable of achieving. In these classes there is low level disruptive behaviour.

Teachers use naturally occurring opportunities very well to develop learners' literacy skills. However planning for including numeracy in lessons is less well developed.

Many teachers use questioning effectively to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. However, few teachers used extended questioning well enough to elicit further information from learners and to enhance their thinking skills. Teachers and classroom assistants give learners effective support in class. Teachers provide clear, constructive, written feedback and give useful verbal feedback in the majority of sessions. All teachers expect high expectations in terms of behaviour and communicate this well to learners.

Teachers monitor learners' progress closely during the first few weeks of their programme and undertake 'right choice reviews' to make sure they are on the right course. Teachers use the college's online learner tracking system effectively to monitor learner progress against their targets. Nearly all level 3 learners monitor their achievements very well against their university targets and aspirations. The college supports learners with additional learning needs very well.

The learning area successfully creates a calm and inclusive environment that values the contribution of each individual. Classrooms are well equipped with up-to-date hardware and relevant software.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

Learning area director and deputy director use their ICT knowledge well. They work well with teachers to revise the curriculum offer to make sure that it is relevant to the needs of the learners, the workplace and higher education.

Managers hold regular meetings with teachers to update them on college strategic and operational targets. Teachers use this information well when they are reviewing their courses. Teachers know what is expected of them to support learners to achieve and make good use of data through the college's electronic quality management systems to monitor learner progress.

The college link governor takes an active role and interest in the learning area. He attends award ceremonies and regularly meets with learners and teachers. He is a member of the area's self-assessment validation panel, where he offers a robust challenge to the learning area team.

The learning area uses the college's quality planning cycle effectively. Course teams meet regularly and use the results of these meetings effectively to produce annual course reviews. Managers use information from these course reviews well to produce the learning area's self-assessment report and quality improvement plan. These plans and reports are subject to rigorous and robust validation by the learning area's link governor and members of the college management team. However, in general, the learning area self-assessment report gives an overly positive view, particularly of the learning area's successful completion data. The quality improvement plan contains realistic targets for improvement, and formal monitoring of progress towards these targets takes place three times per year.

The learning area has a strong range of partnerships, including local schools, Glyndŵr University, employers and industry. They use these partnerships effectively to ensure that the learning area is offering qualifications that are current and meet the needs of a fast-changing skills area.

Most teachers and managers take up the college's offers of continuing professional development to make sure that they have the necessary up-to-date skills to teach new programmes and concepts effectively.

The area makes good use of its staff and their skills, and deploys them effectively to the benefit of learners.

Independent Living Skills

Learning area context

Independent Living Skills at Coleg Cambria is based on two sites, Northop and Yale. Currently there are 145 students and 12 staff.

The Northop campus provides full time life skills vocational courses at pre-entry, entry 1 and entry 2 in animal care, cookery, creative skills, equine, horticulture and workshop skills. In addition, there is a floristry facility, ornamental gardens, horticulture workshops and production areas that are used as outdoor classrooms.

The Yale campus offers full time life skills vocational courses at pre-entry, entry 1, entry 2, and entry 3.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards of learners with national averages or to analyse the performance trends of groups over time because of the nature of the learners' needs.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all planning documentation clearly identifies the needs of learners, and are outcomes focused, specific and measurable
- R2 Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of learners and provides them with the skills they need when they leave college
- R3 Implement systems to track learner progress
- R4 Implement a system of self-evaluation that focuses on learner outcomes
- R5 Ensure that leaders and managers provide a clear direction and focus on learner outcomes

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Adequate

Nearly all learners attain a suitable range of qualifications at entry 1 and entry 2 in vocational areas such as horticulture, animal care, cookery and equine studies. Nearly all learners successfully gained college induction awards and attained the BTEC level 1 home cooking skills. A few learners attained qualifications in numeracy skills.

The college does not have effective systems in place for recording and tracking learners' progress. As a result, the college is unable to demonstrate or evaluate how much progress learners make over time or whether they make appropriate progress in line with their abilities and needs. Learners' individual learning targets for progress and improvement are generally vague and do not focus well enough on developing learners' independence and life skills.

Most learners are attentive in lessons, remain on task and are enthusiastic. Most learners develop their oracy skills well and with appropriate support and prompting many are able to recall prior learning and respond enthusiastically to questions. A minority of learners are confident to read aloud. A very few learners are able to predict the next question and respond before the question has been asked.

Nearly all less able learners provide written responses when required to do so. For the very few with limited handwriting skills, this includes over-writing. More able learners present their work neatly with clear and legible handwriting. They use ICT well to research project work and present their information in an attractive format. However, a minority of learners do not get sufficient help to improve their reading, writing or mathematics.

Many learners develop a basic understanding of numeracy. In catering for example, the majority of learners correctly identify ingredients and kitchen equipment needed to complete a task and most can recall previously learned cooking techniques. Over time, they develop confidence and increased accuracy in weighing items and using kitchen equipment. They learn to measure using a ruler and can identify simple fractions. In practical animal care lessons, the majority of learners follow simple feeding instructions.

There are very good relationships between learners and staff and this makes a significant contribution to the positive behaviour of learners both in lessons and around the college. Most learners listen well and clearly enjoy their lessons, and many remain engaged in tasks. Most learners work well together. However, a minority of learners become quickly disengaged when activities are not challenging enough or when they have completed tasks.

All learners develop new skills and knowledge and use these well in activities such as basic cooking, understanding healthy eating, caring for animals, floristry and creative crafts. However, not all learners make progress that is in line with their ability and many learners progress on to courses at the same level.

Learners' progress in Welsh is generally limited to responding to simple greetings and counting. A few learners respond accurately in Welsh to questions asked in English. Learners from Welsh speaking backgrounds do not make sufficient progress in using the language.

All learners feel safe at the college and develop appropriate links with the community. For example, they help make willow lanterns and take part in the Wrexham lantern parade, make and sell craft items and organise coffee mornings to support national charities.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Adequate

Overall, the learning area uses the college site facilities well to offer broad vocational provision and a wide range of learning experiences. The learning environment is calm and conducive to the needs of learners. There are excellent facilities for animal care, equine and horticulture. However, opportunities and facilities for learners to develop practical independent living skills or relevant vocational skills to prepare them for life after college are limited.

The college offers a suitable range of qualifications. It has recently improved the qualification offer to allow learners to study a useful vocational based qualification at an entry level. A majority of learners have relevant work related experience as part of their course. However, the college does not plan this work related experience well enough and there is limited impact.

The learning area promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship well. For example, learners take part in the college recycling project and work well with local charities, including a food co-operative.

The learning area takes a well-co-ordinated approach to the development of incidental Welsh language skills. However, this is not appropriately matched to learners' prior knowledge.

The department plans well for literacy and numeracy in its schemes of learning. However this planning does not translate well enough into practice in individual sessions.

Teachers and learning support assistants create an environment of mutual trust and respect between themselves and learners. In the majority of sessions, teachers have clear aims for the lesson and are good language role models to the learners. They use open questions well to encourage learner involvement in group discussion. However, the majority of lessons lack pace and do not challenge all learners well enough. Nearly all teachers do not plan effectively to meet the individual learning needs in the group and work is not matched appropriately to learners' abilities. Most lessons are not planned sufficiently well enough to extend learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

Nearly all teachers use positive verbal feedback to praise learners. Staff are beginning to use an online assessment system to provide learners with constructive feedback on how to improve. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.

The college's systems for capturing vital information on the abilities and additional learning and support needs of all learners are not robust enough. The initial assessment of learners' abilities is not comprehensive enough and there is no attempt to follow-up where gaps exist. As a result, the college does not have a good enough understanding of the needs of the learners. Teachers do not consistently use the information they have about learners to develop strategies that meet the learning needs or to set improvement targets.

The learning area plans for, and provides, a useful range of opportunities for learners to develop their understanding of issues such as cyber bullying, personal safety and relationships.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Unsatisfactory

Overall, the management structure within the learning area is appropriate and establishes clear lines of accountability. The senior managers have well-defined areas of responsibility and communication on day-to-day issues between managers and members of the teaching team is effective. The director and deputy director ensure that staff and learners feel valued and work well together. However, they do not provide a clear direction for the learning area that meets the needs of all its learners.

Managers collect a limited range of information on learner outcomes and have only recently begun to develop a broader range of measures to evaluate the progress that learners are making. As a result, the focus for the learning area is too general and is not clear enough on the specific needs of individual learners.

There are regular meetings for teaching staff and leaders. However, team meetings are too focused on operational matters. There is a lack of focus on the progress of learners towards their long-term goals. Responsibilities within the department are not sufficient to address the diverse requirements of learners with such a broad range of needs.

The learning area's self-assessment report appropriately follows the requirements of the college. However, it does not provide an accurate assessment of the strengths and areas for improvement within the learning area. Its judgements are overly positive and it is not evaluative enough. Managers do not draw on a sufficient range of evidence and the report does not focus clearly enough on learner outcomes. Staff within the learning area do not have a shared understanding of the priorities for improvement.

The quality improvement plan does not identify well enough what the department needs to do to have an impact on improving long-term outcomes for learners. Targets do not focus sufficiently on how the department will equip learners with the skills they need in their future lives. Success criteria are not specific and timescales do not identify milestones for completion or identify resource needs. Overall, the quality of self-assessment and planning for improvement within the learning area is ineffective.

The learning area works well with a suitable range of partners to support learner wellbeing. It has valuable relationships with local schools, including provision for taster courses and joint planning to ensure greater understanding of the college curriculum. However, links with partners to provide work experience opportunities both within college and outside are not sufficiently developed.

The learning area has an appropriate focus on managing its resources efficiently. In general, it deploys staff effectively and learners have access to a suitable range of learning resources. Many aspects of the learning environment are outstanding. However, training for staff does not adequately address the specific needs of learners within the department.

Appendix 1

Learner satisfaction

We use the outcomes of the Welsh Government Learner Voice survey to inform all our inspections of post 16 education and training. Learner Voice is a learner satisfaction survey conducted by the Welsh Government between January and February each year.

The survey asks learners a range of questions about the following key themes:

- the information, advice and support provided to them
- provider responsiveness, learning environment and student wellbeing
- the quality of teaching and training; and
- overall satisfaction

Each theme contains a range of questions requiring learners to rate their provider's performance

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Gill Sims	Reporting Inspector
Vanessa Morgan	Team Inspector
Steve Bell	Team Inspector
Mamta Arnott	Team Inspector
Alun Connick	Team Inspector
Huw Davies	Team Inspector
Richard Mark Tither	Team Inspector
Liz Miles	Team Inspector
Cathryn Lisa Williams	Peer Inspector
Frances Green	Peer Inspector
Helen Diane Lawless	Peer Inspector
Sarah Allen	Peer Inspector
Sandra Jayne Taylor	Peer Inspector
Tracey Jayne Evans	Peer Inspector
Alwyn Griffiths	Peer Inspector
Barbara Jackson	Peer Inspector
Marion Lynn Phillips	Peer Inspector
Ceri Evans	Peer Inspector
Rebecca Claire Thomas	Peer Inspector
Terrie Vaughan-taylor	Peer Inspector
Tom Snelgrove	Peer Inspector
Alison Judith Williams	Peer Inspector
Nicola Gamlin	Peer Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Quality Assurance Inspector
Ian Dickson	Nominee