



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

A report on

Priory College North Wales

Date of inspection: April 2019

by

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

About Priory College North Wales

Priory College North Wales is an independent specialist college, situated next to the Wrexham campus of the further education institution serving north-east Wales.

Priory College North Wales was established in 2011 and is administered by Priory Education Services, which is part of the wider Priory Group.

The college offers day placements for young adults aged 16 to 25 with autistic spectrum disorders and associated conditions. There are currently 36 learners at the college. Most learners come to the college from the local area.

A minority of learners access education exclusively at the college and follow pre-entry and entry level courses, including independent living skills. The other learners follow courses at Coleg Cambria. They study a wide range of courses from entry level through to GCSEs. All learners, irrespective of their main place of study, receive both in-class and additional support from Priory College staff.

The head of education has been in post since June 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

The college is starting to address recommendations from previous visits appropriately. However, progress remains too slow.

Learners are benefiting from the company's increased investment in speech and language provision. This is having a positive impact on learners' communication skills including, sign language, where appropriate.

The college supports staff well to undertake training and improve their skills. This includes awareness training on autistic spectrum disorders, improving learner communication skills and managing challenging behaviour.

Learners and staff who attend the further education college are fully integrated into the life of the college and its programmes. Most learners make very good progress and very few learners make excellent progress.

The working relationships between support staff and learners are a strong feature of the work of the college. This makes a positive difference to the success of learners, particularly those accessing mainstream provision.

Areas for development

The college does not acknowledge learners' prior skills well enough. It does not always build upon their prior learning and experiences to support continuous progression in areas such as daily hours of learning, travel independence and a full work programme.

Partnerships with feeder schools and other providers are under-developed. This means that the college does not have extensive knowledge and information about learners needs to support early planning prior to entry.

Systems for identifying and recording incidents and occurrences are not clear. This means that records and record keeping are inconsistent.

Learner targets do not consistently identify short steps of learning that are easily measurable and meaningful. As a result, learners and staff are not always clear about the next steps needed for progress.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure that learners build on their prior learning and experiences during their time at the college
- R2 Ensure that learner targets are clear and consistently support learners' progression
- R3 Improve the working partnerships with feeder schools to ensure early planning for effective transition
- R4 Develop and implement a clear strategy for identifying and recording incidents and occurrences effectively.

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

Recommendation 1: Improve the processes for collating and analysing data so that the college has a clear view of the overall progress that learners make

The college has recently invested in a new information management system to improve its processes to collect, collate and analyse data. However, this is in the very early stages of development and is not yet operational at the college.

The college has implemented a useful range of systems for recording information about learners' progress against a range of measures including qualifications and personal development. However, they do not provide the college with an accurate overall view of progress and they do not inform strategic planning.

Staff carry out an appropriate range of assessments when a learner starts at the college. However, they do not make best use of the information available about learners from the feeder schools to support planning.

Recommendation 2: Review the partnership agreement with the further education college to ensure effective joint strategic planning

The college has recently revised its contract with the local further education provider to clarify and improve the working partnership. Roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined. A new data sharing policy allows both colleges to share relevant information and this has improved communication. As a result, there is a greater understanding of priorities to meet the needs of individual learners. However, joint planning for learners who require twelve months with Priory before taking courses at the further education college is in the early stages of development and it is too early to see the impact on learners' progression.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the college has sufficient ICT resources and expertise to support learning

The college has made good use of an external advisory service to audit its provision and staff skills.

The college has improved resources and provided staff with appropriate training to improve their confidence and develop their awareness of how technology can support learners. Staff have visited other providers to learn about how the use of assistive technology may support learners' communication skills.

Nearly all classrooms have interactive whiteboards that staff use well to support teaching and learning. Learners have suitable access to computers, which they use well to enhance their work and learning across the curriculum.

Copies of the report

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

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

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