



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

A report on
Pengwern College
Date of inspection: July 2019

by

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

About Pengwern College

Cambian Pengwern College is an independent specialist college situated in a rural location in Rhuddlan, north Wales. Since March 2019, the college has been owned by the CareTech group.

The college is registered to provide education for learners aged 16 to 25 years with moderate to profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 41 learners attending the college. Just under half have residential placements and the rest attend as day learners.

Since the previous monitoring visit, in addition to the change of ownership, there have been staff changes to the positions of head of care and principal of the college.

The college's last core inspection was in October 2014.

Main findings

Strengths

Learners are proud of their college and they know that their views are valued and respected. They have positive attitudes to their learning and engage successfully in a wide range of programmes from essential skills through to animal care and creative arts. Almost all learners have a secure understanding of their targets and what they need to do to improve. They work hard to make these improvements and correct any errors made.

The college is a cohesive education community, with staff displaying a strong commitment to learners achieving their best. The very effective working relationships between staff and learners creates a secure environment where learners feel confident to express their views and demonstrate their achievements. Staff use a wide range of communication methods effectively to enable learners of all abilities to participate in decision-making assuredly.

The individualised tailored curriculum meets each learner's needs particularly well and enables them to make strong progress. Beneficial links with the local community and outside organisations provides learners with valuable opportunities for personal development including potential employment.

Areas for development

The college has strengthened its quality assurance processes to inform its improvement planning better such as through the collection, analysis and more intelligent use of data. However, there is too much variation in the way that progress towards learners' targets and education session observation forms are recorded to be fully effective for improvement planning at individual learner, staff and whole college levels.

The college's anti-bullying, educational visits and off-site activities, and safeguarding policies do not include appropriate reference to Welsh Government legislation and guidance.

Recommendations

The school should:

- R1 Ensure that the college's policies include appropriate reference to Welsh Government legislation and guidance**
- R2 Embed and further develop the new arrangements for supporting and challenging the leadership team for education**
- R3 Increase consistency in recording and make better use of monitoring and quality assurance information for improvement planning at all levels**

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

Recommendation 1: Ensure that tutors' planning promotes learners' independence skills wherever possible

Since the previous monitoring visit, the college has increased its focus on developing learners' independence skills. The promotion of these skills now begins before learners enter the college and continues after arrival. For example, at the transition stage, prospective learner placements for the college are encouraged to make their views known through 'choices sheets'. These sheets use suitable communication methods to enable learners to make their wishes known.

Both education and care staff are extremely aware that promoting independence is an individual learner and whole college priority, and they work together well to achieve this. For example, building on professional learning activities, education staff have adjusted their planning to provide for this including giving learners more responsibility such as for time-keeping and arriving at sessions independently.

Across the college, there has been a marked shift towards a more holistic approach where learners develop the independent life-skills appropriate for their future learning and development. Beneficial co-curricular activities promote learners' independence particularly well. For example, participating in young enterprise activities successfully at regional and national level has enabled learners to improve their ability to work as a team and increased their confidence. Other sessions such as those with staff from local banks and financial services help learners to develop assured skills in dealing with money appropriately.

The college's independent living skills programme has also promoted learners' independence skills well. Learners engage enthusiastically in the programme undertaking general domestic duties, cooking, bed-making and outdoor maintenance such as lawn-mowing. These combined activities, together with highly suitable work experience placements, improve the employment prospects of learners where this is attainable.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality and consistency of target setting so that targets are more specific and relevant to learners' needs and destinations

The college has prioritised appropriate staff training to improve target-setting to meet learners needs better throughout the college. Groups of tutors now meet together to discuss individual learners and facilitate more accurate assessment and greater consistency in the quality of target setting. Each learner has six realistic and ambitious targets, three of which are chosen for each particular session. These targets include academic and social targets, as well as an independent life skills target.

Progress towards learners' achievement is tracked carefully through the company-wide tracking system. Largely, this approach is effective, although, procedures are not always clear enough when targets are achieved much earlier than anticipated.

Recommendation 3: Support and challenge the new leadership team for education so that they are successful in their roles

Senior leaders from the college's national and regional education staff have taken suitable actions to support and challenge the new leadership team for education to become successful in their roles. For example, during a period of change at the college, the regional lead for education has worked with senior leaders to provide additional support and establish clearer structures for the strategic and day-to-day management of the college.

The weekly meetings for senior leaders now include education, care, clinical, transition, estates and administration leads. These meetings provide increased opportunities for education leaders to share information with the college's wider leadership team and influence its overall strategic direction. The meetings, coupled with valuable professional learning opportunities such as networking with other colleges and schools across the group, are helping to promote best practice and drive improvement across the college.

Whilst considerable progress has been made, it is too early to evaluate the sustained impact of these initiatives.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that lesson observations have sufficient focus on the progress learners make in lessons

The college has taken several useful steps towards ensuring that lesson observations have a sufficient focus on the progress that learners make. These steps include paired observations with staff from a similar college setting to discuss and quality assure the evidence and judgements made, and a whole college analysis of strengths and areas for improvement.

In the best practice, effective use is made of the college's session observation forms to provide clear insights about the progress learners make in specific skills and the impact of teaching on learner progress. However, overall, there is too much variation in the way that staff complete the forms. In a minority of cases, staff do not provide enough information for the forms to be useful for quality assurance and improvement purposes at individual learner, staff and whole college level. Further, there is not a strong enough focus on learners' attitudes to their work and how they engage with new, unfamiliar experiences and ideas.

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

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.wales

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

© Crown Copyright 2019: 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: 05/09/2019