



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

**Annual monitoring inspection report on  
Coleg Plas Dwbl**

**Date of inspection: July 2017**

**by**

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

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## Context

Coleg Plas Dwbl, which is part of the Ruskin Mill Trust Group, opened in September 2011. It is a residential and day independent specialist college for young people with a range of learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and attachment disorders.

The college is situated on a farm at the base of the Preseli mountains in Pembrokeshire. The land consists of pasture, woodland and extensive gardens for horticulture. There are currently 11 learners aged 18 to 25 years attending the college. Many learners live in the college's residential houses situated in the local villages.

The college bases its educational philosophy on the founding principles of the philosopher and scientist Rudolph Steiner. It offers a practical skills therapeutic education curriculum, which gives learners the opportunity to learn through real-life activities. These activities include a wide range of practical sessions in the workshop, the forge, the farm and the kitchen.

The college was last inspected in May 2015. Since the core inspection, there is a new leadership team in place which consists of a principal, assistant principal, head of education and head of residential care.

## Main findings

### Strengths

All learners are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and each other. Many learners talk about their work and life at the college with confidence and pride, and their behaviour around the college is exemplary.

Learners respond very enthusiastically to the individually tailored and flexible curriculum on offer. They engage particularly well in their sessions and attendance rates are consistently high.

The college has highly effective systems for listening to and acting on learners' views. For example, learners are fully involved in designing and reviewing their personal learning pathways. This participation helps to ensure that courses are matched suitably to learners' needs, abilities and interests.

Learners respond positively to the college's strong emphasis on the Welsh dimension. For example, when staff encourage them, where appropriate, to learn and practise their Welsh language skills in the wide and different aspects of the college's life.

The college has useful links with the community, which enrich the learning experiences on offer. These links include learners attending external work

placements at the local leisure centre, local church or art gallery. These experiences provide learners with a sound understanding of the world of work and make a valuable contribution to their personal and social development.

### **Areas for development**

Leaders have recently introduced a formal cycle of session observations and learning walks at the college. These focus on the quality of teaching, the learning environment and health and safety. The feedback includes a useful summary of the strengths and areas for improvement for individual tutors. However, the observations do not focus on the progress that learners make in sessions, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Leaders have a suitable understanding of the college's main strengths and areas for development. However, these are not fully reflected in the self-assessment report or the college's quality improvement plan. Overall, the self-assessment report does not focus well enough on standards.

Leaders have a sound understanding of the quality of teaching at the college. However, opportunities for tutors and learning support assistants to observe and share good practice across and beyond the college are underdeveloped.

### **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that session observations focus suitably on the progress learners make in their sessions, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- R2 Increase opportunities for all staff to observe and share good practice
- R3 Refine the self-assessment processes to include specific evaluations of learners' progress during sessions and their overall achievement

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

### **Recommendation 1: Improve learners' punctuality when attending sessions**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Since the core inspection, leaders have implemented a range of useful strategies to improve learners' punctuality at the college. For example, the newly established arrangements for morning transport to the college are setting useful routines for residential learners. The formal meet and greet session at the beginning of the day enables all staff to promote the importance of punctuality successfully with learners.

During the day, leaders are visible around the college at break and lunch times. This approach is having a positive impact on encouraging learners to attend their planned sessions independently and on time, particularly after lunch. Leaders monitor learners' punctuality carefully and use this information skilfully to target learners who are persistently late to sessions during the day. As a result, there has been a steady improvement in all learners' punctuality over the last year.

### **Recommendation 2: Provide more opportunities for learners to work in groups**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The college has introduced beneficial opportunities for learners to work with peers and staff in small groups. Nearly all learners listen carefully to each other and respond appropriately to others point of view. For example, they work successfully with their peers in pairs and small groups to complete tasks such as replenishing the vegetable stock at the farm shop. They also apply these communication and social skills successfully in activities such as pizza evenings at their residential homes.

Recently, many learners worked together successfully to perform their own version of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which they performed at other Ruskin Mills colleges. These valuable experiences impact positively on learners' self-confidence, their ability to relate to each other and their personal relationships within the college. Over time, nearly all learners become less reliant on adult support.

### **Recommendation 3: Ensure that all staff give learners time to complete tasks as independently as possible**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The curriculum at Plas Dwbl is based on a clearly defined three-stage process. Each stage encourages learners to overcome barriers to learning and develop a sense of self-worth and confidence by engaging in practical skills. There is a clear focus on developing learners' independence and tutors record their progress against different aspects of their learning, noting the level of support required.

Staff have participated in useful training on the three-stage process. They have a clear understanding of the need for learners to develop their independence in order to prepare them for future life. During their time at the college, many learners respond positively to the support and guidance offered by staff at the beginning of the session. They make good progress and work independently in activities such as harvesting the gardens, preparing lunch and cleaning the kitchen.

**Recommendation 4: Improve the use and analysis of data to inform strategic planning**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Leaders collect a wide range of data on learners' wellbeing and progress against the three-step learning process introduced at the college. They are beginning to analyse this information suitably to inform planning.

Leaders carry out a robust analysis of attendance and behavior data on a termly basis and they use this information well to implement useful support strategies. For example, the analysis of behavior incidents has enabled leaders to identify trends in challenging incidents and the time of day that they happen. This has led to changes in the grouping of learners and to their individual programmes.

Recent analysis of data in relation to wellbeing and teaching identified the need for, and led to the college employing, a specialist speech and language therapist. This specialist input enables the college to further refine the individual learner programmes to meet the complex emotional, behavioural and learning needs of a very few learners.

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

## College information

<b>College</b>	Coleg Plas Dwbl
<b>College number</b>	F0006004
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	Annual monitoring inspection
<b>Date of visit</b>	10/07/2017
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ruskin Mill Trust
<b>Staff</b>	Principal 1 , Head of Education 1, Head of Residential 1 , Assistant Principal1 , Tutor 8, Essential Skills Tutor 1, Learning Assistant 6, Daytime Support Worker 1, Administrator 1, Total staff 21
<b>Number of learners</b>	11
<b>Provision</b>	3 Daytime students 36 weeks and 8 Residential students 36 weeks
<b>Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the college</b>	Autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and attachment disorders
<b>Last full inspection</b>	04/05/2015
<b>Last annual monitoring inspection</b>	04/05/201504/05/2015
<b>Last CSSIW inspection</b>	13/03/2017

## Team information

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