



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: June 2018

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 17 learners aged 18 to 25 years attending the college. Many learners are placed by Welsh local authorities with a few placed by local authorities in England. 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 leadership team consists of a principal, deputy principal, assistant principal, education learning co-ordinator and head of residential care. The college principal has responsibility for education at both the Plas Dwbl and Ruskin Mill sites. The deputy principal manages the day-to day work of the college.

The last full inspection of the college was in May 2015.

Main findings

Strengths

Learners demonstrate high levels of engagement and participation in learning. They work together well to support and encourage each other in sessions. They are polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors to the college.

Many learners make strong progress against their personal targets and become more independent during their time at the college. They develop a sense of responsibility and take pride in their achievements. They apply the skills they learn in college successfully to external work placements in the community, for example at a leisure centre, organic food retailer and equine centre.

The college provides a distinctive learning environment, which promotes the development of learners' independence and practical skills very effectively. Work areas such as the garden, the green woodwork workshop and the forge enable learners to develop a beneficial understanding of sustainability and natural processes. For example, they grow, prepare and eat their own food, and cut and prepare the wood they use in green woodwork sessions.

Tutors and support staff work together closely to support learners' individual needs. They plan a range of challenging activities that are matched well to learners' needs and aptitudes. The college has a well-considered approach to the careful management of risk that strengthens the development of learners' self-confidence and sense of achievement very effectively.

Senior leaders have a clear vision for the development of the college, which they communicate well to stakeholders. All staff promote an ethos of teamwork and mutual respect that supports the wellbeing of learners at the college successfully.

Areas for development

Although the college has made progress against each of the recommendations since the previous monitoring visit, this work remains at an early stage of development.

The college promotes very successfully the safety and wellbeing of learners while at the college. However, planning to meet learners' needs in important areas of the curriculum such as sex and relationships education and online safety are underdeveloped. This means that learners are not as prepared as they should be to manage their personal safety in these areas when they leave the college.

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 self-assessment processes to include specific evaluations of learners' progress during sessions and their overall achievement

R4 Implement a suitable programme of personal and social education that includes sex and relationships education and online safety

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

Recommendation 1: Ensure that session observations focus suitably on the progress learners make in their sessions, particularly in literacy and numeracy

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college has established a regular cycle of session observations that includes teaching and learning observations by senior staff, peer observations by tutors, and learning walks. Leaders have revised suitably the format of session observations since the previous monitoring visit. These now provide an opportunity for observers to focus on the progress learners make in sessions, including the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

However, in many cases, observations still focus too much on descriptions of the learning activity and what the tutor does. As a consequence, they do not provide a precise evaluation of the learning that takes place or of the development of learners' skills.

Recommendation 2: Increase opportunities for all staff to observe and share good practice

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college has regular staff meetings, which enable staff to share ideas and discuss the progress and wellbeing of individual learners. Since the last monitoring visit, leaders have included an appropriate opportunity within the college's cycle of teaching and learning observations for tutors to observe each other's sessions and provide feedback on each other's practice.

Overall, however, the college has not identified clearly enough how strengths and areas for development in teaching link to its priorities for improvement. This means that these observations do not focus on specific aspects of good practice that the college wishes to develop. As a result, they have limited impact on improving the quality of learning and teaching at the college.

Leaders have valuable opportunities to visit other colleges within the organisation as part of the organisation's quality assurance programme, and individual staff have observed practice in other colleges in the organisation as part of their initial training. However, opportunities for tutors to observe good practice with other schools and colleges are limited.

Recommendation 3: Refine the self-assessment processes to include specific evaluations of learners' progress during sessions and their overall achievement

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college has robust processes to track individual learners' progress against a wide range of measures. These include the progress they make against their short-term targets in areas such as work readiness, community inclusion and managing health and wellbeing, as well as against their targets for literacy and numeracy.

The college collects important information about individual learners' wellbeing, for example in relation to their attendance and behaviour. Staff review this information regularly to set new targets for learners and to provide detailed and valuable information to learners' parents and carers, local authorities and the Welsh Government.

Since the last monitoring visit, leaders have made adaptations to self-evaluation processes to collect more focused information on learners' progress during sessions. For example, it has revised its self-assessment report to include more data on pupils' standards and has reviewed its approach to lesson observations to focus more clearly on the progress learners make in sessions. However, overall, leaders do not use the information they collect on learners' progress and their standards of achievement to evaluate clearly enough the impact of the college's work or to plan priorities for improvement based on a robust analysis of this evidence.

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

College information

College	Coleg Plas Dwbl
College number	F0006004
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	27/06/2018
Proprietor	Ruskin Mill Trust
Staff	1 assistant principal, 1 head of residential care, 1 land manager, 4 full-time tutors, 6 part-time tutors, 2 learning assistants, 2 support workers, 1 speech and language therapist
Number of learners	17
Provision	6 day learners, 9 learners on 36-week residential placements, 2 learners on 52-week residential placements
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the college	Autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and attachment disorders
Last full inspection	04/05/2015
Last annual monitoring inspection	03/07/2017
Last CSSIW inspection	13/03/2017