



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

A report on
Coleg Elidyr Camphill Communities
Date of inspection: October 2019

by

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

About Coleg Elidyr Camphill Communities

Coleg Elidyr is a residential independent specialist college for young people aged 18 to 30 years. The college estate extends to 180 acres and includes a kitchen garden, farmland and woodlands. It is located in a rural setting near Llandovery.

There are currently 19 learners at the college, all of whom live in one of the six residential houses on the site. Learners at the college have a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. As a result, it is not appropriate to compare the results of learners in Coleg Elidyr with other providers. The majority of learners come from Wales.

The curriculum at Coleg Elidyr was originally inspired by the educational and social philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and Karl König. It emphasises experiential, practical learning and offers a combination of land-based, vocational and craft subjects to help learners to develop skills for a more independent life.

The college's mission is to enable people with learning difficulties and disabilities to develop their knowledge and skills and reach their full potential, while living and working in a community setting influenced by the Camphill movement.

The Principal and all members of the senior leadership team have been in post for over three years. The leaders are responsible to a board of trustees.

The campus is also home to a further 25 young adults, who are funded by social services and health for residential placements within the community. Estyn did not inspect this provision.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Nearly all learners at Coleg Elidyr make outstanding progress. As a result of the progress they make, whatever their level of needs, by the time they leave the college, they are better prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Most learners develop their social skills effectively and enjoy the company of their peers. Over time, they increase their confidence to meet new people. This is especially good progress for learners for whom social situations have previously been a major challenge.

Teaching at the college provides learners with highly stimulating experiences that help them to engage fully in their learning and make exceptional progress. Tutors and support staff are passionate and enthusiastic practitioners who collaborate extremely well to support learners. The creative and well-planned curriculum and purposeful, strategic planning for progression in learners' individual skills, including literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) are particular strengths.

The college provides learners with exceptionally high levels of care, support and guidance. The very effective whole-college total communication strategy for supporting learners enables them to develop their learning and social skills and prepares them extremely well for adulthood.

Throughout the college, there is a powerful sense of purpose and commitment. This contributes significantly to the exceptional standards learners achieve and their high levels of wellbeing. Leaders and staff set high expectations for learners and themselves. They model and promote professional behaviours such as building relationships rooted in mutual respect to collaborate effectively and drive forward improvements.

The trustees provide extremely valuable leadership and direction in overseeing all aspects of the college's work meticulously.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that the college's arrangements for quality assuring teaching and learning focus appropriately on strengths and areas for development

What happens next

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare two case studies on aspects of its excellent practice.

Estyn will disseminate these case studies on its website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

Nearly all learners at Coleg Elidyr make outstanding progress. In relation to their individual starting points, nearly all learners exceed their personal targets and make exceptional progress towards fulfilling their potential. As a result they leave the college better prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Nearly all learners make exceptional progress in developing their communication skills. This is a strength and enables learners to access the wider curriculum on offer. A majority of learners strengthen their communication effectively with signs or through other resources. A few develop clear oracy skills and the confidence to use these successfully. These learners use technical language and subject relevant vocabulary with fluency and ease. They use these skills confidently in a range of situations, such as speaking at a conference and in the learner forum where they share ideas such as the roles needed to set up weekly youth and gym clubs. Across the college, almost all learners listen attentively to staff and one another and engage positively with their learning. They follow routines successfully, such as loading their 'now and next' boards with verbal prompts, and follow safety routines correctly.

Over time at the college, nearly all learners develop the skills and confidence to become more independent in their learning. They develop their thinking and problem solving skills well and learn to apply them in a relevant manner to everyday life. They develop the skills of reflection and begin to consider their choices before taking actions. For many learners this maturity of thinking before action is significant progress from their starting point. Many learners make tremendous progress towards becoming more independent. For example, they learn to navigate themselves around the college site without support and to look after themselves safely by being aware of traffic.

A few learners make good progress in developing their reading and writing skills. They read with fluency and accuracy and a majority of these learners have appropriate strategies for reading new words. Most learners choose their own reading material and a few express their opinions about stories with enthusiasm. Most learners form letters well, and a few spell suitable words correctly and use full stops with accuracy. They use their skills appropriately across their learning, and improve their dexterity and fine motor skills well through activities such as wood turning and carving. They learn valuable skills that will improve their pen control through rhythmical vocational activities such as using the peg loom in weaving.

Over time, most learners make strong progress in developing their numeracy skills. They consistently use basic numeracy skills accurately such as when comparing objects that are bigger or smaller than each other, and describing objects as being thick or thin and long or short. A few recognise and count single numbers up to ten accurately and a very few calculate negative numbers when subtracting three digit figures. Many learners make effective use of these skills across the curriculum to support their learning. For example, in woodwork, learners use a range of measures well, such as hand spans, rulers and tape measures.

A few learners make good use of a narrow range of information and communications technology skills to improve the presentation of their work, such as incorporating text and images into an attractive poster. Many learners use photography and film effectively to evidence their work such as recording scenarios where they act out how to look after people in need of help.

Most learners gain accreditation for their learning, for example when working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme where they take on volunteering roles in the community, camp out in a tent and learn how to read maps to follow directions.

A few learners develop their vocational skills extremely well using the facilities on the college site. For example in retail, catering and garden maintenance activities, they demonstrate good numeracy and technical skills and communicate confidently with customers, visitors and staff. These experiences prepare them well for supported work opportunities in local shops and businesses.

Most learners develop their gross and fine motor skills effectively in a range of useful contexts, with suitable support where required, for instance when participating in fitness sessions, hand carding wool for use in felting and winding bobbins for weaving. Learners are proud of the quality products they make, such as rugs and table runners that they often sell through the college open days and events.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

The behaviour of learners around the college is excellent. This is because, as they develop the skills to communicate more effectively, they learn to express their emotions and regulate their behaviours. The calm and pleasant atmosphere on site encourages learners to move around the college in a relaxed manner and most therefore arrive at lessons punctually and ready to learn. This is a significant achievement for the few learners who independently walk between sessions and lunch breaks.

Most learners engage extremely well in their learning. They are enthusiastic to try out new activities, with support when necessary, and explore new experiences. They clearly enjoy the range of activities, such as designing and making bird boxes, canoeing and collaborating effectively to look after the college's alpacas and donkeys. They show care and understanding of how to best work with these animals.

Most learners develop their social skills effectively and enjoy the company of their peers. They increase their confidence to meet new people, such as when they represent the college at national meetings, or on social events in the local community. This is especially good progress for learners for whom social situations have previously been a major challenge.

Nearly all learners enjoy a healthy diet and choose healthy snacks at break times. They understand the importance of keeping themselves hydrated and carry water or fruit drinks with them when they are out on walks. They make good use of the gym on site, regularly take part in outdoor activities and enjoy the extra-curricular activities offered by the college. Many transfer their physical skills successfully to their leisure time where they enjoy dancing at the weekly youth club, doing gymnastics at the gym club and fishing in local rivers.

Nearly all learners know whom to go to for support when they need it. They develop close working relationships with staff and trust them to guide their learning and ensure their safety and wellbeing. Over time, they improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result, they learn to manage risks in the safe environment of the college grounds and beyond, for example when walking or cycling around the grounds independently and taking part in exciting walking expeditions in the mountains.

Learners with leadership roles are helping to improve the college environment. For example, they apply their knowledge on health and safety well to inform college leaders of issues such as dangerous pot holes, the need for all cyclists to wear helmets and of walls in need of maintenance. The student forum represents peers well and also contributes to the local community through advising services such as Carmarthenshire's People's First and Domestic Abuse Service.

Many learners develop their understanding of ethical issues, such as fairness and tolerance of others well. They have high expectations for the behaviour of others. For example when playing board games, they expect all players to play by the rules. They show empathy and concern about equality issues when they role play and record a short film presentation about the experiences of homelessness. Learners show understanding and genuine care for their peers, especially those who prefer to work alone or need additional support.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

Teaching at the college provides learners with highly stimulating experiences that help them to engage fully in their learning and make exceptional progress. Tutors and support staff are passionate and enthusiastic practitioners who collaborate extremely well to support learners. They foster very productive working relationships and have an exceptional understanding of their learners' needs. Staff use this information skilfully to plan purposeful activities and tasks for learners that motivate them and help them to develop in all areas across the curriculum. For each session, they develop and use an extensive range of creative resources that are matched particularly well to learners' individual needs and support their engagement.

Staff have high expectations of learners and manage behaviour positively. This approach includes implementing purposeful techniques to help learners to manage their own behaviour and responses assuredly during sessions. For example, during woodwork sessions, learners are encouraged to use the calming, rhythmic process of sanding to manage their behaviours and emotions. During sessions, staff make intelligent and sensitive use of questioning and prompting to probe learners' understanding and to support them to undertake tasks successfully. They are flexible in their approach and provide clear and, where necessary, additional explanations and instructions to support learners' independent working. Tutors also ensure that there is a suitable balance in delivery between support, staff-led and independent tasks and activities.

During sessions, nearly all staff provide useful, measured verbal feedback. This helps learners to understand how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve their work and what to do next. At the end of each session, tutors encourage learners to complete session evaluations about their learning and progress, and tutors and learners use these effectively at the start of their next session to make improvements.

The college's creative and well-planned curriculum is a particular strength. It is tailored and adapted very successfully to meet the individual needs of all learners and prepares them well for their future lives. The college provides learners with an extensive range of experiences to develop their interests and skills across a wide range of areas of learning from skills activities through to health and wellbeing and land-based studies. This provision also leads to valuable accreditation where appropriate.

The vocational and work experience provision at the college enhances learners' independence and employability skills. There is a small range of pathways and vocational courses for learners to access onsite. In addition, work placements are chosen carefully both within the college and in the wider community to reflect the skills and the interests of the learner.

Almost all learners enjoy their personal development time on Friday afternoons, where they pursue their hobbies and interests. The college also offers learners a valuable range of extra-curricular activities that supports the development of learners' life skills well. These activities include the walking group's visit to the RSPB reserve, participation in sporting activities and visits to local festivals, such as the local sheep festival where learners demonstrate craft skills.

The college's purposeful, strategic planning for progression in learners' individual skills, including literacy, numeracy and ICT is a strength. Tutors are adept at identifying appropriate opportunities for skills development and use these very effectively during sessions. For example, in the college shop environment, tutors plan for learners to study dates for stock rotation. In nearly all classroom based sessions, tutors encourage learners to use their ICT skills for research, communication, writing and recording progress. Schemes of work identify beneficial opportunities to develop learners' social and independence skills through practical and relevant activities such as in caring for the college small animals and, in personal development, when preparing healthy food. Overall, the co-ordination of skills within the curriculum provides learners with extremely effective progressive opportunities to prepare them very well for their future independent lives.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The college provides learners with exceptionally high levels of care, support and guidance. In particular, the very effective whole-college total communication strategy enables learners to develop their learning and social skills and prepares them extremely well for adult life.

The college multi-disciplinary team approach is highly effective in driving forward the total communication strategy. Working together, all staff improve their total communication skills which they use consistently with learners. This ongoing and improving practice is a very strong feature of support at the college. Through this work, learners develop their individual preferred methods of communication and this helps them to access their learning and to engage in social interaction. As a result, learners improve their self-esteem, self-confidence and independence and this contributes very strongly to their progress and outstanding outcomes.

The college carries out a very detailed three-day assessment for all potential learners. This enables staff to gather a very thorough understanding of the learners' needs, capabilities and aspirations. As a result, learners have relevant and appropriate targets on their individual learning plans. College staff work as a highly effective team across education and residential areas. They collaborate very well to evaluate learners' progress in meeting their targets across a range of activities. Staff record and collate the information on learners' progress effectively and use it well to inform future planning, including providing additional support where required. This team approach to monitoring and tracking learner progress contributes considerably to learners' achievements.

The college has very useful partnerships with appropriate agencies and stakeholders to ensure that all learners receive the care, support and guidance they need. These include the local police, health care specialists and local authorities. A careers adviser works with the college to support learners and their parents and carers with valuable advice and guidance on prospects and opportunities for the future.

Relationships between the college and parents and carers are nearly always highly effective. There are very useful and frequent opportunities for them to visit the college and to receive appropriate and timely reports on learner progress.

The college places a very high priority on preparing learners for the next stage of their lives. As a result, there is a strong emphasis on personal and social development. Tutors plan well to include all aspects of personal development throughout their sessions to enable learners to acquire these skills as opportunities arise. For example, in woodwork, learners are encouraged to work in pairs and take turns in wood splitting. The college provides useful opportunities to learn about citizenship, diversity and equality where learners develop their understanding through enjoyable role play and drama sessions. Health, fitness and diets are an integral part of the planning for cookery and gym sessions. The college provides relevant information on drugs, alcohol and sex education in ways that the learners can relate to and understand.

Staff across the college plan thoughtfully to allow learners to be as independent as possible around the extensive college site. They make particularly good use of opportunities to support learners develop better understanding of how to stay safe. Online safety is a consistent part of ICT lessons and keeping themselves safe is part of learners' personal development. As a result, learners display an increasing confidence in being able to advise staff if they do not feel safe or when they recognise and wish to report an incident.

The college provides many varied opportunities for learners to develop leadership skills and to learn about responsibility. Examples include the student forum where staff support and encourage the members to take responsibility for issues, concerns and suggestions, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and gym sessions where learners rotate as team leader.

The college's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Excellent

The principal has been extremely successful in establishing and promoting a clear vision for the college. This vision is based on providing high quality personalised education for learners that maximises their independence and post-college life chances.

Throughout the college, there is a powerful sense of purpose and commitment to the college's values and to meeting its aims and objectives. This level of commitment contributes significantly to the exceptional standards that learners achieve and their high levels of wellbeing.

Leaders and staff set high expectations for learners and themselves. They model and promote professional behaviours, such as building relationships rooted in mutual respect to collaborate effectively, and drive forward improvements. Staff at all levels have a secure understanding of their role and responsibilities and almost all fulfil their role effectively. There are well-defined line-management arrangements, which ensure that staff are accountable for the quality of their work. Where underperformance is identified, this is dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate way. As a result, the college has an assured, engaged team of staff who ensure that it operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis.

The trustees provide extremely valuable leadership and direction in overseeing all aspects of the college's work meticulously. They use their professional expertise and experiences to good effective to inform improvement planning and as a critical friend to support and challenge senior leaders. The trustees play an active role in the life of the college and, together with the principal and senior leaders, set-out a clear strategic direction for its future.

The college has a beneficial range of strategic partnerships and collaborates successfully with other providers to build capacity for improving learner outcomes and the quality of provision. These partnerships include links with local, regional and national organisations to support learner work experience placements such as the local dog rescue service and the National Botanical Garden of Wales. They also include worthwhile collaboration with other education providers in the maintained and independent school and college sectors to share and discuss ideas about effective practice.

The college's well-established quality improvement cycle is successful in providing an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement in almost all areas of its work. To support its improvement planning processes, the college makes valuable use of information from the reports that the college receives from a specialist national organisation. However, the college's revised arrangements for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning do not always give clear enough information about specific strengths and areas for development.

Senior leaders and staff have been successful in developing a culture and ethos that supports the professional learning of all staff. At all levels, staff benefit considerably from the extensive range of professional learning opportunities available to them. These are identified suitably through the improvement planning and performance management processes and reflect college-wide and team priorities. Recent training

for all staff has focused specifically on increasing their knowledge about understanding sensory issues for learners, in particular to develop a greater awareness of learners experiencing sensory overload, how to recognise this and developing strategies to address the issues. Staff make effective use of this knowledge to adjust their planning and approach for different learners so that they support them better.

The vice principal responsible for finance and resources, together with the principal and trustees, monitors the college's finances robustly. All expenditure is budgeted carefully and allocated to identified priorities. There is an appropriate focus on improving marketing and planning for future developments.

As a result of prudent budget management, the college is successfully implementing a ten-year capital projects programme to secure the high quality development of its physical environment. For example, the recently built sports hall, fitness room and residential building for Ty Pickwick provide first-rate facilities and accommodation. These developments help to ensure that learners are educated in a stimulating environment where they feel safe, enjoy their learning and make outstanding progress.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent and learner questionnaires and consider the views of teaching and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet proprietors, college leaders and individual members of teaching and support staff to evaluate the impact of the college's work
- meet learners to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their college
- visit sessions and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms and in outdoor areas
- look closely at the college's self-evaluation processes
- consider the college's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the college has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of college documents, including information on learner assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the supervisory body, information on learners' wellbeing, including the safeguarding of learners, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses 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:

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