



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

**Annual monitoring inspection report on
Priory College North Wales**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

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Context

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 35 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 by Priory College staff.

The college has a new head of education who was appointed in September 2017

Main findings

Strengths

- The new head of education has a clear focus on improvement. She has quickly developed a realistic understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the college.
- Many learners benefit from attending mainstream classes at the further education institution to follow vocational courses appropriate to their ability and interests.
- Learners develop their communication skills well in relation to their needs.
- Nearly all learners engage well with their learning.
- Staff have high expectations of learners and provide them with interesting learning experiences that meet their individual needs well.
- There are positive working relationships between learners and staff. The college provides a supportive ethos that helps learners to gain in confidence. Staff encourage learners suitably to develop their independence.

Areas for development

- Processes for collating and analysing data remain at an early stage of development.
- The new head of education has made beneficial changes to provision in a short period of time. However, these are at an early stage and are yet to have measurable impact.

- Although the college and the further education institution work together well at an individual learner level, joint strategic planning is under-developed.
- Learners do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT). The college does not provide sufficient up-to-date resources to support their learning in ICT.
- Overall, the college's progress against recommendations from the full inspection has been too variable.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the processes for collating and analysing data so that the college has a clear view of the overall progress that learners make
- R2 Review the partnership agreement with the further education college to ensure effective joint strategic planning
- R3 Ensure that the college has sufficient ICT resources and expertise to support learning

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

Recommendation 1: Make sure that data collection has a clear focus on learner progress and the evaluation of groups of learners

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college collects an appropriate range of data relating to learner progress. This includes the outcomes from baseline assessments and termly diagnostic assessment scores for literacy, numeracy and ICT, as well as data relating to independent living skills and work-related learning. This information enables staff to track the progress of the in-house learners. However, it is difficult to evaluate the progress of individual learners or groups of learners over time across their different areas of learning.

The college monitors the progress of learners who attend courses at the further education institution through feedback from support staff and informal conversations with the further education institution. However, despite previous recommendations on this aspect of the college's work, systems for tracking and evaluating the progress of these learners remain too informal.

Recommendation 2: Improve the punctuality of learners

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Managers have started to collate and analyse data on attendance and punctuality in the mornings, and to put appropriate strategies in place to support individual learners. More recently, the college has begun to record punctuality at the start of lessons. Staff give learners a five minute warning when break or lunchtime is ending. This helps learners to prepare themselves for lessons.

Most learners now attend punctually in the morning and at the start of lessons. However, as the college has only very recently begun to analyse data, managers are unable to evaluate the extent to which punctuality has improved overall since the full inspection.

Recommendation 3: Plan the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to make sure that learners have clear progression

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college has recently introduced a new system to track learners' achievement and progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Teachers use the system to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, plan individual targets and allocate appropriate resources to meet their needs.

The college has revised learners' timetables to ensure they include discrete sessions for literacy, numeracy and ICT. Where necessary, staff provide individual 'skills boost' sessions to support learning. Learners who attend mainstream courses receive skills sessions specifically related to the vocational area of their course of study.

The college does not have the range and quantity of suitable ICT resources to support learners to develop their ICT skills sufficiently.

Recommendation 4: Make sure that all learners have access to appropriate specialist support to address their individual needs

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

There is a good ratio of staff to learners. This ensures that learners can access staff on an individual basis when they need additional advice, support or guidance.

The college has provided staff with update training on a range of specialist areas, including autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour, in order to better support learners' individual needs.

The college has appointed a trained counsellor to support the emotional health and wellbeing of learners.

There is a suitable focus on supporting learners to develop their communication skills. Staff make effective use of specific programmes to encourage learners to identify aspects of their own communication that they wish to develop.

Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of self-assessment and improvement planning to make sure that they focus on learner progress and include clear targets that can be measured and evaluated

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The newly appointed head of education has worked well with senior staff and the business manager to improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning. Improvement planning now has a clear focus on learner progress.

The college's self-evaluation document links well to its improvement plan. This contains appropriate success criteria and realistic timescales for further review and completion. An annual cycle of meetings, deadlines and monitoring for reviewing progress is clearly set out.

A cycle of governance activities provides the Priory Group with a useful framework of audit and monitoring tools to quality assure the work of the college. However, overall, the college's progress against recommendations from the full inspection has been too variable.

Recommendation 6: Improve communication with the further education institution fully to support learners' needs and improve their performance

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Generally, communication with the further education institution at an individual learner level is effective. Meetings to discuss individual learners provide staff with a shared understanding of important issues relating, for example, to learner wellbeing. Support staff play a key role in sharing information between the two settings.

Communication at a strategic level is less well developed. The new head of education has taken important steps to establish a strong working relationship with senior managers at the further education institution. Several meetings have taken place and managers have a shared understanding of the need to formalise arrangements between the two settings. This includes reviewing the partnership agreement to ensure that it sets out roles and responsibilities clearly, and developing improved systems for the sharing of data.

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

College information

College	Priory College North Wales
College number	F0006006
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	06/11/2017
Proprietor	Priory Group
Staff	1 head of education , 1 business manager, 1 administration assistant, 1 housekeeper, 2 drivers, 1 senior teacher, 2 teachers, 3 senior support workers, 17 learning support workers and 2 bank staff
Number of learners	35
Provision	Day. Term time only
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the college	Autism spectrum disorders (including associated conditions)
Last full inspection	06/06/2016
Last annual monitoring inspection	08/06/2015
Last CSSIW inspection	n/a