



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

A report on

**Priory College South Wales
Pontypool Campus
Coleg Gwent
Blaendare Road
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 5YE**

Date of inspection: December 2019

by

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

About Priory College South Wales

Priory College South Wales is an independent specialist college, situated within the Pontypool campus of Coleg Gwent, the further education institution (FEI) serving south-east Wales.

Priory College South Wales was established in 2010 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 Asperger syndrome, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and associated conditions. There are currently 32 learners at the college. All learners come to the college from the local area.

Around a fifth of learners access education in-house, exclusively at the college, and follow pre-entry to level 2 courses, including independent living skills. The other learners follow full-time courses at Coleg Gwent from a range of programmes from entry level through to level 3. All learners, irrespective of their main place of study, receive both in-class and additional support by Priory College staff.

The last core inspection of the college was in January 2017. The college manager was appointed in 2017.

Main findings

Strengths

The college provides a calm, welcoming environment that enables learners to feel safe and secure. This contributes to the very high levels of attendance.

The college provides all learners with high levels of support and guidance that is based on a sound understanding of learner needs. This helps learners to make suitable progress and where appropriate, to achieve their qualification aims.

Learners are able to access a curriculum that includes studying for nationally recognised qualifications, alongside their mainstream peers, and in-house provision that is generally well suited to individual needs. This helps develop learners' confidence and independence skills.

Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement at the college. These are based on a strong commitment to improving opportunities and outcomes for all learners.

Areas for development

Overall, the college has taken appropriate action in addressing the recommendations of the previous annual monitoring visit. However, self-evaluation activities do not identify priorities for improvement clearly or consistently enough.

The college tracks the destinations of learners when they leave the provision. However, it does not have processes in place to continue to monitor these over time.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1. Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes

R2. Track the progress that learners make after they leave the college

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

Recommendation 1: Make sure that self-evaluation activities are clearly focused on the impact of teaching and provision on learner outcomes

The college has robust processes in place to collect information about the progress learners make. Where learners attend Coleg Gwent for their main programme of study, college leaders work closely with key staff there to identify what is working well and where changes need to be made to support individual learners' progress.

The college uses the information gathered through these activities to make adjustments to the provision for individual learners or to improve the provision as a whole, for example to enhance transition arrangements for learners joining the college. However, overall, the college still does not ensure that important self-evaluation opportunities such as lesson observations and staff meetings focus clearly enough on the impact of teaching and provision on learner outcomes. This means that improvement priorities do not focus consistently well enough on improving outcomes for learners in ways that are relevant to them.

The college's improvement plan demonstrates that the college has made improvements to its provision in response to identified shortcomings. College leaders have a relevant and ambitious vision of how they would like to strengthen the provision for learners, particularly in terms of developing the range and challenge of learning experiences for in-house learners. However, planning does not reflect this vision well enough or identify how the college intends to achieve this vision / goal.

Recommendation 2: Develop better communication with schools, other agencies and local authorities to ensure information about learners' prior learning can inform learning plans

Since the last annual monitoring visit, the college has established links with many of the learners' previous schools and now attends annual review meetings of learners, prior to them taking a place at the college. Schools share vital information on the learners, including their strengths, support needs and documentation from annual reviews. Information in relation to learners' academic ability and progress, however, is limited and variable. The college is developing its relationships with schools to improve this.

The college has recently strengthened the information it requires as part of the application process. They consider the views of parents and learners in relation to learners' likes, dislikes aspirations and support needs. In addition the college uses vital information about, for example, learners' level of independence, awareness of risk and community engagement to provide a curriculum that is generally well suited to individual learners. The college also assesses learners' skills in literacy and numeracy on entry to college. This range of evidence provides a very useful starting point for individual learning plans and is used to good effect to create in-house provision that focuses on developing confidence, speaking and independence skills and to advise on appropriate courses of study and progression opportunities.

Individual learning plans are based on a secure understanding of learners' needs and aspirations. Targets for improvement are appropriate. However, in a few instances these are not challenging enough, and tracking the progress that learners make towards these targets is not always clear enough.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the provider 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.

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