



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

A report on

**Pembrokeshire College
Merlins Bridge
Haverfordwest
SA61 1SZ**

Date of inspection: January 2017

by

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the provider's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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Context

Pembrokeshire College has around 6,350 further education learners, of whom around 1,650 are full time. The college employs about 485 staff.

The college is based at two main campuses – a general further education campus offering a range of vocational programmes and A level provision at Haverfordwest and a smaller centre at Milford Haven, the MITEC centre, focused on engineering.

Most of the college's full time learners come from within Pembrokeshire, with a small proportion coming from the neighbouring counties of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Pembrokeshire is largely a rural county with a population of 123,000, of whom 18% speak Welsh. Industry within the county is dominated by the engineering, energy and hospitality and leisure sectors.

The county has a relatively low average wage economy and has pockets of deprivation. However, in comparison with other colleges in Wales, the college has relatively few learners who come from the most deprived areas, as characterised by the Welsh index of multiple deprivation.

The college offers a curriculum from pre-entry level to higher education level. It currently offers A level provision, in federation with other Pembrokeshire schools. This provision is due to expand, and the construction of a new sixth form centre at the Haverfordwest campus is underway.

Summary

The provider's current performance	Good
The provider's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

The college's current performance is good because:

- The rates at which learners successfully complete their courses and qualifications show an upward three-year trend. The college's unpublished data for 2015-2016 is robust and indicates a continued rise in the overall success rate. The upward trend is consistent across many learning areas.
- Overall, most learners make good progress in their studies and their skills develop at a sound pace.
- Many learners participate regularly in a wide range of beneficial enrichment activities, which help them develop confidence and self-esteem.
- The college plans very well to meet the needs of learners and the wider community. It provides clear progression routes across a broad range of courses, which enable many learners to progress successfully to the next level of learning or to employment.
- Many teachers conduct lessons that involve a variety of well-paced and engaging learning activities, enabling most learners to make good progress.
- Provision for care, support and guidance is highly effective and assists all of its learners from the pre-entry stages through to achievement of their main programmes, and their progression into further levels of education and training or employment.
- Staff promote the core values of the college well, creating a highly inclusive environment in which learners feel respected and safe.

Prospects for improvement

The college's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- The principal and governing body have provided outstanding transformational leadership in implementing major structural change, driving rapid significant improvements in standards and delivering strong financial performance.
- The principal and senior leaders have been successful in establishing a consistently open and collaborative ethos, which permeates all internal and external relationships.
- The college has a clear cycle of quality management, which ensures that all staff and teams are involved beneficially in the self-assessment process.
- The college is a trusted partner with a diverse range of community, educational and business organisations across the region. These highly effective partnerships, with small, medium and large enterprises, have enabled the college to offer comprehensive educational opportunities at all levels.
- The college has a broad range of diverse income sources. The governing body

has strong financial expertise, which the college uses well to advise its strategic planning. During a period of reduced funding the college has grown its reserves, enabling it to invest in building new provision to meet its strategic aims of supporting local learners.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that learning activities provide sufficient challenge for learners of all abilities, enabling them to attain the highest grades they can
- R2 Ensure that learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the full breadth of their learning programmes
- R3 Make sure that targets for learners, including those for skills, are specific, challenging and measurable, and regularly reviewed
- R4 Ensure that self-assessment is concise, evaluative and well informed by an appropriate range of data

What happens next?

The college will incorporate actions into its quality development plan which show clearly how it is going to address the recommendations made in this report. Progress against these recommendations will be monitored periodically by Estyn's college link inspector. Estyn will invite the college to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

In 2014-2015, across a range of indicators and qualification types, learners at Pembrokeshire College successfully completed their qualifications at rates around or slightly below the national comparators.

Success rates show an upward trend over the three year period 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. Over this period, the overall rate at which learners successfully achieve their qualifications has risen from 83% to 86%. The college's unpublished data for 2015-2016 is robust and indicates a continued rise in the overall success rate, and the success rate for learners on substantial courses (those of 150 guided learning hours or greater). In particular, the rate at which learners stay on at college and complete their substantial courses has shown a notable improvement. The upward trend is consistent across many learning areas.

Learners from different ethnic groups, male and female learners, learners with additional learning needs, learners with disabilities and learners from different levels of deprivation successfully achieve their qualifications in line with their national comparators and the general rise in success rates across the college.

Overall, most learners make good progress in their studies and their skills develop at a sound pace. For example, energy sector learners develop high standards of practical skills and theory knowledge that are closely related to the work of industry. Nearly all learners in art and design experiment with media and processes in a way that stretches and challenges their skills and most produce good quality practical outcomes. In class, most learners engage well with their learning, behave well and have respectful relationships with staff and peers.

However, learners on a minority of vocational courses are not sufficiently challenged and do not achieve the highest grades of which they are capable. A minority of learners do not have sufficiently clear and challenging targets and so do not always know what they need to do to improve.

Nearly all learners complete appropriate initial and diagnostic assessments at the start of their course and use this information well to identify their overall strengths and weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. However, only a minority of learners are fully aware of the short term targets they need to reach to address these weaknesses and improve their existing skills.

More than half of the college's learners enter the college without either a GCSE grade C in English or Welsh, or in mathematics. Those learners taking discrete classes to improve their English and mathematics generally make solid progress from their starting points. The rates at which learners achieve their Essential Skills Wales qualifications are good, and show an improving trend.

In lessons, many learners listen carefully to their tutors and peers. The majority respond clearly to questions, explain their knowledge and ideas effectively, and use subject specific terminology appropriately. Many learners extract information from text well, appropriate to their ability. Generally, many learners spell in line with their previous starting points. In vocational courses, too many learners do not write well for a wide enough range of appropriate purposes.

In most numeracy lessons, learners make good progress in developing their skills. In a minority of learning areas, learners develop numeracy skills well in the context of their studies. For example, independent living skills learners with additional learning needs calculate how much hay and water horses need at a riding centre. However, a minority of learners are not sufficiently challenged and do not develop their numeracy skills enough though their learning areas.

About half of learners have timetabled classes to develop their Welsh skills, leading to accredited outcomes. The number of accredited outcomes has risen over the last five years. In these classes, learners make suitable progress in improving their use of Welsh, for example in customer service and client care, or in the use of vocationally relevant terms. A very few Welsh speaking learners produce written work though the medium of Welsh. A few learners participate in eisteddfodau and other social events where they can practise and develop their Welsh well. However, across the college, non-Welsh speaking learners make limited progress in developing their Welsh language skills through their main programmes of study.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all learners feel safe at college and know whom to talk to if they have concerns. The majority of learners have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and enjoy college life.

Most learners attend college regularly and attendance rates have improved significantly over the last few years.

Learners behave well around the college and most learners behave well in lessons. In both learning and communal areas there is a positive atmosphere and an ethos of calm. Learners show respect for each other, staff and visitors. During lessons, most learners are well motivated and demonstrate appropriate levels of engagement.

Learners participate well in decision-making at the college. Most contribute well to regular surveys that lead to relevant actions and improvements. For example, sports learners can now take an additional netball leader qualification as a consequence of responses by the college to learners' comments.

Many learners participate regularly in a wide range of beneficial enrichment activities, which help them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Many learners benefit from opportunities to develop their social and life skills through a wide range of community projects and work-related activities. For example, health and social care learners work alongside clients with learning difficulties at a local community centre. Independent living skills learners gain social skills in a riding stables, where they learn to work with each other and take responsibility for the daily care of horses. A

few learners from a wide range of abilities have successfully taken part in national skills competitions.

A few learners have benefited from a newly opened employment bureau within the college, helping learners prepare CVs and gain work experience and part-time work. However it is too soon to evaluate the full impact of this initiative.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The college plans very well to meet the needs of learners and the wider community. Leaders and managers take very good account of feedback from employers and labour market information to ensure that the curriculum contributes positively to the specific needs of the local and regional economy. The college provides clear progression routes across a broad range of courses, which enable many learners to progress successfully to the next level of learning or to employment.

The college has collaborated very effectively with the local authority and a number of local schools to extend the choices available for learners in the region. This enables learners from a range of schools to study a wider combination of subjects than they would otherwise be able to do.

The college provides many opportunities for learners, including more able and talented learners, to obtain additional qualifications and skills relevant to their main qualifications. The college has increased significantly the number of learners accessing work placements, including valuable opportunities in the college's own restaurant and hair and beauty salon. However, the college has identified that work experience opportunities in a few learning areas, such as ICT, are underdeveloped.

There are suitable arrangements to assess learners' skills in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy when they join the college. Staff use the outcomes of these assessments well to ensure that learners receive the correct level of support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This includes opportunities to achieve relevant Essential Skills Wales and GCSE qualifications. However, roles and responsibilities for the development of literacy and numeracy skills within learning areas across the college are not clearly defined. As a result, there is too much variation in the quality and consistency of target setting and use of literacy and numeracy skills for learners within their learning areas.

The college is developing an online learning framework for many courses. However, it is too early to gauge the impact of this on learners' progress and attainment.

The college has increased the numbers of students taking Welsh medium or bilingual assessments significantly since its last inspection in 2011. It provides beneficial units to develop language awareness and improve Welsh language skills within targeted learning areas. These include topics such as customer service and client care, where there is an increasing demand from employers for bilingual skills. In many sessions, tutors develop learners' understanding of the culture of Wales appropriately. However, few tutors develop learners' use of the Welsh language outside of the designated learning programmes.

The college plans effectively to develop learners' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship through the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, schemes of work and a wide range of valuable projects that promote learners' awareness of personal responsibility and community.

Teaching: Good

Across the college, many teachers demonstrate comprehensive, up-to-date subject knowledge and technical skills. They conduct lessons that involve a variety of well-paced and engaging learning activities, enabling most learners to make sound progress. Vocational teachers regularly reference industry practices and contextualise lessons well. For example, in engineering, industrial partners work with college staff to shape lesson activities, providing learners with worthwhile experiences of energy sector and food manufacturing processes.

Most teachers foster productive and supportive relationships with learners. This results in a positive working environment in which learners, teachers and support staff interact well to improve learning. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not maintain high expectations of progress, and do not plan activities that sufficiently challenge the more able learners.

Many teachers devise effective group practical activities that result in learners working well with their peers. Support staff make a valuable contribution to learner progress, both within lessons and as part of wider college life. Learning coaches, alongside other pastoral support staff, are effective in motivating learners to maintain sustained engagement with their studies.

The college's wide range of dedicated literacy and numeracy lessons are matched to the abilities of learners, enabling them to make sound progress in the development of these skills. However, within vocational lessons, only a minority of teachers take regular advantage of opportunities to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

Many teachers use questioning well to test learner knowledge and develop individuals' understanding and skills. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not use questioning techniques skilfully enough to engage all learners.

Many teachers provide learners with useful verbal feedback in lessons. A majority of teachers mark learners' work frequently and provide them with valuable written feedback. However, a few learners do not benefit from feedback that identifies clearly enough what they need to do to improve.

The college provides a formal progress report to parents once a year alongside an annual parents' evening. Additionally, learners have web-based access to their individual learning plans and are encouraged to share these with their parents or carers. Such records provide up-to-date, valuable information on attendance as well as any concerns raised, support required and targets set. The college's additional targeted communication with parents has been particularly effective in helping to raise the rate of learners' attendance and ensuring that it remains high.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Provision for care, support and guidance is highly effective and assists all of its learners from the pre-entry stages through to achievement of their main programmes and their progression into further levels of education and training or employment.

The college prioritises the health and wellbeing of its learners effectively. Learners are able to access a wide variety of worthwhile support services, including financial support, interdenominational chaplaincy, accommodation, transport, childcare, crisis and personal support, and a full-time college nurse. There is also a college counselling service, which makes innovative use of on-line counselling for hard-to-reach learners, or those who do not want face-to-face meetings. This online service is available throughout the day and this year has seen a significant increase in its usage though this new method of access.

The college places a strong emphasis on improving the attendance and punctuality of its learners and employs a full-time retention and attendance officer to monitor learners' attendance. Liaising with all learning areas, this officer works particularly effectively to follow-up on non-attendance at an early stage, with any identified at-risk learners swiftly referred to members of the learning support team. This work has made a significant contribution to the increase in learners' completion and success rates across the college.

Nearly all learners within the college benefit from a well-qualified advice and guidance team. The team offer high quality impartial advice and guidance to all learners, including re-direction to other pathways if applicants are not yet ready for their initial choice of programme. The team continue to provide this advice and guidance to learners for up to two years after they leave.

The college has strong multi-agency partnership arrangements with a wide range of organisations and the college's head of safeguarding and learner wellbeing is an active member of a wide range of county and national safeguarding networks. College procedures for ensuring the safety and welfare of its learners are shared across the county and at national events. Many elements of these procedures have been adopted as good practice by the local authority and the sector. The college's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern, including its duty to protect children and young people from radicalisation and extremism.

The college works very well to monitor any learners who may be at risk of leaving their programme and to offer them appropriate support. Chaired by the head of safeguarding and learner wellbeing, it holds weekly internal agency reviews to discuss and track current and potential cases. These meetings are highly effective in ensuring support to learners from internal staff, or referral to the college's multi-agency partnerships where appropriate. The many and very well integrated facets of support offered to learners are outstanding, with the result that most learners who receive support go on to gain their main qualification.

Learning environment: Excellent

Staff promote the core values of the college exceptionally well, creating a highly inclusive environment in which learners feel respected and safe. Nearly all teachers create a positive teaching environment with an inclusive ethos, and promote equality and diversity well within lessons and practical activities. This helps many learners to develop self-confidence and make progress towards their learning aims. In classes and around the college, nearly all learners show respect to each other and to teachers. College enrichment activities promote opportunities to develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity well, including the LGBT weekly meetings.

The college is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups and supports them very well. This is a strength of the college's provision. There is a highly inclusive and integrated approach to supporting independent living skills learners, which starts while they are in school, and a good proportion progress on to level 1 provision. These learners are integrated very well into all aspects of college activities. For example, the college's equine provision enables independent living skills learners to develop confidence and a broad range of skills.

The college has worked closely with Gypsy and Traveller communities to enable them to access and succeed in learning, and supported a few young people from these communities to progress to university. The college is supporting Syrian refugees who arrive in the UK.

The college's detailed strategic equality plan maps clearly the data it collects and its aims in promoting equality, although its key priorities for improvement are less clearly indicated.

All college buildings and facilities provide learners with learning facilities and classrooms that are of a high standard, with good access to ICT and resources. There is good internet connectivity that enables learners to use their own devices, and the college provides all learners with software. Learners have a broad range of learning options that help them to develop digital competence. Nearly all workshops and specialist classrooms contain modern, industry standard equipment that meets the needs of learners well. A classroom based at a local riding centre is well equipped with ICT and 3D learning resources. The college has developed an exceptional virtual control room that enables learners to simulate a wide range of industrial process control operations in a realistic environment. The college has identified that, in a very few cases, specialist facilities are cramped, or offer difficult access for learners who have restricted mobility.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Excellent
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Leadership: Excellent

The principal and governing body have provided outstanding transformational leadership in implementing major structural change, driving rapid significant improvements in standards and delivering strong financial performance. The college has made strong progress in addressing external funding pressures and progressing strategic developments.

College leaders address local and national priorities very well through the development and implementation of key strategic initiatives. These developments have resulted in the significant expansion of GCSE English and mathematics provision and are instrumental in supporting the development of local sixth form provision.

The principal and senior leaders have been successful in establishing a consistently open and collaborative ethos, which permeates all internal and external relationships.

The strategic plan identifies six key strategic goals. These are used extensively to help define key performance indicators and underpin associated development plans. This approach has been very successful in re-focusing the work of leaders and staff to prioritise learner interests, local needs and collaborative working.

Key priorities linked to learner behaviour, attendance and learner outcomes are consistently understood and widely supported across the college. The college management structure is clear, coherent and effective in most areas of the college, with appropriately defined roles and carefully balanced allocation of responsibilities.

Leaders and managers across the college communicate very well, through regular team meetings, briefings by the principal and dissemination of information through newsletters. As a result, staff are well informed about current developments and priorities. The recent introduction of 'tea and talk' sessions with the principal has been effective in identifying and enabling responses to staff suggestions for improvement.

Staff morale is generally good, there is a strong team ethos across the college and staff absenteeism is low.

Performance management arrangements are effective and most staff appraisals are completed in a timely manner. There is robust and supportive management of under-performance, and carefully targeted interventions have been successful in resolving any difficulties and improving performance in almost all cases.

The composition and membership of the governing body are strong. Governors have a wide range of expertise and provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders. Learner representatives contribute well to board discussions and decision-making.

A clear and innovative framework for governance has recently been established by the board. This framework has been developed carefully and skilfully to support ongoing transformation of post-16 provision within the locality. The new arrangements include appropriate joint involvement of schools and the local authority in governance arrangements relating to the new A level centre.

Improving quality: Good

The college has a clear cycle of quality management, which ensures that all staff and teams are involved beneficially in the self-assessment process. The quality assurance policy sets out well the annual quality cycle and the responsibilities of staff at all levels. Through designated checkpoints, provision and outcomes are regularly reviewed, enabling the college to monitor performance closely.

The college uses clear criteria to trigger a range of targeted interventions to deal with underperformance and these have led to improvements in a range of underperforming courses. However, data is not used effectively to analyse performance and drive improvement in a minority of learning areas.

Self-assessment is comprehensive in a majority of learning areas. In a majority of the learning areas inspected, judgements awarded by the college were over generous and do not match those of the inspection team.

Regular staff appraisals and supportive performance management link well to identifying professional development needs and the sharing of best practice. The values embedded in the college's initiative to raise the standard of teaching – 'ASPIRE' – are useful in encouraging self-reflection and peer-led improvement. ASPIRE tutors offer appropriate bespoke assistance to teachers. This links quality review processes and professional development activities valuably in supporting improvements in learning outcomes and behaviour.

The college focuses consistently on overall learner success and progression. Generally, the college uses national and local benchmarking data well and sets learner outcomes and financial performance targets effectively at college level. However, in a few learning areas the setting of specific targets is less effective.

The college uses learners' views and feedback well to drive improvements in key areas such as teaching, learning and college facilities. Learners are given worthwhile feedback on how their views have been considered.

The college has recently introduced new observation processes with learning walks, replacing graded observations. During unannounced learning walks, managers collect valuable data at different points throughout the year in order to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In addition, the recent introduction of an electronic dashboard system is beginning to provide useful information to help managers and staff improve standards of teaching and learning. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives.

Most managers listen effectively to staff. This successfully supports an ethos of openness and collaboration that contributes well to the drive to improve quality.

Suitable progress has been made to address the recommendations of the previous inspection in 2011.

Partnership working: Excellent

The principal and leadership team have created a new ethos and culture which is outward looking and collaborative. The commitment to partnership working is exemplified well by the principal, who plays a leading role in key strategic groups, including CBI Wales and the regional learning and skills partnership. This has allowed the college to be highly responsive to local and regional needs.

The college is a trusted partner with a diverse range of community, educational and business organisations across the region. These highly effective partnerships, with

small, medium and large enterprises, have enabled the college to offer comprehensive educational opportunities at all levels.

The college has outstanding relationships with many employers across the region. These provide significant opportunities for learners to participate in authentic work related activities, developing skills to meet employer needs.

The college uses its links to its work-based learning partnership highly effectively to allow progression between further education and work-based learning programmes, or opportunities for employment.

The college has a well-developed strategy to expand higher education opportunities. It has developed additional partnerships to respond quickly to labour market intelligence. These have resulted in, for example, new progression routes into higher education for engineering and animal management.

A positive outcome of the holistic approach to partnership working has been the enhanced opportunities for groups of vulnerable learners. The college works well with a wide range of community partners to engage hard-to-reach groups, such as Gypsy and Traveller communities, those at risk of dropping out of education and the economically inactive. The college works very effectively with the local special school to support the transition, integration and progression of learners on independent living skills programmes. The excellent range of multi-agency partnerships support these more vulnerable learners very well during their programmes.

Relationships with the local authority and local schools have improved, providing an opportunity for transformational change in post-16 education within the north of the county. This includes the development of a new centre for post-16 education, including A levels, financed jointly by the college and the Welsh Government.

Resource management: Good

The college manages its finances well. Its beneficial links with the local authority enable it to share expertise in a few key areas that improve efficiency, such as a procurement officer, which enables access to joint-contracting. It also commits its own resources to enable school learners to follow A levels that local schools do not offer. It routinely reinvests savings, such as £750k from reduced energy costs, into improving college services and provision further. At the same time as reducing management costs, the college has strengthened the resources available to fund learning coaches. During a period of reduced funding, the college has grown its reserves, enabling it to invest in building new provision to meet its strategic aims of supporting local learners.

Planning for staffing is effective and relates closely to the curriculum plan. Staff absence rates are very low. Staff have good access to a well-managed programme of mandatory and development training that meets their needs well. The training ensures that staff understand their contribution to the college's aims and supports them in developing their teaching skills.

The college takes very good account of sustainability and energy efficiency in the management of its estate. For example, it has reduced its carbon footprint by about a third in the past year.

The college has a wide range of diverse income sources. It makes effective use of government and European grants to invest in its provision. The governing body has strong financial expertise, which the college uses well to advise its strategic planning. An audit sub-committee provides rigour and challenge to resource management. The college uses benchmarking well to manage its financial performance.

Responsibility for operational budgets is devolved to department heads. The finance and human resource team meets regularly with department heads to monitor their expenditure and to support them in their contingency planning.

Overall, outcomes for learners are good and the college offers good value for money.

Learning Area reports

Literacy

Learning area context

Literacy is developed through Essential Skills Wales (ESW) classes, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification classes, GCSE and a range of pre-GCSE classes, through study skills sessions, and one to-one-support. Learners also develop their literacy skills through their main programmes of study.

The college uses the national initial and diagnostic assessment tool to identify learners' skills needs. Initial assessment results for 2016-2017 show that 77% of learners on entry to college have literacy skills at level 1 or below.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Ensure that learners have meaningful short-term specific literacy targets
- R2 Improve attendance on literacy courses
- R3 Ensure that learning areas develop learners' literacy skills appropriately in meaningful
- R4 Clarify lines of accountability for developing learners' literacy skills in learning areas
- R5 Improve the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Adequate

The college's success rate for ESW Communication has fluctuated between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015. In 2014-2015 the rate improved and placed the college in the second quartile in comparison to other colleges in Wales. This trend of improvement has continued with the college's own unpublished data for 2015-2016.

Nearly all learners complete a literacy diagnostic assessment at the start of their course and use this information to identify individual literacy targets for improvement. However, a majority of learners are not able to articulate clearly what their targets are or the progress they are making towards achieving them because they are not sufficiently specific or short term.

Nearly all learners follow appropriate literacy courses to improve their skills. Those learners who have not previously attained a grade C at GCSE English or Welsh follow courses that are matched well to their starting points, with clear progression

routes. Those with grade C at GCSE, or above, follow relevant essential skills qualifications at the appropriate level. This allows learners to make suitable progress given their starting points.

In literacy lessons and in vocational courses, many learners listen carefully to their tutors and peers. The majority respond clearly to questions, explain their knowledge and ideas effectively, and use subject specific terminology appropriately. However, a minority of learners are passive and respond to questions in brief statements. Often this is because they lack the confidence to explain their thinking or subject concepts clearly.

In literacy lessons and in their vocational classes, many learners extract information from text well. A few highlight text appropriately to identify relevant information. In their vocational classes, a minority gather, compare and contrast information from a range of sources well. In GCSE lessons, a minority are able to analyse language suitably and infer basic meaning from text. However, generally, a minority of learners do not use a suitable range of reading strategies or analyse text well enough.

Many learners spell well, based on their literacy starting points. The majority of learners use subject specific words competently in their written work in literacy lessons and in their vocational lessons. However only a minority of learners write confidently at length. Too many learners do not write well for a wide enough range of appropriate purposes, particularly in their vocational studies, and have an insecure understanding of how to structure written work. A minority of learners make frequent errors in punctuation and grammar and, in a few cases, their written work is poorly presented.

Many learners enjoy college and have positive attitudes to their work.

In 2016, attendance rates on literacy courses were generally sound. However attendance to date and during the inspection week was below 80%, particularly in ESW lessons.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Adequate

The college offers a useful range of courses to support the development of literacy skills. This provision includes GCSE English, progression courses to GCSE programmes, ESW Communication, a basic skills programme and study skills sessions.

The college makes effective use of initial assessments to allocate learners to courses at the appropriate level. In 2016-2017, 77% of learners on entry to college have literacy skills at level 1 or below. Most teachers set learners individual literacy targets based on their initial assessment outcomes. However, learners' individual literacy targets are not set, monitored and reviewed consistently well in personal tutorial sessions.

In literacy lessons, most teachers have strong subject knowledge and are effective role models for literacy. In a majority of cases, literacy teachers plan their lessons effectively and explain concepts well. However, in a minority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow and concepts are not explained clearly enough. A minority of teachers use a limited range of teaching and learning strategies to engage and support learners to develop their skills and maintain their interest.

In vocational classes, a majority of learning areas plan well to support the literacy needs of their learners. However, in a minority of areas, the planning for developing learners literacy skills is too generic and does not provide sufficient support to develop literacy skills effectively in context.

In vocational lessons, many teachers provide good support to learners to develop subject specific terminology and for spelling. A minority make effective use of opportunities to develop learners' literacy skills in naturally occurring contexts. However, overall, there is too much variability in how teachers develop learners' literacy skills in meaningful ways through their vocational programmes. For example, they do not develop learners' ability to write confidently and accurately for a wide enough range of purposes.

A majority of tutors use questioning appropriately to check understanding and engage learners. However, they do not always use questioning to encourage learners to give extended answers or to probe and extend thinking well enough.

In a few learning areas, teaching staff provide frequent verbal feedback and many correct spelling and basic punctuation errors appropriately. However, in general, the quality of feedback varies too much in skills lessons and across learning areas. Too often, learners are given insufficient guidance on how to improve the quality and structure of their work beyond its technical accuracy.

Learners have access to beneficial extra support, for example through learning coaches based in faculties. This provides a valuable additional layer of support.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Adequate

Leaders have responded well to national priorities and local needs, for example through developing well-organised provision for learners to retake GCSE English that takes good account of their starting points.

The college has developed a useful skills policy that aims to enable learners to access small classes that best suit their ability level. The college has committed resources to strengthen this provision and to collect data to monitor the development of learners' skills. However, managers across the college do not use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of provision consistently. The skills policy does not contain strategic objectives that make planning for the next few years clear, or contain quality improvement targets that can inform planning. Strategic targets for improvement are not clear enough and therefore do not enable the college to evaluate whether its review of skills provision has sufficient impact on learners'

attainment or achievement over time. Not all teachers are clear about the contribution they need to make to enable the college to meet its longer term aims.

The college uses the national literacy and numeracy assessment tool to track learners' development of literacy. Managers have used this well to place learners into classes targeted to match their ability levels. Managers set operational targets for groups of learners' performance and they review individual learners' performance through a number of management groups. However, there is no sufficient, prompt analysis at a strategic level of how well provision impacts on the improvement of learners' skills.

The college has a wide range of methods, including staff observation, learning walks and themed audits, which it uses to monitor the quality of skills provision. The skills self-assessment report draws on a broad range of data. However, in a few cases, self-evaluations are overgenerous and do not allow leaders accurately to identify areas of best practice or areas for improvement.

There is good communication and strong guidance within the skills team, which enables teachers to stay up to date with the specifications of qualifications. Course leaders provide good access to relevant training and this has enabled a few staff to develop their expertise and improve their confidence in delivering literacy to a broader range of learners. Skills provision is well resourced, with effective administrative support.

Lines of accountability for GCSE and ESW courses are explicit and leaders have a suitably clear understanding of their role in ensuring that they are a success. However, roles and responsibilities for the development of literacy across the college are not clearly defined. As a result, there is too much variation in the quality of provision and the progress that learners make in developing their skills in context across and within learning areas.

The college has strengthened partnerships with local schools. This has helped to enable the college to improve its communication with schools and to access information about learners' attainments.

Numeracy

Learning area context

Numeracy is developed through Essential Skills Wales (ESW) classes, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification classes, GCSE and a range of pre-GCSE classes, through study skills sessions, and one to-one-support. Learners also develop their numeracy skills through their main programmes of study.

The college uses the national initial and diagnostic assessment tool to identify learners' skills needs. Initial assessment results for 2016-2017 show that 85% of learners on entry to college have numeracy skills at level 1 or below.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Ensure that learners have meaningful short-term specific numeracy targets
- R2 Improve attendance on numeracy courses
- R3 Improve the self-evaluation and improvement planning processes for the delivery of numeracy

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

The college's success rate in ESW Application of Number has been consistently above the national comparator over the last three years. In GCSE mathematics resit classes, learners pass their resit examinations at appropriate rates.

Nearly all learners follow appropriate numeracy courses to improve their skills. Those learners who have not previously attained a grade C at GCSE mathematics follow courses that are matched well to their starting points, with clear progression routes. Those with grade C at GCSE, or above, follow relevant essential skills qualifications at the appropriate level. This allows learners to make suitable progress given their starting points.

In numeracy lessons, most learners show good recall from previous lessons and respond well to questioning. They work well individually and in pairs and make sound progress. For example, in a pre-GCSE class, most learners demonstrate their understanding the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes well. They are able to use this understanding to identify the mathematical names of shapes from a range of properties that the teacher issues. In a mixed ability essential skills class, level 1 and entry level learners carry out calculations appropriately using pi and write out their calculations clearly in order that they can demonstrate how they reach their conclusions.

Most learners have useful numeracy targets in their individual learning plans, based on their initial assessment. A majority use these targets well in numeracy lessons and receive useful feedback on how to improve further. However, a minority of learners do not pay sufficient attention to their targets, and do not review their targets regularly enough.

In vocational classes, many learners generally make sound progress in developing their numeracy skills in the context of their subject. For example, construction students apply multiplication and division skills when estimating materials required for jobs. They are clear about their numeracy targets and understand how they will attain these. In animal care, learners apply numerical calculations well to identify the correct dosages of medication to animals in relation to their body weight. However in a few learning areas, a minority of learners are not sufficiently challenged and do not develop their numeracy skills enough though their subjects.

Many learners participate well in lessons. They work well independently and in groups and enjoy learning. While attendance at numeracy classes is generally sound, a few learners persistently miss classes, which impedes their progress.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The college offers a useful range of provision for learners to improve their numeracy skills. It has recently reviewed and reorganised GCSE courses to develop a good range of streamed provision for learners. Most of these courses are delivered in small groups so that learners have targeted support. All learners' numeracy skills are assessed on entry and this information is used well to help learners select numeracy courses appropriate to their needs.

All numeracy teachers have good subject knowledge. They have clear, detailed schemes of work and session plans. Almost all are well informed of learners' learning needs and preferred learning styles and they use this information well when planning lessons. They have supportive relationships with learners. Nearly all use a wide variety of activities to engage learners and to help learners understand new concepts. They explain new ideas or principles clearly, often using real-life examples to develop learners' understanding.

In numeracy classes, the pace of most lessons helps to maintain most learners' interest and motivation well. Most teachers plan a range of activities skilfully to suit learners' different levels of ability. However, in a few cases, teachers do not use extension activities to challenge a few of the more able learners in a class. A few teachers make good use of internet based resources and quizzes. Nearly all teachers use interactive whiteboards well to stimulate learners' interest, for example through enabling learners to explore the characteristics of two- three-dimensional shapes in a way that stimulates their interest.

In a few vocational areas, teachers develop learners' numeracy skills well as part of their vocational learning. For example, bricklaying learners develop skills in multiplication and area calculation in order to estimate the materials they will require.

Nearly all teachers use directed questions skilfully, both to build learners' confidence and to assess their knowledge. They use this to monitor the appropriateness of the pace of lessons, adapting their plans where necessary to suit learners' needs. Teachers give learners helpful verbal feedback in lessons. A majority of specialist teachers mark work clearly, giving learners helpful feedback on how they can improve their work or calculations. Marking informs the development of relevant targets that are included in learners' individual learning plans.

In most tutorials, teachers discuss learners' progress towards their targets and the majority help learners to set short term targets that will help reach their longer-term goals. However, a minority of teachers do not help learners to focus enough on target setting, and set targets that are too general, a few of which are not clear enough for learners to apply to the planning of their work.

A majority of teachers liaise well with learning coaches and refer learners to them if the learner needs additional support.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Adequate

Leaders have responded well to national priorities and local needs, for example through developing well-organised provision for learners to retake GCSE mathematics that takes good account of their starting points.

The college has developed a useful skills policy that aims to enable learners to access small classes that best suit their ability level. The college has committed resources to strengthen this provision and to collect data that enables leaders to monitor learners' development of skills. However, managers across the college do not use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of provision consistently.

The skills policy does not contain strategic objectives that make planning for the next few years clear, or contain quality improvement targets that can inform planning. Strategic targets for improvement are not clear enough and therefore do not enable the college to evaluate whether its review of skills provision has sufficient impact on learners' attainment or achievement over time. Not all teachers are clear about the contribution they need to make to enable the college to meet its longer term aims.

The college uses the national literacy and numeracy assessment tool to track learners' development of numeracy. Managers have used this well to place learners into classes targeted to match their ability levels. Managers set operational targets for groups of learners' performance and they review individual learners' performance through a number of management groups. However, there is no sufficient, prompt analysis at a strategic level of how well provision impacts on the improvement of learners' skills.

The college has a wide range of methods, including staff observation, learning walks and themed audits, which it uses to monitor the quality of skills provision. The skills self-assessment report draws on a broad range of data. However, in a few cases, self-evaluations are overgenerous and do not allow leaders accurately to identify areas of best practice or areas for improvement.

There is good communication and strong guidance within the skills team, which enables teachers to stay up to date with the specifications of qualifications. Course leaders provide good access to relevant training and this has enabled a few staff to develop their expertise and improve their confidence in delivering mathematics to a broader range of learners. Skills provision is well resourced, with effective administrative support.

The college has strengthened partnerships with local schools. This has helped in enabling the college to improve its communication with schools and to access information about learners' attainments.

Leisure, Travel and Tourism

Learning area context

The learning area offers a range of full-time level 2 and level 3 courses in sport development, coaching and fitness. About 170 learners study in the learning area, amounting to about 6% of the college's total provision. Learners study on the main campus in Haverfordwest and travel to local off-site facilities to undertake most practical sessions.

The college took the decision to discontinue specialist travel and tourism courses from the end of 2015-2016 following a review of the learning area's provision. The college has no plans to reintroduce discrete travel and tourism provision.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Finalise the strategy for meeting the needs of travel and tourism employers within the locality
- R2 Improve the effectiveness of planning and delivery of literacy and numeracy skills development within the learning area
- R3 Ensure that teachers provide all learners with sufficiently challenging activities

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

The sport, leisure and tourism learning area has had variable success rates over the last three years. Success rates on substantial programmes in 2014-2015 are four percentage points below the national comparator. Success rates on all programmes in 2014-2015 are three percentage points above the national comparator.

Unpublished data for 2015-2016 is robust and demonstrates that overall success rates in sport have improved significantly in 2015-2016. Most sports learners achieve distinction or merit grades within their final grade profile. However, success rates on travel and tourism courses have been poor.

Nearly all learners are aware of their progress in learning and review this effectively with their course tutor. Most learners, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress in their learning and many progress to higher level courses, including higher education. The strong progress made by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds is a particular strength of sport provision.

Nearly all learners develop their practical skills well across an appropriate range of sports. Many male and female learners participate and compete well in Welsh college sport competitions and events. A few learners achieve success at local, regional and national level in sports such as rugby, football, cricket, athletics, tennis, badminton and swimming.

All learners undertake initial and diagnostic assessments. Most learners make appropriate progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Many learners use online resources well to improve their knowledge and understanding of

vocational concepts, support skills development and, in a few cases, to review and evaluate their practical skills in sporting activities.

Although 14% of learners in the learning area are fluent Welsh speakers, too few learners develop their Welsh language skills further after joining the college.

Nearly all learners attend well, are punctual and behave very well in classes and in practical sessions. Most learners participate well in lessons and training activities and nearly all learners show respect to their peers, teachers and the wider college community. Most learners develop their personal qualities well and participate fully in setting and achieving targets for attendance, behaviour and progress in learning.

Many learners contribute well to the wider local community through the delivery of coaching activities in primary schools and by officiating in local sports competitions.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The learning area offers a suitable range of level 2 and level 3 sport qualifications leading to useful opportunities for progression into employment or higher education. Learners are able to take worthwhile additional courses, including sports leadership and first aid qualifications, as well as attend sports academy sessions. Learners have purposeful work related experience including the opportunity to deliver coaching sessions to school children. This enhances learners' confidence, skills and employability.

Nearly all teachers have current knowledge of their subject. They are positive role models and have effective and mutually respectful working relationships with learners. They plan lessons thoroughly and are clear about the lessons' objectives and outcomes. The majority of teachers provide engaging activities at a level that meets most learners' needs, and effectively link theory to practical applications. However, in a few practical and theory sessions, teachers do not stretch more able learners with sufficiently challenging activities.

Teachers and learning support advisers provide learners with effective in-class support to develop confidence and extend their understanding of a range of sporting concepts. Learners with additional learning needs are supported well and have full access to the curriculum. Learning coaches effectively support learners with their vocational assessments.

Teachers keep appropriate records of learners' progress. Many provide constructive and developmental oral feedback. In the majority of cases, teachers provide helpful written feedback. However, in a few cases, feedback is insufficiently detailed or is hard to read.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

The learning area manager has a clearly defined role and provides clear direction and support to learning area staff. The learning area team work together effectively to develop strategic policies for the learning area. The recent review of the travel and tourism provision and the decision to withdraw the courses from the curriculum have been managed well.

The learning area lead shares information with the learning area team well. The learning area meets on a monthly basis to monitor the progression of learners. Learners' progress is effectively reviewed using a three quality checkpoint system at the beginning of their course, at the mid-point, and at the end of the year. An online programme review system documents all actions that are agreed in meetings and is used effectively by learning area staff. An improvement in success rates indicates that this strategy of closely monitoring students is having a positive impact.

All learning area staff are well aware of the self-assessment report, which is evaluative, honest and comprehensive. An action plan is produced that identifies targets and areas for improvement and is regularly reviewed and updated by the curriculum area manager.

Managers carry out learning walks as part of the quality improvement cycle for teaching and learning. However, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative in improving teaching and learning in the learning area.

The learning area has developed strong and effective partnerships with a wide range of worthwhile partners. In particular, the college has strong links with local sport teams, which allows all learners very successfully to develop their work-related experience. The learning area team work effectively to secure extra funding to support the additional costs of off-site provision and to improve resources.

The learning area manager is responsible for the management of learning area project budgets. Resources are well managed and finance is allocated well. The curriculum area manager meets with finance manager frequently to track staffing costs and project spend. Teachers and support staff are deployed suitably to make sure that the needs of all learners are met. The learning area makes good use of learning coaches, learning support assistants and the retention officer to continue to improve standards of learners' work, attendance and retention.

Information and Communication Technology
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Learning area context

The computing and IT learning area offers programmes from entry level to level 5, through its further education and work-based learning provision. In further education, the learning area offers full-time diploma courses from level 1 to level 3.

At January 2017, there were approximately 61 learners, amounting to about 3% of the college's provision. All courses are based at the college's main campus.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Improve the rate at which learners successfully complete their substantial courses
- R2 Ensure that all learners can learn, practise and develop numeracy skills throughout their learning programme
- R3 Ensure that all teachers provide learning experiences that engage, stretch and challenge learners of all abilities
- R4 Ensure that self-assessment is rigorous and evaluative

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

Overall, for 2014-2015 success rates for all courses in the learning area were just above the national comparator. The college's own unpublished data for 2015-2016 confirms an upward trend in success rates on main qualifications.

Learners on level 3 courses attain strong grades and progress at sound rates from year 1 to year 2 of their programmes. On completing their level 3 extended diploma qualifications, learners progress well on to higher education or gain IT-related employment.

Many learners make sound progress on their courses and use feedback well to improve the accuracy of their written work. Nearly all learners use tracking sheets effectively to monitor their progress.

Most learners are motivated and engage well in class activities. For example, during a level 2 website development class, learners contributed well to class discussions on accessibility options. Most learners are confident in discussing their work, use ICT terminology well and answer questions with confidence in their knowledge and understanding. However, a few learners at all levels lose interest when activities are not challenging enough.

Nearly all learners complete initial diagnostic assessments and use the results effectively to work with their teachers to set their own short, medium and long-term targets for literacy and numeracy. They speak fluently about their work and are able to give examples of how their literacy and numeracy has improved.

Very few learners develop their Welsh language skills while on their programmes.

All learners feel safe at college, and most know whom to approach if they need help with issues outside of their course. Learners demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning and attendance across all courses is very good. Most learners are punctual. Learners are helpful and supportive to their peers. They take responsibility for their own actions and are respectful of their teaching and learning environment.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The learning area offers an appropriate range of courses based on the needs of learners, employers and local labour market information.

Nearly all teachers use initial and diagnostic assessment well to set effective short, medium and long-term targets for improvement. They monitor and review these targets regularly during tutorials. However, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for learners to develop their numeracy skills in their lessons.

Nearly all teachers have sound and up to date subject knowledge and most use this effectively to engage and motivate their learners. Teachers plan most lessons effectively. The majority of lessons are well paced and appropriate to the level of the learners. In most lessons, teachers provide a clear introduction and recap prior learning well. They use questioning well to check learners' knowledge and understanding. The use of information and learning technology resources to support learning is effective.

However, in a minority of lessons teachers do not stretch or challenge more able learners enough. Too few teachers plan opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills or knowledge of Wales into their lessons.

Teachers assess work regularly and use the tracking system effectively to monitor learner progress. Most written feedback is constructive and ensures that learners know what they need to do to improve.

The learning area's learning coach works effectively to support learners, including working with learners over the summer to support progression to higher-level courses.

Nearly all teachers know their learners well and use this information effectively to support their wellbeing. Course tutors follow up on absences and monitor attendance well. All teachers have a good rapport with learners and develop an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Classrooms are well equipped and have industry standard software that is relevant to the needs of all learners.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

The learning area manager has a clear vision for the future of the area. This has contributed well to significant rise in outcomes for its learners in the past year.

The learning area has implemented college policy on how it offers advice and guidance to learners well, with the result that learners' attendance and completion rates have improved. The learning area works effectively to follow up learners who do not attend or are at risk of leaving the course.

The learning area uses the college's quality and planning processes effectively in order to identify areas of good practice and to share these across the college. However, the learning area's self-assessment report is not always evaluative enough and a few of the strengths identified in this report were not evidenced during the inspection.

The self-assessment report effectively identifies areas for improvement. An appropriate action plan clearly outlines useful actions which are reviewed regularly.

Managers and staff in the learning areas value the views of learners well, and act on learners' suggestions. Course representatives are pro-active in helping to bring about improvements to their programmes and to the learning environment. For example, computer monitors in the learning area were replaced following learners' feedback .

The learning area has limited links with employers. However, it uses those it has well to inform curriculum developments, offer opportunities for work experience and demonstrate the use of new technologies within real working environments. The area has recognised the need to strengthen employer links and has begun to identify potential employers for future working relationships.

Management of resources is effective. Staff teach across the range of courses offered within the area and professional development opportunities, such as attending World Skills competitions, are used well in order that staff remain up-to-date in this fast moving environment. College quality procedures, such as teaching and learning observations and appraisal, are used well to support and develop staff.

Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
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Learning area context

The learning area delivers courses in mechanical, electrical, motor vehicle and marine engineering. Engineering courses are delivered on the main college site and at the MITEC centre in specialist engineering facilities.

The learning area delivers a wide range of full and part time courses. In the current year, there are approximately 298 full-time learners, amounting to about 18% of the college's full-time provision.

Learning area recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all learners of all abilities are challenged to perform at their highest level
- R2 Improve teaching and assessment strategies to develop lesson planning and questioning techniques to provide more challenge
- R3 Ensure that all teachers mark learners' written work regularly and give them constructive feedback on their performance
- R4 Ensure that self-assessment is robust

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

Between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015, success rates for substantial qualifications were broadly in line with national comparators. However, in 2014-2015 success rates were three percentage points below the national comparator. The college's own unpublished data for 2015-2016 indicates a significant improvement in success rates from the previous year. In courses that have graded outcomes, a majority of learners achieve higher grades.

Most learners make appropriate progress in lessons and a minority make strong progress. Nearly all learners work competently when undertaking a wide range of practical tasks. For example, they complete electrical wiring tasks and motor vehicle maintenance tasks to at least a competent standard. Energy sector learners develop high standards of practical skills and theory knowledge that are closely related to the work of industry. In most lessons, many learners demonstrate secure knowledge of engineering theory. The majority of learners answer questions correctly, using the appropriate technical terms and phrases. In nearly all sessions, learners work well together and with staff.

The majority of learners are actively engaged in their learning. However, a very few learners sit passively for extended periods of time. In the majority of cases, this is a result of learners not benefiting from extension tasks that would enable them to develop their learning further.

All learners undertake an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy. The majority show an appropriate understanding of their targets. The majority of learners develop their numeracy skills well. They use these skills to apply engineering formulae to complete a wide range of tasks. The majority of learners' written work is well presented with correct spelling and punctuation. However, a minority of learners do

not present or organise their work well. Learners do not benefit from consistent feedback on their written work by all teachers. As a result, they do not always know what they need to do to improve.

A very few learners make progress developing their Welsh language skills while on their programmes.

Learners across the learning area feel safe and are well supported by their teachers. In practical lessons, learners work in a safe manner and show a good understanding of health and safety. When undertaking learning activities most learners maintain a high level of engagement, and interact productively with teachers and support staff.

Learners are polite and behave well. Learners' attendance rates across the learning area have improved, and are strong for the 2015-2016 year. However, a very few learners regularly arrive late for their lessons.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The learning area plans its curriculum effectively. It offers a wide range of courses that meet the needs of learners and employers well, including specialist courses for the local energy and marine engineering sectors. These courses prepare learners well to gain and sustain employment.

Teachers monitor learners' progress effectively and put in place useful intervention measures for learners that are at risk of underachieving or leaving the course.

Most essential skills teachers provide beneficial support for learners in literacy and numeracy sessions and are good language models. However, vocational teachers do not supplement this support consistently enough, for example by providing regular feedback on errors of spelling and grammar.

Most teachers demonstrate relevant subject knowledge and draw on their skills and industrial experience well. A majority of teachers plan lessons well and, as a result, learners make generally strong progress in both theory and practical lessons. A majority of teachers use a wide range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies along with resources that engage and challenge learners. In many lessons, teachers are well prepared and support learners to develop their knowledge, understanding and practical competences to prepare them for future employment. However, in very few lessons the pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not use effective strategies to challenge more able learners to develop and extend their learning. As a result, learners with higher ability are not progressing at the rate of which they are capable.

A minority of teachers mark learners' written work infrequently and do not provide them with meaningful and constructive written feedback.

Teachers use an appropriate range of systems to track learner progress effectively. The majority of teachers use a suitable range of general questioning techniques to

test learners' understanding and knowledge. However, in many lessons, teachers do not use targeted questions effectively enough to test individual learners' understanding.

The motor vehicle and mechanical engineering provision has created workbooks for learners to develop their Welsh language skills and a few groups of engineering learners have undertaken a five hour Welsh unit.

The guidance that learners receive when they join courses has been significantly strengthened. As a result, learners are carefully matched to courses that meet their needs and career choices. A dedicated learning coach works in the learning area and gives engineering learners particularly effective levels of support. The college attendance officer has been effective in supporting learners to remain on their courses. These staff give learners high levels of personal support. As a result, most learners who receive support make strong progress. This effective admissions guidance and support to learners when attending courses has contributed well to the significant increase in learner outcomes.

The learning environment provides learners with a wide range of specialist workshops and classrooms. As a result, they access industry related equipment and resources. These resources include a wide range of computers and software that meet the needs of learners well.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

Managers in the learning area provide effective leadership that has had a positive impact on the performance of the learning area. They work well together to deliver the learning area's key priorities.

The head of faculty and curriculum area managers have well-defined roles and responsibilities. They are effective in providing a clear direction for the engineering learning area and have a strong focus on improving learner outcomes and standards.

There is regular communication between managers and teachers in the learning area. Managers and staff attend a range of scheduled meetings where managers review key aspects of the learning area's work and keep staff updated on developments and the learning area's progress against targets. These meetings have a strong focus on the quality of the provision and the progress of learners. Managers use performance data well to set and monitor challenging targets. These meetings have been effective in contributing to improving learner outcomes. As a result, the learning area has significantly improved the rates that learners achieve their qualifications.

The learning area's self-assessment report is a comprehensive and detailed document that contains a wide range of information. The report uses learner performance data well. However, in a few sections of the report strengths are overstated and areas for improvement not identified clearly enough. The quality improvement plan is a clear document that contains the key priorities of development

for the learning area. Targets in the plan are appropriately focused to inform improvement planning.

Managers in the learning area use the college's procedures for the review of staff performance appropriately. Managers and staff benefit from attending a wide range of professional development activities. For a few staff, these activities include training to develop teaching and learning, and opportunities to update their skills to current industrial practice.

Managers in the learning area use learner voice responses appropriately to improve the learner experience. Appropriate action is taken where concerns are raised.

The learning area has effective partnerships with a wide range of employers. Partnerships with employers in the energy sector are particularly strong. The learning area continues to develop its strong partnerships with employers, work-based learning providers and local schools.

Managers in the learning area manage resources well. The learning area includes a wide range of specialist practical workshops and classrooms. These facilities include specialist work areas and resources for the energy sector and marine engineering learners. These workshops have recently been supplemented by a range of newly purchased specialist machinery and equipment. Managers deploy staff well to use their specialist knowledge to meet the needs of learners.

Art and Design

Learning area context

The creative arts learning area is in the faculty of arts, science and skills and is made up of performing arts, and art and design. Learners can access A level study in art, media, photography and drama and a range of full-time vocational programmes at level 2 and level 3.

In January 2017, there are approximately 160 learners, around 10% of the college's full time provision. All courses are based in the college's main campus.

Learning area recommendations

R1 Improve learners' skills of analysis and evaluation

R2 Strengthen assessment processes so that learners know exactly what to do to improve their work.

R3 Improve self-assessment and planning for improvement

Main Findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement: Good

Within the learning area, performing arts courses have shown a steadily improving trend in success rates over three years, with outcomes above the national comparator in 2014-2015, and unpublished data indicating further improvements in 2015-2016. In art and design courses, success rates have been below national comparators between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 but have shown a significant improvement, according to unpublished data, in 2015-2016.

Nearly all learners experiment with media and processes in a way that stretches and challenges their skills. Many learners use new technologies confidently and competently in their work. Most learners produce good quality practical outcomes. They use their sketchbooks and notebooks well to explore processes and to collect visual references. However, a majority of learners do not annotate their sketchbooks well enough to analyse their work effectively, to explore ideas and to investigate contextual sources. Too few learners know precisely what to do to improve their work and to achieve higher grades.

Many learners orally articulate their ideas confidently and clearly, using a wide range of accurate vocabulary. They respond very well to questioning. However, a minority of learners do not express themselves well enough in their writing, and make errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. In addition, only a few learners demonstrate higher order reading skills and extract information successfully from text.

Learners in a few areas, for example level 3 fashion design, use their numeracy skills appropriately to construct three-dimensional forms and to solve problems.

Learners develop their knowledge appropriately of the culture of Wales through visits to local and national galleries, and through workshops with local Welsh artists.

Most learners are well-motivated and participate actively in lessons, showing enjoyment in their learning. They work well in teams and review each other's work honestly. They make helpful suggestions to improve the work of their peers. Learners have good attendance. However, they are late arriving to a few lessons. In a very few courses learners have missed deadlines.

Learners benefit from taking part in local and national competitions and achieve very successful outcomes. Many learners are involved in charity and community events and demonstrate valuable social and life skills. Learners in performing arts are active in debates, choirs and hustling events on behalf of the whole college cohort. Student representatives understand the process for learner voice and are actively involved in decision-making.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Judgement: Good

The learning area offers a range of courses that generally meet learners' needs. Provision is flexible enough for learners to move between courses where appropriate. However, only one level 2 course is offered, which limits opportunities for learners to experience a wide range of study before choosing courses at level 3. The art and design, music technology and performing arts courses have established strong links with a range of local employers and arts-based organisations, and these include theatres, galleries, local artists, charities and design studios.

Learners receive an appropriate initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Many teachers use the college guidance to correct spelling in learners' work. However, a few teachers do not support learners to develop their reading and writing skills well enough, and this has a negative impact on learners' capacity to evaluate successfully.

Nearly all teachers have valuable subject expertise and this knowledge is used to support learners with expert advice and guidance. They have high expectations of learners' practical skills. Teachers have strong and positive working relationships with learners. Many teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure an appropriate pace of learning, and this means that in most teaching sessions learners make good progress in their learning. However, a few teachers do not plan sufficiently well enough and the pace in these sessions is slow.

Nearly all teachers assess learners well, and many teachers provide learners with valuable ongoing verbal feedback. However, a few teachers do not provide sufficient constructive feedback to learners to help them to improve their work. Approaches to recording and providing feedback to learners vary too much between teachers.

Teachers plan to develop learners' understanding of the culture of Wales through visits, workshops with local artists and encouraging learners to participate in Urdd competitions. Teachers have developed an introductory Welsh language module within the interactive media learning programme.

The learning area uses the college's mechanisms to identify and support learners with additional learning needs effectively. Teachers communicate regularly with the learner support team staff to ensure that this support remains effective.

Nearly all accommodation is fit for purpose with well-equipped media rooms, theatre space, music studios, darkrooms and workshops.

Key Question 3: How good is leadership?

Judgement: Good

Leaders and staff work well together to promote a caring and inclusive ethos. There is a strong drive for improvement in the learning area, and staff demonstrate a commitment to a shared vision of aspiration. Leaders have implemented

cross-college strategies successfully, and this has resulted in improved success rates for learners.

The progression board process is helpful to track learner progress and to provide support for learners. Review systems have enabled leaders and teachers to intervene to support learners and improve aspects of provision. Leaders have addressed a few instances of underperformance swiftly and effectively, and this has had a positive impact on learner outcomes.

There are clear channels of communication that allow management information to be disseminated effectively. Leaders and staff meet regularly, and meetings focus appropriately on learners' progress. However, management meetings do not generate sharp enough actions for improvement.

There is a clear annual quality cycle and appropriate processes for self-assessment. Staff gather information for self-assessment from a suitable range of evidence, including the observation of teaching and the appropriate use of learner voice. However, staff do not use evidence from first-hand observation of teaching and learning analytically enough to identify specific strengths and areas for development in teaching and in standards.

Leaders and teachers review courses regularly, and keep detailed records of this process. These notes provide a helpful reflection on course provision. Leaders and other staff are beginning to make better use of data to monitor performance across the learning area. However, data is not used robustly or routinely enough to evaluate learners' progress in detail, and to identify strengths and shortcomings in the learning area.

Overall, development planning is not linked clearly enough to self-evaluation processes. The development plan is not focused sharply enough on areas for improvement, actions and targets are not precise enough to help the learning area to improve the quality of learner outcomes.

The learning area works well with a wide range of partners and the local community to enrich learners' experiences. For example, performing arts learners work with schools on theatre in education projects, which is mutually beneficially to learners and pupils.

The learning area is proactive in working with schools to enable prospective learners to make informed choices about courses offered by the college. However, joint working with schools is underdeveloped.

Leaders in the learning area manage resources appropriately. Staff have undertaken a range of professional development activities that have arisen from observations of teaching. However, recently, professional learning for staff has not focused well enough on developing specific aspects of teaching and learning.

Appendix 1

Learner satisfaction

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	
I was given good information by my provider when I was choosing my learning programme.	1007	251 25%	707 70%	41 4%	8 1%	Cefais wybodaeth dda gan fy narparwr pan oeddwn yn dewis fy rhaglen ddysgu.
I have been given good advice about what I can do when I have finished my learning programme.	1014	231 23%	631 62%	142 14%	10 1%	Rydw i wedi cael cyngor da ynglŷn â'r hyn y gallaf ei wneud pan fyddaf wedi gorffen fy rhaglen ddysgu.
My induction has helped me to settle in to my learning programme.	1002	276 28%	662 66%	55 5%	9 1%	Mae fy nghyfnod ymsefydlu wedi helpu i mi ymgynefino yn fy rhaglen ddysgu.
I get good personal support from my tutors, trainers or assessors.	1010	376 37%	573 57%	49 5%	12 1%	Rydw i'n cael cymorth personol da gan fy nhwtoriaid, hyfforddwyr neu aseswyr.
There are other effective types of support available for me.	995	233 23%	684 69%	73 7%	5 1%	Mae mathau effeithiol eraill o gymorth ar gael i mi.
I understand why I was initially assessed at the start of my learning programme.	1003	216 22%	663 66%	105 10%	19 2%	Rydw i'n deall pam y cefais fy asesu ar ddechrau fy rhaglen ddysgu
I know what I need to do to improve my literacy and numeracy.	1001	245 24%	635 63%	106 11%	15 1%	Rydw i'n gwybod beth mae angen i mi ei wneud i wella fy llythrennedd a rhifedd.
I regularly work with my tutor to set targets for this improvement.	998	219 22%	628 63%	134 13%	17 2%	Rydw i'n gweithio gyda'm tiwtor yn rheolaidd i osod targedau ar gyfer y gwelliant hwn.
The targets I have set with my tutor have helped me to improve.	988	213 22%	634 64%	126 13%	15 2%	Mae'r targedau rydw i wedi eu gosod gyda'm tiwtor wedi helpu i mi wella.
I know how I will be supported in English, Maths and IT.	989	192 19%	617 62%	163 16%	17 2%	Rydw i'n gwybod sut byddaf yn cael cymorth mewn Saesneg, Mathemateg a TG.
Staff give me learning opportunities and support in Welsh and/or English according to my choice.	989	208 21%	656 66%	104 11%	21 2%	Mae staff yn rhoi cyfleoedd dysgu a chymorth i mi yn Gymraeg a/neu Saesneg fel rydw i'n dewis.
(Welsh speaking learners only) Should I wish to do so, I can access support for my learning through the medium of Welsh.	390	72 18%	234 60%	62 16%	22 6%	(Dysgwyr sy'n siarad Cymraeg yn unig) Pe bawn i'n dymuno gwneud hynny, rydw i'n gallu cael cymorth ar gyfer fy nysgu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

(Welsh speaking learners only) Should I wish to do so, I am able to complete assessments through the medium of Welsh.	362	63 17%	215 59%	63 17%	21 6%	(Dysgwyr sy'n siarad Cymraeg yn unig) Pe bawn i'n dymuno gwneud hynny, rydw i'n gallu cwblhau asesiadau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.
Staff show all learners respect and listen to their views and concerns.	995	321 32%	569 57%	85 9%	20 2%	Mae staff yn dangos parch at bob un o'r dysgwyr ac yn gwrandao ar eu safbwyntiau a'u pryderon.
Staff act on the views of learners.	1006	247 25%	643 64%	101 10%	15 1%	Mae staff yn gweithredu yn unol â safbwyntiau dysgwyr.
Staff help me to understand and to respect people from different backgrounds.	994	317 32%	605 61%	61 6%	11 1%	Mae staff yn fy helpu i ddeall a pharchu pobl o wahanol gefndiroedd.
Learners show respect and support one another well.	1005	287 29%	625 62%	72 7%	21 2%	Mae dysgwyr yn dangos parch ac yn cynorthwyo ei gilydd yn dda.
Staff help me to learn and to make progress.	1004	337 34%	627 62%	33 3%	7 1%	Mae staff yn helpu i mi ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd.
When required, I have access to good quality work placements.	951	218 23%	594 62%	116 12%	23 2%	Pan fydd angen, gallaf fanteisio ar leoliadau gwaith o ansawdd da.
I feel safe and free from harassment in my place of learning.	1005	375 37%	542 54%	66 7%	22 2%	Rydw i'n teimlo'n ddiogel ac yn rhydd oddi wrth aflonyddwch yn fy lleoliad dysgu.
I enjoy my learning.	1013	357 35%	568 56%	75 7%	13 1%	Rydw i'n mwynhau fy nysgu.
Staff use good quality learning materials.	1009	298 30%	634 63%	70 7%	7 1%	Mae staff yn defnyddio deunyddiau dysgu o ansawdd da.
My teachers have good knowledge of their subject.	1007	520 52%	444 44%	37 4%	6 1%	Mae gan fy athrawon wybodaeth dda am eu pwnc.
I have access to enough books and equipment, including computers, to do my work.	1009	407 40%	553 55%	39 4%	10 1%	Mae digon o lyfrau ac offer, gan gynnwys cyfrifiaduron, ar gael i mi wneud fy ngwaith.
Staff give me useful feedback on how I can improve my work.	1006	336 33%	612 61%	51 5%	7 1%	Mae staff yn rhoi adborth defnyddiol i mi ar sut gallaf i wella fy ngwaith.
My learning will help me to achieve my goals.	1009	409 41%	566 56%	26 3%	8 1%	Bydd fy nysgu yn helpu i mi gyflawni fy nodau.
Taking part in this learning programme has helped me to improve my life skills.	998	296 30%	593 59%	90 9%	19 2%	Mae cymryd rhan yn y rhaglen ddysgu hon wedi helpu i mi wella fy medrau bywyd.
Taking part in this learning programme has helped me to become involved in my community.	1002	170 17%	570 57%	221 22%	41 4%	Mae cymryd rhan yn y rhaglen ddysgu hon wedi helpu i mi gymryd rhan yn fy nghymuned.
My learning has helped improve my attitudes to keeping healthy and safe.	1010	237 23%	633 63%	113 11%	27 3%	Mae fy nysgu wedi helpu i mi wella fy agweddau at gadw'n iach a diogel.
I would recommend this learning provider to other people.	1013	369 36%	568 56%	58 6%	18 2%	Byddwn yn argymhell y darparwr dysgu hwn i bobl eraill.

Learner Questionnaire / Holiadur Dysgwyr

All Gender, All FT/PT, All Ages

	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	
I was given good information by my provider when I was choosing my learning programme.	25%		70%			4%	Cefais wybodaeth dda gan fy narparwr pan oeddwn yn dewis fy rhaglen ddysgu.
I have been given good advice about what I can do when I have finished my learning programme.	23%		62%			14%	Rydw i wedi cael cyngor da ynglŷn â'r hyn y gallaf ei wneud pan fyddaf wedi gorffen fy rhaglen ddysgu.
My induction has helped me to settle in to my learning programme.	28%		66%			5%	Mae fy nghyfnod ymsefydlu wedi helpu i mi ymgynffwrdd yn fy rhaglen ddysgu.
I get good personal support from my tutors, trainers or assessors.	37%		57%			5%	Rydw i'n cael cymorth personol da gan fy nhiwtoriaid, hyfforddwyr neu aseswyr.
There are other effective types of support available for me.	23%		69%			7%	Mae mathau effeithiol eraill o gymorth ar gael i mi.
I understand why I was initially assessed at the start of my learning programme.	22%		66%			10%	Rydw i'n deall pam y cefais fy asesu ar ddechrau fy rhaglen ddysgu.
I know what I need to do to improve my literacy and numeracy.	24%		63%			11%	Rydw i'n gwybod beth mae angen i mi ei wneud i wella fy llythrennedd a rhifedd.
I regularly work with my tutor to set targets for this improvement.	22%		63%			13%	Rydw i'n gweithio gyda'm tiwtor yn rheolaidd i osod targedau ar gyfer y gwelliant hwn.
The targets I have set with my tutor have helped me to improve.	22%		64%			13%	Mae'r targedau rydw i wedi eu gosod gyda'm tiwtor wedi helpu i mi wella.
I know how I will be supported in English, Maths and IT.	19%		62%			16%	Rydw i'n gwybod sut byddaf yn cael cymorth mewn Saesneg, Mathemateg a TG.
Staff give me learning opportunities and support in Welsh and/or English according to my choice.	21%		66%			11%	Mae staff yn rhoi cyfleoedd dysgu a chymorth i mi yn Gymraeg a/neu Saesneg fel rydw i'n dewis.
(Welsh speaking learners only) Should I wish to do so, I can access support for my learning through the medium of Welsh.	18%		60%			16%	(Dysgwyr sy'n siarad Cymraeg yn unig) Pe bawn i'n dymuno gwneud hynny, rydw i'n gallu cael cymorth ar gyfer fy nysgu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.
(Welsh speaking learners only) Should I wish to do so, I am able to complete assessments through the medium of Welsh.	17%		59%			17%	(Dysgwyr sy'n siarad Cymraeg yn unig) Pe bawn i'n dymuno gwneud hynny, rydw i'n gallu cwblhau asesiadau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.
Staff show all learners respect and listen to their views and concerns.	32%		57%			9%	Mae staff yn dangos parch at bob un o'r dysgwyr ac yn gwrando ar eu safbwyntiau a'u pryderon.
Staff act on the views of learners.	25%		64%			10%	Mae staff yn gweithredu yn unol â safbwyntiau dysgwyr.
Staff help me to understand and to respect people from different backgrounds.	32%		61%			6%	Mae staff yn fy helpu i ddeall a pharchu pobl o wahanol gefndiroedd.
Learners show respect and support one another well.	29%		62%			7%	Mae dysgwyr yn dangos parch ac yn cynorthwyo ei gilydd yn dda.
Staff help me to learn and to make progress.	34%		62%			3%	Mae staff yn helpu i mi ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd.

When required, I have access to good quality work placements.		Pan fydd angen, gallaf fanteisio ar leoliadau gwaith o ansawdd da.
I feel safe and free from harassment in my place of learning.		Rydw i'n teimlo'n ddiogel ac yn rhydd oddi wrth aflonyddwch yn fy lleoliad dysgu.
I enjoy my learning.		Rydw i'n mwynhau fy nysgu.
Staff use good quality learning materials.		Mae staff yn defnyddio deunyddiau dysgu o ansawdd da.
My teachers have good knowledge of their subject.		Mae gan fy athrawon wybodaeth dda am eu pwnc.
I have access to enough books and equipment, including computers, to do my work.		Mae digon o lyfrau ac offer, gan gynnwys cyfrifiaduron, ar gael i mi wneud fy ngwaith.
Staff give me useful feedback on how I can improve my work.		Mae staff yn rhoi adborth defnyddiol i mi ar sut gallaf i wella fy ngwaith.
My learning will help me to achieve my goals.		Bydd fy nysgu yn helpu i mi gyflawni fy nodau.
Taking part in this learning programme has helped me to improve my life skills.		Mae cymryd rhan yn y rhaglen ddysgu hon wedi helpu i mi wella fy medrau bywyd.
Taking part in this learning programme has helped me to become involved in my community.		Mae cymryd rhan yn y rhaglen ddysgu hon wedi helpu i mi gymryd rhan yn fy nghymuned.
My learning has helped improve my attitudes to keeping healthy and safe.		Mae fy nysgu wedi helpu i mi wella fy agweddau at gadw'n iach a diogel.
I would recommend this learning provider to other people.		Byddwn yn argymhell y darparwr dysgu hwn i bobl eraill.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Steve Bell	Reporting Inspector
Richard Mark Tither	Team Inspector
Sion Peters-Flynn	Team Inspector
Mamta Arnott	Team Inspector
Vanessa Morgan	Team Inspector
Mark Evans	Team Inspector
Sarah Lewis	Team Inspector
Ian Dickson	Team Inspector
Alun Connick	Team Inspector
Gareth Kiff	Team Inspector
Jackie Gapper	Quality Assurance Inspector
David Owen	Peer Inspector
Jen Williams	Peer Inspector
James Young	Peer Inspector
Timothy Robert Clark	Peer Inspector
Christopher Gill Jones	Peer Inspector
Marion Lynn Phillips	Peer Inspector
Christine Williams	Peer Inspector
Amanda Morgan	Peer Inspector
Jason Anthony Williams	Peer Inspector
Robert Evans	Peer Inspector
Helen Elizabeth Griffith	Peer Inspector
Michael Andrew Rees	Peer Inspector
Barry Walters	Nominee