



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

**A report on**  
**Priory College North Wales**

**Date of inspection: June 2016**

**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:

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

Priory College North Wales is an independent specialist college, situated next to the Wrexham campus of the further education institution serving north-east Wales. Priory College North Wales was established in 2011 and is administered by Priory Education Services, which is part of the wider Priory Group.

The college offers day placements for young adults aged 16 to 25 with Asperger's syndrome, autistic spectrum disorders and associated conditions. There are currently 27 learners at the college. Most learners come to the college from the local area.

A minority of learners access education exclusively at the college and follow pre-entry and entry level courses, including independent living skills. The other learners follow full-time courses at Coleg Cambria. They study a wide range of courses from entry level through to A levels. All learners, irrespective of their main place of study, receive both in-class and additional support by Priory College staff.

The current principal of the college took up post in November 2012. This is the first full inspection of the college.

## Summary

<b>The provider's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The provider's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

Current performance at Priory College North Wales is adequate because:

- Data indicates that learners make steady progress overall
- Many supported learners, who are on vocational and academic courses at the local further education institution, make good progress and achieve their learning aims well
- Most learners engage very well in lessons and remain on task
- The college provides a supportive and caring environment that has a very positive impact on many aspects of learners' personal development and wellbeing

However:

- Many learners are not punctual to lessons and, as a result, they do not develop important time-keeping skills and miss valuable opportunities to learn
- Initial assessments of learners' needs do not inform programme planning and targets on individual learning plans well enough
- Around half of targets on learners' individual learning plans are not specific enough to address individual needs appropriately
- Structured planning for the progression of learners' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all lessons is underdeveloped
- Individual learners' behaviour support plans do not identify strategies well enough, meaning that staff do not have clear guidelines on how to provide specialist support for learners with more challenging behaviour
- A minority of lesson objectives do not reflect learners' individual, specific targets well enough
- Communication with the further education institution is underdeveloped and this has a negative impact on the outcomes for a few learners

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement at Priory College North Wales are adequate because:

- The college has recently appointed a governance quality improvement lead
- The college principal and senior staff promote high expectations for the care of learners

However:

- The principal and senior staff do not consistently set clear objectives for high quality educational provision
- The college does not have a robust schedule of meetings and those that are held

do not result in actions for improvement or change

- Data collection at the college is underdeveloped, and the college is not able to collect and analyse a range of data on learner progress, achievements and outcomes to inform improvement planning
- Self-assessment does not focus well enough on learner standards and learner progress from their individual starting points
- The college improvement plan is not a sufficiently clear and well-presented document, and does not prioritise areas for improvement
- Reflective reviews of practice by staff and stakeholder and learner opinions are not used well enough to inform improvement planning

## Recommendations

R1 Make sure that data collection has a clear focus on learner progress and the evaluation of groups of learners

R2 Improve the punctuality of learners

R3 Plan the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to make sure that learners have clear progression

R4 Make sure that all learners have access to appropriate specialist support to address their individual needs

R5 Improve the quality of self-assessment and improvement planning to make sure that they focus on learner progress and include clear targets that can be measured and evaluated

R6 Improve communication with the further education institution fully to support learners' needs and improve their performance

### What happens next?

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current quality development plan to show what action the college intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents at the college.

Estyn will monitor progress against the recommendations at the next annual monitoring inspection.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

It is not possible to compare the college's performance with national averages, as there is no benchmark data available. Learners' attainment and achievement are judged on an individual basis.

The college does not have effective systems in place for recording and tracking learners' achievements from entry. Data provided by the college shows that learners do make steady progress overall. However, managers are unable to demonstrate or evaluate accurately how much progress learners make over time in line with their needs and abilities or measure their progress against individual areas of learning.

Individual learner records show that many of the college supported learners, who are on vocational and academic courses at the local further education institution, make good progress and achieve their learning aims well. However, overall, college information on the achievements of groups of learners is not sufficiently comprehensive or detailed enough to inform robust analysis and evaluation.

All learners have individual learning plans (ILPs). These contain a wide range of targets and learners review their targets on a regular basis.

Nearly all learners develop their communication skills well. They communicate confidently with other students, staff and visitors by listening attentively and making relevant contributions to discussions. Many learn to support their opinions effectively with appropriate reasoning.

Most learners develop their literacy skills appropriately in line with their ability. More able learners write well for a suitable range of purposes including through activities such as producing a poster to warn against cyber-bullying and writing a book review. Less able learners write independently, sounding out letters and spelling familiar words accurately. However, in a few lessons, learners do not develop their extended writing skills well enough.

Overall, learners develop their numeracy skills appropriately over time. Less able learners develop their numeracy skills appropriately through practical activities. More able learners recognise the time on analogue and digital clocks and record dates in a range of formats, as well as estimating measurements accurately in practical activities such as planting potatoes.

Many learners achieve an appropriate range of vocational qualifications and nearly all more able learners achieve a relevant unit of credit in literacy and numeracy skills. However, the levels of units of credit and vocational qualifications achieved do not demonstrate well enough a clear progression from the learners' starting point.

A minority of learners carry out suitable work-related learning, including working on reception in the college and assisting in the local library. Through their work-related learning, learners gain valuable life skills such as basic cookery and how to serve food safely.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Most learners attend college regularly. They engage well in lessons and remain on task. The majority of learners work well together and nearly all respond positively and appropriately to staff advice and support. However, a few learners are not punctual to lessons. As a result, they do not develop important time-keeping skills and miss valuable opportunities to learn. A very few learners do not attend college regularly enough.

Nearly all learners feel safe and know whom to speak to if they are worried. They are confident to approach senior staff, tutors or their key workers if they have concerns.

Most learners behave well in lessons and around the college. They are polite and courteous to visitors and staff, and relate well to one another. Many learners learn to manage their anxieties and improve their behaviour over their time at the college.

Many learners understand what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. A minority take advantage of the opportunities for regular sport and exercise organised by the college as part of their learning programmes, including swimming and fitness training at the local gym.

Many learners acquire useful social and life skills. They access the local community regularly to develop their confidence in social interaction and practise their independent travel skills. They organise fundraising events for charity and develop valuable enterprise skills selling craft products at the local market. A few learners take on important positions of responsibility within the college, acting as representatives on the student council, as peer mentors or working in the college reception area. This increases their self-confidence well.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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**Learning experiences: Adequate**

The college offers an appropriate range of qualifications through broad and balanced learning programmes that are individual to each learner.

The college carries out a wide range of initial assessments. Many of these focus on providing comprehensive information on learners' social, behavioural and emotional needs very well. However, initial assessments for learners' educational needs are underdeveloped. In addition, the college does not have a clear enough strategy and process for using the outcomes of the assessments. They do not inform programme planning and targets on ILPs well enough. Overall, there is too high a focus in programme planning on the requirements of qualifications rather than on personal progress.

The college offers learners very useful opportunities to attend courses at the local further education institution with support to meet their individual needs. This provides learners with a valuable range of learning experiences and opportunities to which they would not usually have access.

Teachers and staff plan well to provide learners with a suitable range of opportunities to develop their social and life skills. These contribute very well to learners' wellbeing and social development.

The college plans well for learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills through appropriate units of credit. During the college day, learners have regular opportunities to practise these skills in a range of activities and contexts. However, structured planning for the progression of learners' skills in all lessons is underdeveloped. Opportunities for learners to develop their ICT skills are very limited.

The college has a designated member of staff to co-ordinate work-based learning. The co-ordinator liaises well with employers and parents or carers to ensure that learners have access to a wide range of opportunities. However, there is no formal tracking or monitoring of the impact or outcomes of this experience to inform learners' future targets.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Learners and staff share a very positive learning relationship where there is mutual respect. This helps learners to have confidence when attempting new tasks.

Staff plan carefully for learning sessions and in many lessons learning objectives are specific and measurable. However, in a minority of lessons the objectives do not reflect well enough the outcomes of initial assessments and learners' individual, specific targets recorded on their ILPs.

Staff generally provide work that engages the learners suitably. They provide a range of practical and classroom-based activities that motivate the learners well and help them to remain on task. Staff offer praise and encouragement regularly throughout each session.

Staff provide regular opportunities for learners to develop their learning and life skills effectively. On a few occasions, a few staff plan useful programmes to enable learners to transfer and practise skills learned within the further education institution within units of study at the college.

All staff manage learners' behaviour well. They promote a calm environment and are sensitive to the needs of the learners. They use their skills and knowledge well to help learners to reduce their anxieties and manage their behaviour successfully. However, many lessons do not begin punctually and valuable learning time is lost.

Staff assess learners' work regularly throughout the lesson and provide useful verbal feedback, including encouraging learners to reflect on their learning in the lesson



appropriately. However, written feedback is not consistently effective in encouraging learners' understanding of how to improve their work.

Overall, there is no formal strategy for assessment for learning.

### **Care, support and guidance: Adequate**

The college provides a supportive and caring environment. This has a positive impact on many aspects of learners' personal development and wellbeing. For example, staff have a secure understanding of the individual needs of learners and they provide a calm and consistent approach that promotes learners' confidence and behaviour effectively.

Learning support staff working with learners in the further education institution support them very well and help learners to integrate into mainstream learning programmes effectively. However, individual learners' behaviour support plans do not identify strategies well enough to assist staff working with learners with more challenging behaviours. This has led to disruption of learning, and the subsequent non-completion of learning programmes for a few learners at the further education institution.

The college has an appropriate programme of personal and social education to ensure that learners develop their understanding of a range of important topics relating to their future wellbeing, including online safety and sex and relationships education. Many learners benefit from access to a visiting sexual health nurse to discuss issues of interest and importance to them. However, the college does not plan carefully enough to ensure that all learners develop their understanding of these topics at a level that is appropriate to them.

The college works effectively with a range of specialists to support the individual needs of learners. For example, it facilitates access to impartial advice and guidance, and advocacy services where this is required.

There is a well-co-ordinated approach to identifying learners' additional learning needs and the college's speech and language therapist makes a valuable contribution to the assessment of learners' communication needs. However, the current arrangements for other specialist support are not sufficient to meet the increasingly complex range of learners' needs. The impact of this is seen in areas such as the college not having suitable strategies in place to meet the behavioural needs of a few more challenging learners.

The college has appropriate policies and procedures in place to promote learners' health and wellbeing. The college's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The college provides a welcoming and safe environment based on a strong foundation of mutual respect. It has a positive and inclusive ethos that values the diversity of its learners. Effective and well-planned learning support ensures that all

learners have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. However, the learning environment does not sufficiently celebrate its learners' achievements through displays or evidence of learners' work.

The college has appropriate policies in place to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. It develops its learners' understanding of the issues faced by young people with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively. The college has recently relocated to a new building that provides a bright, modern and attractive learning environment. The accommodation is newly decorated and well maintained. The college has a range of appropriate resources that meet learners' needs effectively, including a catering kitchen, common room and quiet room.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Adequate**

The college principal and senior staff promote high expectations for the care of learners. They demonstrate a secure understanding of the strengths and needs of young people with autistic spectrum disorders and foster a caring ethos within the college environment. However, they do not consistently provide staff with clear guidelines, expectations and objectives for high quality educational provision.

There are suitable documents that set out roles and responsibilities for staff at all levels of the college. All staff understand their roles and they work together as a team very well.

Senior staff manage their time appropriately and prioritise their work well to meet the needs of their learners. They have appropriate working relationships with stakeholders and outside agencies.

Senior staff meet regularly to discuss the daily work of the college. They address issues quickly and exchange relevant information to make sure that they will meet the needs of the learners. However, the college does not have a robust schedule of meetings to share information and drive improvement. For example, records of most meetings that do take place lack a regular agenda and do not result in actions for improvement or change, and minutes are inconsistent.

The college governance quality improvement lead shows a secure understanding of the college strengths and those areas that require improvement. However, this role is new and it is too early to evaluate the impact on the work of the college and the standards that learners achieve.

There is a secure process for managing the performance of staff. Staff have regular performance reviews and these result in useful and wide ranging opportunities for continuing professional development.

The college is starting to introduce new systems to collect and process data. However, currently, target setting and data collection are underdeveloped. This means that the college is not able to collect and analyse a range of data on learner progress, achievements and outcomes to inform improvement planning.

### **Improving quality: Unsatisfactory**

Leaders and senior staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development and the college's self-assessment report provides a comprehensive insight into its work. However, in a few sections the self-assessment report is too descriptive and lacks sufficient evaluation. It does not focus well enough on learner standards and learner progress from their individual starting points and it is overly positive.

The college improvement plan clearly identifies targets for improvement. A minority of these link appropriately to statements in the self-assessment report. However, the college improvement plan is not sufficiently clear and well-presented. For example, it does not prioritise areas for improvement, timescales are too general and not specific, and success criteria and actions do not address the identified areas for improvement well enough. Currently, the college has no clear and robust systems in place for monitoring progress against the actions.

The college has a very clear and useable timetable for strategic deadlines such as internal verification and college open days. However, this does not include specific times for reviews of courses or learning programmes.

There are clear processes in place for observing the practice of teachers and learning support workers. The process is well established and the outcomes are used well to inform staff development and to offer training opportunities. Staff carry out useful reflective reviews of their practice and lessons. However, this information does not inform self-assessment well enough to bring about structured improvements to programme planning and learner outcomes.

The college routinely gathers the views of learners, parents and carers and stakeholders. However there is no clear evidence of how this information is analysed and used by the college to inform self-assessment and bring about improvements.

Although the college includes a few previous recommendations from Estyn's annual monitoring visits within the college improvement plan, overall the college is slow at addressing these recommendations to bring about improvement.

### **Partnership working: Adequate**

The college has an extensive partnership with the local further education institution. The principal and senior staff make effective use of this partnership to place learners on vocational and academic courses. They allocate learner support staff to provide in-class support to meet the needs of the individual learners. There is a comprehensive mutual willingness by both partners to provide a suitable and stable education for the college learners.

However, fully effective communication between the college and the further education institution is underdeveloped. There is a lack of cohesion with learner behaviour management strategies, learner progress, learner targets and issues that arise in classes. This means that a few learners do not successfully complete their programmes of study.

The college has effective links with a range of external agencies and partners. Staff use these partnerships well to support learners' wellbeing. They invite external experts to deliver relevant sessions in areas such as sexual health and drugs awareness.

Staff contact parents and carers through regular weekly phone calls or emails. This allows them to exchange information and to keep parents and carers informed about progress and issues. The college has an open door policy where parents can drop in when they are in the local area. This initiative helps to maintain an effective working partnership for the benefit of the learners.

The college has established partnerships with an appropriate range of employers to offer learners useful opportunities for work-related experience.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

Overall, the college manages its resources well. The principal is taking suitable account of the growing numbers of learners accessing the provision and there are relevant plans in place to provide more college space.

The principal has planned well to increase the staffing ratio to make sure the college meets the needs of all learners. Recruitment of staff is a robust and well established process.

The college deploys staff well to meet the needs of the learners and to make best use of the knowledge and expertise of the staff. Staff development is a high priority and staff have access to a wide range of relevant courses and qualifications.

Overall, the college manages its budget well. Buildings and resources are well maintained.

The college provides value for money for its learners.

# Appendix 1

## Stakeholder satisfaction report

### Responses to learner questionnaires

Learner Questionnaire / Arolwg Dysgwyr				
All Pupils / Pob Disgybl				
Priory College 06685				
	Nifer o ymatebion Number of responses	Nifer o ymatebion / Number of responses		
		Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	
I feel safe in my college	12	11 92%	1 8%	Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ngholeg.
The college deals well with any bullying	12	12 100%	0 0%	Mae'r coleg yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.
I have someone to talk to if I am worried	12	11 92%	1 8%	Mae gen i rywun i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw i'n poeni.
The college teaches me how to keep healthy	11	9 82%	2 18%	Mae'r coleg yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.
There are plenty of opportunities at college for me to get regular exercise	12	10 83%	2 17%	Mae digonedd o gyfleoedd yn y coleg i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
I am doing well at college	12	12 100%	0 0%	Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn y coleg.
The teachers help me to learn and make progress and they help me when I have problems	12	12 100%	0 0%	Mae'r athrawon yn fy helpu i ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd ac maent yn fy helpu pan fydd gen i broblemau.
I have enough books and equipment, including computers, to do my work	12	8 67%	4 33%	Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.
Learners behave well and I can get my work done	12	10 83%	2 17%	Mae dysgwyr eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.
Staff treat all learners fairly and with respect	12	12 100%	0 0%	Mae staff yn trin pob dysgwr yn deg ac yn dangos parch atynt.
The college listens to our views and makes changes we suggest	12	9 75%	3 25%	Mae'r coleg yn gwrandao ar ein barn ac yn gwneud newidiadau rydym ni'n eu hawgrymu.
I am encouraged to do things for myself and to take on responsibility	12	11 92%	1 8%	Rwy'n cael fy annog i wneud pethau drosaf fy hun a chymryd cyfrifoldeb.
The college helps me to be ready for my next college or to start my working life	12	12 100%	0 0%	Mae'r coleg yn helpu i mi fod yn barod ar gyfer fy ngholeg nesaf, neu i ddechrau fy mywyd gwaith.
The staff respect me and my background	12	12 100%	0 0%	Mae'r staff yn fy mharchu i a'm cefndir.
The college helps me to understand and respect people from other backgrounds	12	11 92%	1 8%	Mae'r coleg yn helpu i mi ddeall a pharchu pobl o gefndiroedd eraill.
I was given good advice when choosing my courses	12	11 92%	1 8%	Cefais gyngor da wrth ddewis fy nghyrsiau yn y chweched dosbarth.

## Responses to parent questionnaires

Parent Questionnaire / Arolwg Rhieni													
Priory College 06685													
	Nifer o ymatebion Number of responses	Nifer o ymatebion / Number of responses											
		Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod							
Overall I am satisfied with the college	7	6 86%	1 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r coleg yn gyffredinol.						
My child likes the college	8	6 75%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn hoffi'r coleg.						
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the college	8	7 88%	1 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y coleg.						
My child is making good progress in college	8	5 63%	3 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y coleg.						
Learners behave well in college	8	4 50%	4 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae dysgwyr yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y coleg.						
Teaching is good	8	5 63%	3 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.						
Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best	8	5 63%	3 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn disgwyl i fy mhentyn weithio'n galed ac i wneud ei orau.						
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect	8	7 88%	1 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.						
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise	8	6 75%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.						
My child is safe at college	8	6 75%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn ddiogel yn y coleg.						
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs	8	6 75%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.						
I am kept well informed about my child's progress	8	6 75%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhentyn.						
I feel comfortable about approaching the college with questions, suggestions or a problem	8	7 88%	1 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n esmwyth ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r coleg, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.						
I understand the college's procedure for dealing with complaints	8	5 63%	3 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y coleg ar gyfer delio â chwynion.						
The college helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility	8	7 88%	1 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r coleg yn helpu fy mhentyn i ddod yn fwy aeddfed ac i ysgwyddo cyfrifoldeb.						
My child is well prepared for moving on the next college or work	8	4 50%	4 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r coleg nesaf neu waith.						
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits	8	4 50%	4 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.						
The college is well run	8	7 88%	1 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r coleg yn cael ei rhedeg yn dda.						

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Gill Sims	Reporting Inspector
Elizabeth Ann Dackevych	Team Inspector
Richard Tither	Peer Inspector
Sandra Morgan	Nominee