



Annual monitoring inspection report on

Priory College North Wales

Date of inspection: June 2015

by

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

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Context

Priory College North Wales is an independent specialist college providing support and care for young adults aged 16 to 25 with Asperger's syndrome, autistic spectrum disorders and associated conditions.

The college is adjacent to the Yale campus of Coleg Cambria in Wrexham.

Due to the complexity of their needs and learning abilities, the majority of learners access education exclusively at Priory College's own premises. These learners follow pre-entry and entry level courses, including independent living skills. A minority of learners follow full time courses at Coleg Cambria. They study a wide range of courses from entry level qualifications in range of subjects to A levels in, for example, geography and geology.

All learners, irrespective of their main place of study, receive both in-class and additional support by Priory College staff, for example to develop their social use of language.

Since the last annual monitoring visit Priory Education Services has made a number of new appointments, including a head of education services and a further education manager.

Main findings

Strengths

The college's strengths are that:

- Staff make good use of the questionnaires completed by learners and parents to ensure that appropriate programmes of study are in place immediately on taking up a place at the college
- There are a range of small group and bespoke individual learning experiences to develop learners' understanding of social use of language and their independent living skills
- Where appropriate, learners access a wide range of courses in Coleg Cambria
- Learners are supported well to consider appropriate further training or employment opportunities on completing their course
- There are very well-developed plans to re-locate to more appropriate facilities

Areas for development

The college's areas for development are that:

- The partnership agreement with the Coleg Cambria does not include an information sharing protocol
- The college lacks a comprehensive recording and monitoring system to track learner progress closely and to ensure that the curriculum fully meets the needs of learners
- Teachers do not always record pupils' outcomes against their individual learning plan targets
- Staff are still developing their knowledge and understanding of the needs of learners with autistic spectrum disorders
- Managers and leaders do not have a good enough understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement
- The college has made very little progress against many of the recommendations of the 2014 annual monitoring visit

Recommendations

The college should:

- R1 Review the partnership agreement with Coleg Cambria
- R2 Implement a system that tracks the progress of all learners
- R3 Continue to develop staff expertise in working with learners with autistic spectrum disorders
- R4 Ensure that all stakeholders are involved in selfevaluation and improvement planning

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

Recommendation 1: Revise the self-evaluation report to include specific evaluations of outcome data, learner progress, achievement and attendance

This recommendation has not been addressed.

The college is using a self-evaluation format that is based on Estyn's common inspection framework.

The Principal of Priory College provides monthly reports to Priory Education Services. However, these do not focus on learner standards. Managers of the organisation are not formally involved in self-evaluation. As a result, they do not know the college's strengths and areas for development as well as they need to.

There is no systematic approach to collecting learner progress data to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. Priory College over relies on support staff to collect what information they can on the progress that learners make on courses provided by Coleg Cambria. In addition, staff do not use progress data for those of learners that access education exclusively at Priory College's premises. As a result, the self-evaluation report makes very little reference to learner outcome data.

A partnership agreement is in place between Priory College and Coleg Cambria. This usefully identifies the need for sharing of learner data. However, there is no system to do this.

Recommendation 2: Use the findings from the self-evaluation report to inform the development targets in the action plan

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The college's self-evaluation report is overly descriptive and does not focus well enough on the standards achieved by learners. Stakeholders, including Priory Education Services, have a minimal input into self-evaluation.

The development plan identifies three targets for improvement. These are in relation to tracking learner progress and the continued professional development of staff. These generally relate to the information contained in the self-evaluation report. However, the plan does not provide any interim milestones or target dates for completing actions.

Since November 2014, the monthly report to Priory Education Services contains the same action points. The management of the organisation has taken limited action in relation to the identified areas for improvement.

The development plan does not sufficiently address the recommendations of the last annual monitoring visit.

Recommendation 3: Review the learners' vocational and academic programmes to identify opportunities for staff at Priory Coleg to extend and support learners social, emotional and educational development

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Joint multi-agency progress reviews are held twice a year for each learner. However, these tend to focus on behaviour and attitudes and insufficient attention is given to learner progress. Individual learning plan targets are not monitored closely enough to ensure efficient future planning. There are no formal arrangements in place for a joint review of the vocational and academic programmes available to learners.

Priory College staff support learners well in a wide range of learning opportunities which are well-suited to their needs and interests.

Recommendation 4: Establish a formal system to track and evaluate learner progress on vocational and academic courses

This recommendation has not been addressed.

The sharing of information about learner progress is inconsistent. Currently tracking is paperbased in individual pupil files and there is no structured system in place where staff can access information easily. Individual learning plans are not reviewed systematically. Staff do not consistently record learner outcomes against vocational and academic targets. As a result, the college does not know how well all its learners are progressing at any given time.

All learners have individual learning plans. However, documentation is incomplete and often does not contain specific and measurable targets to inform future planning.

Recommendation 5: Make sure plans for developing learners independent living skills are relevant and appropriate to the aspirations for the learners' future lives

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The college carries out a thorough consultation process with learners and parents as part of their induction procedures. This enables staff to prepare an appropriate programme of study for learners to begin immediately when they join the college.

There is a strong focus on developing independence. For example, learners develop skills in budgeting and cooking and, where appropriate, are supported to travel independently.

Using information gathered from previous placements, the college takes full account of the learners' interests in relation to future needs and employment. Learners are enthusiastic about the courses they follow. Effective transition plans support the learners as they progress through their education. Learners are encouraged to consider a wide range of future options including vocational and university level

qualifications where appropriate. The college works well with a small number of partners to support learners in the transition process including during holiday periods. Inspectors' judgements on this annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full inspection.

College information

College	Priory College North Wales
College number	F0006006
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	15/06/2015
Proprietor	Priory Education Services
Staff	1 Vice Principal (vacant), 1 business manager, 1 SEN teacher, 3 education co-ordinators, 2 senior team leaders, 1 speech and language therapist (part-time), 1 student speech and language therapist, 11 learning support staff.
Number of learners	18
Provision	Day provision / 38 weeks a year
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the college	Autistic spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, attention deficit disorder, dyspraxia, dyslexia, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder.
Last full inspection	No inspection to date
Last annual monitoring inspection	28/04/2014
Last CSSIW inspection	n/a

Team information

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