



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Coleg Gwent
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1XJ**

Date of inspection: April 2012

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh)

© Crown Copyright 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 15/08/2012

Context

Coleg Gwent is one of the largest providers of further education in Wales. It delivers programmes from five main campuses at Newport, Pontypool, Cross Keys, Usk and Ebbw Vale and two outreach Learn IT centres at Cwmbran and Monmouth. The college enrolled 28,859 learners in 2010-2011, an increase of 3.7% from the previous year. Over 10,000 of these learners were on full-time programmes. Around 13% of all enrolments were at entry level, 26% at level 1, 36% at level 2 and 22% at level 3. Around 42% of all learners were male and 5% from black minority ethnic backgrounds.

The college serves a wide catchment area and five local authorities, Newport, Torfaen, Monmouth, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. The population in this area equates to around 19% of the total population of Wales. The percentage of Welsh speakers across the region is around 12% and around 6% of learners at the college speak Welsh. The college serves several areas of high deprivation. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates areas of high deprivation in Torfaen, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent. The college estimates that around 56% of all college enrolments are from areas of high deprivation, rising to around 77% at the Ebbw Vale campus.

The percentage of working age population with no qualifications is higher in Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Caerphilly and Torfaen than other areas in Wales. Economic inactivity rates in Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Caerphilly are between 25% and 28.8% and are higher than the 23.5% for Wales. The percentage of workless households in Blaenau Gwent is 31.7%, Torfaen 26.7% and Caerphilly 26.4%. These are higher than the 22.9% for Wales and the 18.7% for the UK. The Gross Value Added (GVA) for the Gwent Valleys in 1999 at £53.3 is lower than the all Wales value of £73.3.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance is good overall because:

- success rates for nearly all programme areas across all college campuses are good and have shown an upward trend over the past three years;
- the college performs well when success rates are ranked against other colleges in Wales;
- the college performs well at A Level when compared to other providers;
- the proportion of learners achieving higher grades on vocational programmes is good;
- success rates for the Welsh Baccalaureate are good;
- learners from areas of high deprivation perform well;
- almost all learners feel safe and are very satisfied with their experiences at the college; and
- the college provides good guidance and support for learners.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the college has a good track record in making improvements and addressing the recommendations from previous Estyn inspections;
- the principal and senior management team provide strong and decisive leadership that has had a significant impact on the college;
- there are clear and well-communicated priorities and targets for improvements and these are shared and agreed by all staff;
- the college knows its strengths and weaknesses well and what it needs to do to improve;
- the college has the capacity and resources to deliver the identified priorities;
- there are robust systems in place to review progress, to identify areas for improvement and to take action to remedy them; and
- the governing body is well informed about the work of the college and supports and challenges the principal and senior management team to deliver the priorities in the college's strategic plans.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the standards achieved by learners across all learning areas in order to achieve the targets in the strategic plan.
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching in all programme areas in order to increase the proportion of good and excellent teaching.
- R3 Make sure that skills policies are used effectively to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of all learners.
- R4 Maximise the use of the electronic Individual Learning Plans across the college to set and monitor learner targets and to allow learners to take more responsibility for their progress.
- R5 Promote the importance and use of the Welsh language across the college in line with the college's bilingual strategy.

What happens next?

The college link inspector will monitor the college action plans and the progress against the above recommendations. The college will be required to submit a case study of the excellent partnership working identified by inspectors.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Overall, the rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications are good. Success rates at all levels, in all learning areas and at all college campuses have shown a steady upward trend over the last three years. College unverified data shows that this three year upward trend in performance is continuing. The college compares well with other colleges in Wales when ranked on their success rates for all courses. Similarly, the college is in the top half of all colleges in Wales when ranked on success rates for all learning areas.

The success rate for all A Level subjects is above the average success rate for all colleges in Wales the success rate for all providers in Wales and has increased steadily over the past three years. The success rate for AS Level subjects has increased steadily over the past three years in line with the averages for Wales. Overall, learners attain near to their predicted levels at Advanced level based on their previous GCSE attainment in schools.

The percentage of learners achieving higher grades on BTEC National qualifications is good with over 50% of learners achieving three Merit grades or higher.

Key and Essential Skills success rates are adequate overall and have improved year-on-year in line with those of other colleges in Wales.

Learners from relatively deprived socio-economic backgrounds attain well at the college. At the Ebbw Vale campus, where over 77% of learners are from areas of high deprivation, attainment rates have increased year-on-year and were above 90% last year.

Learners in receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance or the Assembly Learning Grant perform well and success rates are 4% above those for learners not receiving this financial support. Achievement rates for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) are good overall. In 2010-2011, at Foundation and Intermediate Levels, success rates are well above averages for Wales. At Advanced Level, achievement rates are slightly above the average for Wales.

Success rates for male and female learners are similar overall. The success rates for ethnic minority learners are similar to the rates for other learners at the college.

Learners at all levels generally make good progress in the classes observed. They participate well in class, are engaged and motivated and contribute well in whole class, group and individual tasks. The majority of learners answer questions confidently and talk confidently about their work and how they apply their learning.

Nearly all learners use initial and diagnostic literacy assessment results well and know the specific areas of literacy they need to develop. A majority of learners have good oracy skills, communicate well in class and use an appropriate range of

vocabulary. Most learners show good skills in skimming and scanning texts to extract information. A majority write well for a range of purposes and learners in AS and A Level classes demonstrate relevant higher order literacy skills. However, many learners are not developing their spelling skills well enough and a minority of learners make basic errors in punctuation and grammar. Many learners do not take application of number qualifications at a level relevant to their skills development.

A small number of full-time Welsh-speaking learners attend the college (less than 6%). Although no learners complete all or part of their main qualifications bilingually, a small number complete Welsh in the Workplace units and use Welsh where appropriate eg in Customer Care, Hair and Beauty, Childcare and on the tutorial enrichment programme.

Wellbeing: Good

Overall, learners enjoy coming to college and their experiences are generally positive. Nearly all learners feel very safe and well supported in the college. Most learners are involved in challenging activities through the tutorial enrichment programme and Welsh Baccalaureate Core that encourage a positive attitude towards healthy eating and lifestyle.

Learners participate enthusiastically in classroom activities. Most learners are motivated to be successful and are keen to make progress with their studies. Generally, in the classroom and around college learner behaviour is very good and they treat others respectfully.

The majority of learners at all levels participate in the Enrichment Activity Programme and ADEPT Scheme (Activities, Dates, Events, Presentation and Themes) enabling them to gain valuable experience in fund-raising, volunteering and charity events that promote local and global citizenship.

Most learners have a clear understanding of learner representation and the role of the Learner Forum. The establishment of the Learner Involvement Strategy Sub Group including a Governor, the Student Union Vice President, Sabbatical Officer and Learner Governors is developing opportunities to improve and respond to the Learner Voice. Their findings are reported annually to the Curriculum and Quality Sub Committee. Most learners are involved in a learner review, which contributes towards and influences the annual college review.

Nearly all learners are aware and adhere to the college's Code of Conduct. Most learners develop good social and life skills. A few learners have been trained as Peer Mentors to work and support learners who are at risk of withdrawing. Most learners increase their levels of confidence and self-esteem through the tutorial enrichment programme, tutor support and other college activities.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
---	-------------

Learning experiences: Good

Overall, the college plans the curriculum effectively and meets the needs of learners, employers and the community well. It offers a wide range of further education

courses from entry level to level 4 across all learning areas. These include vocational programmes and around 35 A Level subjects. It delivers work-based and adult community learning programmes and offers customised courses, for example those designed specifically to support Trade Union representatives in their roles.

The college collaborates well with other education providers to extend learning opportunities for 14 to 19-year-old learners. Currently about 1,300 14 to 16-year-old school pupils attend college programmes and a small number of 16 to 19-year-old learners attend A Level classes.

Just over 700 learners across a range of courses study the WBQ at foundation, intermediate or advanced levels. The provision is planned well to cover the learning core and to broaden learners' experiences.

Learners who do not study the WBQ cover the elements of the learning core through a very well-structured and comprehensive tutorial enrichment programme alongside their main qualifications. They study a range of topics relevant to their needs and interests, including personal health and wellbeing, personal finances, citizenship and equality and diversity.

All full-time learners follow a programme of work-related education. They complete appropriate work experience where this is a compulsory element of their programme. Other learners have practical experience in the college environment. Learners complete a work skills course, which helps them to develop a wide range of skills needed for employment.

All learners have an initial assessment to identify their levels of literacy and numeracy. In addition, all learners have a diagnostic assessment for literacy. Learners working above level 1 in numeracy have a diagnostic assessment, but this is not consistent practice across the college.

The college uses the results of initial assessment well to inform teachers of learners' needs. Many teachers make good use of this information and they have strategies to help learners at all levels to improve their literacy skills. However, its effectiveness varies too much across the college. The college is at an early stage in using this approach to improve the numeracy skills of learners.

Most learners study essential skills at a level matched to their ability. Teachers contextualise and integrate essential skills well into learners' main programmes.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) is embedded in the curriculum and most learners develop a good understanding of concepts relating to ESDGC. They understand the need for recycling and re-using materials, and participate in themed events and activities that promote awareness of ESDGC. The college supports learners well to participate in a wide range of community projects and partnerships and overseas exchange visits.

The college is developing its Welsh language provision well. It has recently appointed a Bilingual Champion and is developing good links with local Welsh medium secondary schools. The college promotes the use of the Welsh language

where appropriate, for example through Welsh in the Workplace units and by using the Welsh language in Childcare, Customer Care and Hair and Beauty. The college is collaborating well with two other further education colleges to develop their bilingual provision. The Welsh language is one of the 12 themes in the college-wide tutorial enrichment programme.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and a good professional relationship with the learners. Many teachers plan lessons well and set clear aims and objectives and make these clear at the start of their lessons.

A majority of teachers use a variety of effective teaching strategies and a few teachers use innovative practical activities to engage and motivate learners. A few teachers make very good use of the College Group Information Form to identify those learners who may need more support. A majority of teachers adapt activities well to suit the different abilities of the learners. In a very few numeracy classes, teachers use alternative methods of numeracy calculation to suit the learning styles of the learners. In most classes, lessons are delivered at a good pace with appropriately timed activities, and learners are challenged to achieve well. However, in a small number of classes observed, the pace of the lessons is too slow and learners are not challenged well enough to achieve to the best of their ability.

The majority of teachers give learners sufficient opportunities to develop their independent thinking and learning skills. Many tutors use good verbal questioning techniques that are directed to individual learners and to the whole class to assess their understanding as well as their subject knowledge.

Many tutors, especially in practical areas, plan assessment opportunities effectively and, where applicable, simulate real working environments.

Nearly all tutors mark learners' work promptly. Many teachers provide useful verbal feedback that supports and encourages learners well. However, too many portfolios lack constructive comments for improvement and many literacy errors are left uncorrected. A majority of tutors keep effective learner tracking records and use these well to ensure that learners understand their progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The college provides good care, support and guidance for all learners. It provides a good range of health promotion activities and events, including smoking cessation events, a health promotions week and Sport Relief events. It ensures that learners have a good choice of healthy eating options in canteens. The college has installed on most campuses vending machines that contain healthy eating choices. Learners take good account of healthy lifestyle issues when planning their assignments.

A helpful induction programme helps learners to settle in to the college quickly. Nearly all learners are aware of the good range of support services that the college provides. They know how to access services and those who use them find that the support they offer helps them to continue on their courses.

Learners receive helpful advice when they apply to study at the college. This helps them to make informed decisions about their choice of course. Where appropriate, they are referred to independent guidance providers. All learners are aware of the careers advisers who attend the campuses and most learners use this facility to plan their progression. However, a few courses do not do enough to ensure that learners have an adequate awareness of the labour market and opportunities available to them after completing their studies. The college provides good support for learners aiming to progress to higher education.

Teachers monitor learners' attendance effectively. Most learners report that their absence is followed up promptly by tutors and a minority know that they can see information about their attendance on-line. The college has recently introduced an electronic register system and an electronic Individual Learning Plan (eILP). These enable easier monitoring of attendance and learner progress. However, not all learners use them effectively to monitor and improve their own progress and attendance.

There are good procedures in place to ensure that learners know what to do if they feel they are being bullied. There are very few reports of bullying incidents at the college. The college has an appropriate policy and has comprehensive procedures for safeguarding that include training and recruitment of staff. Procedures are publicised clearly in every classroom. All staff are clear about what to do if they encounter a safeguarding issue. The majority of governors have received training in safeguarding.

The college supports learners with additional learning needs well. Nearly all staff tailor support to individual learners' needs, using tutorials well to monitor the progress of learners who need extra support. They link well with support workers to respond to emerging issues of vulnerable learners. Two campuses have very helpful behaviour support programmes, which help learners to manage their behaviour and continue with their courses. One campus is introducing a potentially useful 'team around the child' forum to co-ordinate learner support. The college provides useful, targeted support for learners with autistic spectrum disorder.

Learning environment: Good

The college has a strong commitment to inclusion and promotes an ethos of equality and diversity well. It provides an inclusive environment for all of its learners. Learners have a good understanding of equality and have a high level of respect for each other and their tutors. The college has developed a good range of policies that clearly support and underpin their commitment to equality and diversity. Almost all learners feel safe and free from harassment at the college.

The college has staff and student diversity groups on each campus that report to the Diversity Steering Group. The college has delivered useful training on equality and diversity to all staff and managers. College managers monitor the impact of their policies through the careful analysis of data on the performance of different groups of learners. This includes the analysis of learner performance by gender, age, ethnicity, basic skills support need, postcode and financial support status. College staff work closely with their local Safeguarding Children boards. The college works closely with

the five local authority social services departments to make sure that they provide appropriate support for learners leaving care. This enables the college to identify these learners early to make sure that appropriate support is in place before they start their college course.

Overall, most accommodation across the college sites is appropriate and provides a welcoming learning environment, particularly in the most recently built facilities which are of a high quality. A few facilities at the college are not of the same high quality. However, the college has a detailed estates strategy that includes comprehensive plans to develop these areas into high quality teaching and learning areas.

Most classrooms and workshops are well resourced and have enough information and communication technology (ICT) equipment of an appropriate standard that meets the needs of learners.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
--	-------------

Leadership: Good

The college has gone through a period of rapid change and improvement since the appointment of the current principal less than two years ago. He provides strong and decisive leadership and has had a significant impact on the culture of the college. The revised vision and mission make it clear that striving for excellence for all learners is at the heart of all aspects of the college's operations. These changes have had a very positive impact on all parts of the college's wide range of activities and managers and staff feel empowered to bring about change.

The principal and senior management team work very well together to set and deliver the college's strategic priorities. There have been very few recent changes to the membership of senior and middle management teams. Their roles, responsibilities and reporting lines have been modified considerably to reflect the need to improve communication and to improve the whole college ethos. As a result, all staff are now clear about the lines of accountability for all aspects of their work. Communication between all managers and staff across all sites of the college is very good and the 'Buzz the Boss' initiative enables all learners and staff to contact the principal about any aspect of college life that they want to see improved. They receive timely and constructive responses to their concerns from the relevant manager.

The college uses management data very well to measure and challenge all aspects of performance against an appropriate set of key performance indicators. The information is easily accessible to all managers through the 'One Stop Shop' for college data. Managers use this information very well to identify where performance is not on target. The reasons for any negative deviation from target are investigated carefully and systematically and appropriate action is taken swiftly and transparently. These actions are beginning to have a very positive impact on most learners' success rates. However, actions are not yet fully effective in all parts of the college's work. Senior managers are clear about what the college needs to do to address any shortcomings and to support staff in carrying out their roles.

Management systems and procedures are clear and generally well understood. Staff know what is expected of them in terms of challenging learners to achieve the best possible outcomes in terms of standards and behaviour around the college.

The college works very effectively to meet the needs of its many communities and five partner local authorities. The actions taken by the college to improve learners' experiences and outcomes reflect the national priorities for the transformation of education in Wales very well.

The governing body is proactive and challenging. It sets a clear and appropriate strategic direction for the college. It supports the college management team well in carrying out their responsibilities. Governing body members receive very good information about all aspects of the college's work, particularly in relation to learners' outcomes. They place their responsibilities for curriculum and quality at the heart of the governing body's operations.

The governing body carries out its work very efficiently and economically, and all papers are supported with a concise executive summary to support decision-making. Board members use tablet computers effectively to access, scrutinise and discuss all board papers electronically. They have rigorous and appropriate arrangements for assessing their own effectiveness.

Improving quality: Good

The college has good arrangements to monitor and improve quality and standards. The self-assessment report and quality development plans are used effectively by the college to improve quality and strategic planning.

Annual self-assessment is an integral part of the college's strategic planning. The operational plans for the college are linked clearly to departmental objectives. Overall college objectives are very well supported at departmental and course level.

Self-assessment begins at course team level and is well informed by the college's central data facility. This facility provides accurate and clear data to support quality improvement. Judgements in course and school self-assessment reports are based on evidence from learners' questionnaires, the outcomes from teaching session observations, value added indicators and learner outcomes. These are compared with national benchmarks and college agreed targets well in order to measure progress.

All staff participate in self-assessment. Course teams, schools, faculties and functional areas are very well-supported by campus managers and the quality team in the preparation of their self-assessments. Self-assessment reports are validated by the self-assessment validation panel consisting of the Principal, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality), and the quality team. These meetings are very detailed and challenging. All college managers contribute to the whole college self-assessment report. The report includes a detailed quality development plan that is used as a working document to drive improvements in quality and standards. These plans inform the delegation of budgets at operational levels.

The college undertakes a well-established and very effective rolling programme of internal reviews. The college makes very good use of the expertise available from other colleges and those supported through the Colegau Cymru's self-regulation services in their internal reviews. This external involvement has improved the robustness of the reviews, particularly for a multi-campus college.

The college has introduced a Leading Learning Initiative to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This includes the appointment of learning mentors and an accredited programme for observer training. Since the introduction of a revised observation policy, student perception data shows an improvement in those areas related to teaching, and internal classroom observations show an improved number of higher judgements for the quality of teaching.

The college has significantly improved its overall performance in a relatively short period of time and responded very well to the recommendations of the most recent Estyn inspection reports. The self-assessment report is an honest and true account of the college's strengths and weaknesses. There is a close match between the college's self-assessment report and the findings of the Estyn inspection team.

Partnership working: Excellent

The college has developed excellent partnership arrangements with the local community and the businesses that it serves. These partnerships are based on mutual trust and co-operation. The Deputy Principal, together with the senior management team, has built up very successful strategic and operational relationships with the five local authorities, primary and secondary schools, further and higher education providers, work-based learning providers and adult and community learning providers.

The college places a high priority on developing partnerships and new initiatives to improve learning opportunities for all learners. The college takes an active role in planning and evaluating the 14-16 provision in the five local authority areas. As a result of this joint working and collaboration, the college has contributed to the significant reduction in the number of learners in the Greater Gwent area leaving school without a recognised qualification or who are at risk of becoming NEETs ('not in education, employment or training').

The college is a key player in the development of the Learning Zone in Blaenau Gwent. The Learning Zone will provide comprehensive tertiary provision in the area from September 2012. Headteachers and college staff have worked hard and effectively together to break down barriers between pre and post-16 education and training. They work together well to plan the transition process for the current Year 11 pupils. The Deputy Principal attends the Transition Arrangements Group, which brings together the headteachers and key local authority staff to co-ordinate the development of the Learning Zone. These arrangements are particularly effective.

The college is an active member of the Heads of the Valleys Education Programme (HoVEP). This strategic partnership between two colleges and two local authorities is specifically aimed to raising participation and standards for learners in areas of high deprivation. They also have strong and effective partnerships with the two universities in in University of the Heads of the Valley Initiative. These provide

learners with excellent progression opportunities from the wide range of foundation degrees offered by the college. The college has strong and effective partnerships with the University of Wales Newport and the college jointly funds two staff appointments with the university.

The college has very effective and longstanding relationships with local and national employers. College staff across all campuses work well with the Business Development Unit to provide learners with work experience opportunities relevant to their chosen training programme. The college is well represented at sector skills council network meetings. Senior staff are pro-active in developing and influencing policy and direction to meet the needs of employers.

The college has well established relationships for the delivery of adult community learning and Welsh for Adults provision across the Greater Gwent area. These partnerships provide learning opportunities to meet the needs of a very wide range of adult learners.

An increasing number of external companies are contributing effectively to fund resources and reduce costs for the college. For example, bus companies are working with the college to develop more efficient travel plans for learners and there are developing construction skills sponsorships to provide more facilities and equipment for construction learners.

The college Essential Skills manager works well in partnership with three other colleges to share initial assessment results and develop benchmark criteria to improve learner outcomes. Similarly, the college Bilingual Champion is developing bilingual provision jointly with two other further education colleges.

College staff and students organise and manage the annual Countryside Experience Week. This work strengthens partnerships with local primary schools to focus on environmental issues and gives children a broader experience of community and college learning.

Resource management: Good

Overall, the management of resources is good. The college has developed comprehensive and robust systems for managing its financial resources. It uses these finances well to improve its estate and to upgrade resources and equipment for teaching and learning.

The college's strong financial planning and the allocation of resources are clearly linked to its strategic plan. Managers allocate budgets effectively and monitor spending across the college carefully. They have developed a clear strategic approach to curriculum planning to make the most effective use of resources across the college. Effective financial management has resulted in the college increasing learner numbers while maintaining a stable cost base.

Most staff are well qualified. The college employs an appropriate number of qualified and experienced staff to deliver the curriculum. It deploys these staff effectively to make the best use of their skills and expertise.

The continual professional development needs of staff are identified well through strategic and operational plans and annual staff appraisals. The annual Learning and Development plan defines clearly the key training priorities for staff at all levels, such as the Leading Learning Initiative.

The college makes good use of alternative sources of funding. For example, senior managers have used grant funding from the Welsh Government well to appoint a bilingual champion and to undertake a number of building development projects.

The college has developed a comprehensive estates strategy. As a result, the college is significantly improving the quality of its estate. The majority of classrooms and workshops are resourced well. Throughout the college sites, learners and staff have access to a suitable range of ICT equipment.

Overall, the college's health, safety and environmental management are very good and the college is committed to supporting sustainable initiatives.

Overall, outcomes for learners are good, and the quality of teaching is good. The college manages its finances and resources well and therefore provides good value for money for its learners.

Appendix 1

Learner satisfaction

The learner questionnaires show that learners are very satisfied with their experiences at the college. Almost all learners would recommend the college to other people. Almost all learners feel that they were given good information by the college when choosing their learning programme and good advice about what they can do when they finish their learning programme. Almost all learners agree that they get good personal support from their tutors and from other staff at the college. Almost all learners agree that staff show them respect and listen well to their concerns and act on the view of learners. Almost all learners responded that they feel safe and free from harassment at the college and that they enjoy their learning. Almost all learners indicated that their learning has helped them to improve their attitudes to keeping healthy and safe.

Appendix 2

Overall, the rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications are good. Success rates have improved steadily year-on-year in line with other colleges in Wales. They have increased from 70% in 2007-2008 to 82% in 2009-2010. Similarly, completion rates have improved from 89% to 90% and attainment rates from 84% to 91% over the same three year period. These are broadly in line with the increases in other colleges in Wales. Success rates at all levels and in learning areas have shown similar increases over the same three year period. College unverified area shows that this three year upward trend in performance is continuing. When ranked against all other colleges in Wales on the success rates for all courses, the college is 11 out of 24. Similarly, the college is in the top half of all colleges in Wales for most learning areas when ranked on success rates for all learning areas.

The percentage of learners achieving A*-E and A*-C at Advanced Level has increased steadily over the past three years in line with the averages for Wales. Similarly, the percentage of learners achieving A*-E at AS Level has increased steadily over the past three years in line with the averages for Wales. However, the percentage of learners achieving A*-C at AS Level has been below the average for Wales for the same period. ALPS data shows that the majority of learners achieve as predicted by their previous GCSE results in schools.

The percentage of learners achieving three Distinction grades on BTEC National qualifications is good at 30% with over 50% achieving three Merit grades or higher.

Key skills success rates are adequate overall and have improved year-on-year in line with those of other colleges in Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Huw Collins HMI	Reporting Inspector
Bernard Hayward HMI	Team Inspector
Gill Sims HMI	Team Inspector
Eleanor Davies HMI	Team Inspector
Christine Hooper HMI	Team Inspector
Sandra Barnard HMI	Team Inspector
Alun Connick HMI	Team Inspector
Mark Evans HMI	Team Inspector
Jackie Doodson	Peer Inspector
Frank Mellers	Peer Inspector
Eurwyn Edwards	Peer Inspector
Fran Green	Peer Inspector
Lesley Tipping	Peer Inspector
Nora Richardson	Peer Inspector
Peter Jones	Peer Inspector
Nicola Gamlin	Provider Nominee