



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 Sir Gâr
Graig Campus
Heol Sandy
Llanelli
SA15 4DN**

Date of inspection: May 2013

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

Coleg Sir Gâr is a large general further education college with campuses at Llanelli, Ammanford, Gelli Aur, Pibwrlwyd and Jobs Well. It has an annual turnover of £30m and employs around 850 staff. The majority of learners live in Carmarthenshire, with significant numbers living in Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Ceredigion. The college provides courses in 15 sector subject areas from entry level through to level 4. It has a substantial higher education provision. The largest numbers of enrolments are in Health, Public Services and Care, Arts, Media and Publishing, Art and Design and Foundation for Work. In 2010-2011, there were 2,760 full-time 7,583 part-time learners on Further Education programmes at the college. There were 380 full-time and 587 part-time learners on Higher Education programmes. Around half of all full-time learners and around 60% of all part-time learners were female. Over 80% of full-time learners are aged 16-19 and around 64% of all part-time learners are aged 25-64. Around 8% of all learners are from minority groups. In 2010-2011, there were 765 full-time and 700 part-time learners able to speak Welsh at the college.

According to the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (2011), there are a number of areas of deprivation in Carmarthenshire, with a small number in the 10% of most deprived areas in Wales. These are mainly around the larger centres of population in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford. Data from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) shows that around 14.8% of learners live in the most deprived areas of Carmarthenshire.

Welsh Government data for March 2013 shows that 66.2% of the residents of Carmarthenshire aged over 16 are in employment compared to the Wales average of 67.3%. The data shows that 72% of working age adults hold a qualification at least at level 2 compared to 74% for Wales. Similarly, 33% of the working age adults hold a qualification at level 4 or over compared to the 32% for Wales. The percentage of working age adults without a qualification at 13% is slightly above the 11% for Wales. There are around 8,500 business units in Carmarthenshire. The highest proportion of businesses are in landbased, retail, construction and administration.

According to the 2011 census, around 46% of the population of Carmarthenshire can speak, read or write Welsh. This is the fourth highest percentage in Wales. However, Carmarthenshire has the highest number of Welsh speakers in Wales.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the college is good because:

- success rates across the college are generally good and have improved year-on-year;
- the college performs well in most learning areas with high performance in six learning areas;
- the college performs well at A level, in National and Extended Diplomas and in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification with many learners achieving high grades;
- learners from minority groups and those from areas of high deprivation perform well at the college;
- learners feel safe and well supported at the college and this enables them to make good progress with their learning; and
- the ethos of equality of provision and opportunity for all learners across all college sites enables learners from all backgrounds to succeed.

Prospects for improvement

The college has good prospects for improvement because:

- the principal and senior management team have set clear priorities for the college and have challenging targets for improvement;
- the Governing Body has a clear vision for the future of the college and governors support and challenge staff to achieve high standards;
- the college has a good track record in managing change and in addressing Estyn recommendations from previous inspections;
- the college manages its finances well and uses its financial resources appropriately to improve quality and standards;
- the college has made good progress in implementing the strategic aims set by the principal since his appointment;
- the college has well-established systems to review its progress, it knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has clear and challenging plans for improvement;
- the college has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning in line with its aim of achieving excellence.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve standards in those areas where they are below the college targets for successful completion
- R2 Improve teaching and learning in all areas to achieve excellence in line with college strategic plans
- R3 Improve the level of differentiation and the quality of questioning in teaching to provide sufficient challenge for learners of all abilities
- R4 Encourage learners to complete more of their formal learning in Welsh or bilingually and to attain more qualifications in Welsh and/or bilingually

What happens next?

The college link inspector will monitor action plans and the progress in addressing the above recommendations. The college will be required to submit case studies of the effectiveness of their partnership working, the arrangements for more able and talented learners and the arrangements for improving learners' literacy skills.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Overall, the rates at which all learners complete and attain their qualifications are good. Successful completion rates have improved year on year from 2009 to 2012 at around the same rate or slightly above the rate for all colleges in Wales. Unverified data for 2011 to 2012 show that these success rates have been maintained in line with other colleges in Wales although the overall attainment rate is slightly down on the previous year. In 2010-2011, the college was in the top half of all colleges in Wales when ranked on their success rates for all courses. The rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications are particularly good in Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Retailing, Hair & Beauty, Hospitality, Art & Design and Independent Living Skills.

Learners attain high standards on the National Diploma courses. In 2010-2011, over a third of learners achieved three Distinction grades and over two thirds achieved three merit grades or better. Learners achieve well on the Extended Diploma courses with 22% achieving D*D*D* or DDD grade profiles in 2011-2012. Over half of learners achieved three Merit grades or better. Around a quarter of all learners on First Diploma courses achieved D or D* grades in 2010-2011.

Attainment rates are good on A level courses with 99% of learners achieving A* to E grades in 2011-2012 and around half of all learners achieving A* - B grades. Similarly, learners achieved well on AS courses in the same year with 88% achieving A*-E grades. Overall, learners attain at the expected levels in A2 subjects when compared to the predicted levels based on their previous GCSE attainment at school. However, learners generally attained below the predicted levels in AS subjects in 2011-2012 for the first time.

Learners achieve well on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. In 2010-2011, attainment rates at Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced levels were all well above the average rates for other colleges in Wales.

Overall, female learners perform better than male learners at the college. Learners from areas of high deprivation generally perform well when compared to learners from other areas. Similarly, learners in receipt of the Educational Maintenance Allowance attain at a rate slightly above the rate for learners not in receipt of the Educational Maintenance Allowance. The very small percentage of learners from ethnic minority groups attains at around the same level as all other learners at the college.

In the classes observed during the inspection, most learners make good progress and develop appropriate vocational and academic knowledge and skills. They acquire new knowledge and understanding of their subjects and apply previous learning well to new and different situations. They participate well in classroom and workshop activities and contribute effectively to whole class, group and individual

tasks. Learners' oral skills are generally good and the majority of learners speak confidently and clearly in class. A significant number of learners across the college develop and exhibit their vocational skills well in a competitive environment. The more able and talented practitioners succeed in local, national and international skills competitions.

Nearly all learners use initial diagnostic assessments well and know specific areas of literacy they need to develop. Learners who receive additional support make good progress and develop appropriate levels of literacy. Almost all learners consistently develop their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills throughout their course of study.

Many learners express themselves well, demonstrate good oracy skills and use technical language accurately. Most learners write clearly for a range of purposes and present their work well. However, level 3 learners do not consistently develop their extended, higher level writing skills.

An increasing number of learners are completing all or part of their learning in Welsh or bilingually. Learners on a small number of care, hair and beauty, fashion and agriculture courses complete all of their studies in Welsh. However, a significant number of learners use Welsh informally in their learning and in social and sporting activities, such as Saint David's day and Santes Dwynwen events. There has been a significant increase in the number of learners completing units on their courses in Welsh, such as 'Iaith ar Waith', Welsh in a bilingual society and a range of Agored Cymru Units. Over 90 learners completed the Communications Essential Skills qualification in Welsh or bilingually in 2011-2012.

Wellbeing: Good

Learner behaviour in the classroom and around college is very good. The culture of respect is a prominent theme throughout the college and learners are very clear about the impact of the college's 'Respect' and 'Be Safe' campaigns. Learners regard the college as a safe environment and are confident that they are able to contact staff when in need of support.

Almost all learners participate well in the sessions observed and develop good relationships with tutors, support workers and peers. Most take part enthusiastically in whole class, individual and group learning activities and they enjoy their learning. A small number of learners are not engaged fully enough in learning. They are passive during questioning and rely on other learners or teachers to provide answers to questions or tasks.

Learners' attendance and punctuality are good. The attendance rate across the college for full and part-time learners is currently 87%. Learners are clear about the college's attendance and lateness policy and its implications for them.

There are two learner representatives on each full-time course. They attend cross-college and curriculum area learner panels and feedback the views of their group and influence decisions. The college has responded well to issues raised by learner representatives and has made changes to timetables and transport

arrangements. They contribute to discussions on teaching and learning at the termly curriculum area learner voice panels. There are two learner representatives on the college's governing body.

There are 49 student ambassadors at the college. Those learners who have contributed to community life in school and are proven achievers apply to become first year cross college ambassadors. These learners apply in their second year to become a curriculum area ambassador. Learners who hold this role are positive about its impact on their confidence and that it has helped them in completing university and employment applications.

Learners, particularly those on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, are involved in a range of community and fund-raising projects. For example, raising funds to produce a children's booklet on life-saving techniques.

Many learners participate in the college's extensive 5 x 30 project. The project is successful in increasing learners' awareness of healthy living and keeping fit. The number of learners participating in 5x30 activities at the college has increased substantially over the past three years.

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

Coleg Sir Gâr provides learners and their employers with a very broad and appropriate range of qualifications. These provide good opportunities for learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding irrespective of their starting point. The college provides very good opportunities for learners to progress from entry level to degree level qualifications in a wide range of learning areas. A particular strength of the college is its close working relationships with employers and sector skills councils in providing qualifications that meet specific industrial needs, particularly in manufacturing, landbased and construction. Learners on level 3 courses in sport have good opportunities to use up-to-date sports analytical software, such as the 'game breaker' tool used by leading rugby clubs.

The college uses labour market intelligence well and enhances this information with its own detailed knowledge of the needs of industry in the region. Its close working relationships with employers help it to make close matches with their needs in the on-the-job and off-the-job elements of training in the construction industry.

The development of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification has been carefully managed and the qualification is offered to a wide and appropriate range of level 3 learners. The college puts the needs of individual learners and their aspirations first before determining whether they study the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

More than 1,000 school pupils aged 14-16 participate in a comprehensive range of vocational courses from pre- entry level to level 3 every week. The college provides these opportunities at local schools and on college sites.

The college has a very wide range of procedures to ensure that all learners have appropriate opportunities to develop work-related skills. These include placements of up to three months on farms in agriculture. Learners on sport courses work as sports coaches in schools. Learners on catering and hospitality courses work for extended periods with local employers.

More able and talented learners at every level are provided with outstanding opportunities to develop and demonstrate their talents. All learners at the college are encouraged to participate in World, UK and Wales skills competitions in a wide range of vocational, academic and sporting areas. These opportunities enable learners to strive to achieve and showcase excellence in their different disciplines to a very wide audience. Learners aged 14-16 at schools in the Llanelli area have excellent opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities designed to challenge and promote high achievement in artistic performance, sport, science, music technology and technology through the college.

The college has highly effective and innovative provision for developing the literacy skills of learners across all areas of the college and at all levels. It has taken a sensitive and comprehensive approach to developing the skills and commitment of staff to the programme by providing staff with appropriate and timely support and teaching materials. These enable staff to improve their own skills and to enable them to help learners effectively. The college provides staff with a wide range of support materials on the college Moodle site. These measures have proved to be highly effective in boosting the confidence of teachers in all areas to develop learners' literacy skills.

Learners have individual learning plans to improve their literacy skills. Staff monitor and review learners' achievement of these targets regularly. The college has designed and implemented a clear marking guide for spelling, punctuation and grammar which includes error analysis. Further initiatives for improving literacy include the 'six book challenge' in which learners are encouraged to read six books from the college learning resource centre and to write short reports on their books.

The college provides learners with vocational word banks, technical and vocational dictionaries and spelling tests. As a result of the consistent implementation of all these measures, learners have improved the standard of their written work and have great pride in the progress that they have made.

Coleg Sir Gâr places a strong emphasis on the development of the Welsh language and culture at the college. The 'Tim Cymraeg' provides strong strategic direction in implementing a wide range of effective measures to improve the bilingual skills of learners and staff. An increasingly wide range of courses are delivered bilingually and learners are provided with good opportunities to take part in Welsh language and bilingual programmes. These include the core of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification delivered in Welsh on the 'A' level programme and BTEC Extended Diplomas in Agriculture and Fashion.

The college has a strong commitment to promoting sustainable development and global citizenship wherever it can be related to a vocational context as well as through the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. Staff select learning materials

carefully to make sure that learners understand how they can make worthwhile contributions to such initiatives as 'Fairtrade' and relevant entrepreneurial activities such as recycling second-hand clothes.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Most teachers plan and structure their sessions well. Teachers prepare detailed lesson plans and schemes of work that include appropriate aims and objectives. They share these with their learners at the start of the session, address them as the session progresses and refer to them at the end of the session to assess learners' progress. They use detailed learner profiles well to help them to plan learning activities that meet each learners' specific needs. Lesson plans include the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills in an appropriate vocational context.

In the majority of sessions observed, teachers use a good range of teaching approaches and activities to maintain learners' interest. These include whole group, paired, small group and one-to-one activities. In the majority of sessions, the pace of the work was appropriate to maintain learners' interest and to provide enough challenge to extend all learners' knowledge and experience. However, in a small number of sessions observed, the pace was too slow. As a result, learners lose concentration and interest in their work and make slower progress.

Overall, teachers' management of sessions is good. The relationships between teachers and learners are very good and conducive to a supportive learning environment. Teachers challenge lateness appropriately and deal with the very occasional inappropriate behaviour very well.

Teachers use information technology well in their teaching. In most cases, where interactive whiteboards are available, teachers use them well to support teaching and learning. However, teachers do not encourage learners to use the interactive white board enough.

Almost all teachers use questioning in their sessions to test learners' knowledge and understanding. However, the effectiveness of this questioning varies widely from excellent to adequate. In the majority of sessions observed, questioning is effective, teachers direct questions at individuals, groups and the whole class. They challenge learners appropriately, encourage them to elaborate on their answers and to display a greater understanding of the subject. In the minority of sessions where questioning was less effective, teachers ask questions that are too general with few opportunities for learners to explain their answers or to their knowledge of the subject.

Most teachers mark learners work regularly. They give good written feedback so that learners know how to improve their work. Many teachers make effective use of the college-wide literacy guide when correcting written work for spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, in a small number of cases, the feedback is too brief and does not give learners clear enough direction on what they need to do to improve their work.

Teachers make extensive use of the new interactive Gâr iSystem. They use this developing and effective management information system to monitor learners' attendance, assessment and to set targets for improvement. They use the system to prepare accurate reports for parents. Learners use the system to check their own progress and performance.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Overall, the college supports learners very well. It has a comprehensive range of learner support services. These are co-ordinated effectively to meet learners' individual personal and academic needs. The college gives learners good encouragement and support to offer their opinions on their experiences while attending college and to participate in decisions that affect their learning and wellbeing.

The college has good arrangements for promoting learners' health and wellbeing. Learners feel safe in the college and are clear about where they can seek support if they need it. The college emphasises the importance of personal safety. Its 'be safe' promotion encourages learners to discuss issues which concern them. It has applied procedures effectively and consistently for dealing with unacceptable behaviour that may adversely affect learners' wellbeing. Its 'respect' campaign promotes good behaviour amongst learners and encourages them to show consideration for others.

The college has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

The college encourages learners to appreciate the benefits of healthy living through opportunities to participate in a range of physical activities and to choose healthy dietary options. In conjunction with professionals in the field, it delivers a programme of health-related topics, such as substance misuse, internet safety and mental health awareness. These help learners to develop and understand wider issues that contribute to good health and wellbeing.

Learners receive good advice and guidance before they come to college and while they are on programme. They have a well-structured induction that introduces them to the college and the support it can give them. All full-time learners have a personal tutor and participate in group and one-to-one tutorials which support their academic and personal progress well.

The college has enough support staff to give learners extra specialist support and advice when they need it. For example, the learner support mentor team works effectively with vulnerable learners to give them the support they need to access learning. The college liaises well with external agencies to supplement this support when learners require additional specialist intervention to ensure their wellbeing.

The college has an effective system to support learners with additional learning needs. It identifies learners' individual needs well before and during their studies. This allows specialist and learning support to be put in place as soon as possible. This wide-ranging, tailored and targeted support meets the needs of individual learners very well.

Learning environment: Excellent

The principal and senior managers have established a college ethos that is safe, inclusive and tolerant. They have set a strong strategic aim of establishing equality of provision and opportunity for all learners across all college sites. The college provides an inclusive and positive environment for all learners regardless of their prior learning, personal circumstances or background.

Learner mentors promote social inclusivity well and the college provides open access to the curriculum for learners from all backgrounds. The college has a strong commitment to equality and challenges all forms of discrimination effectively. The college has implemented a number of learner-centred activities, through the college's 'respect' campaign, to further promote equality issues. This campaign is highly effective in promoting and maintaining an ethos of tolerance, equality and diversity across all campuses. It has a profound impact on learners' behaviour and understanding of equality issues. Performing Arts learners devised and performed 'theatre forum' pieces on diversity issues. These have been particularly successful in underpinning these values across the college. Themed weeks and tutorial sessions are used well to reinforce the ethos of the college and to promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity.

The college has an appropriate Strategic Equality Plan which identifies clear actions and targets to develop equality issues. This is monitored effectively by the Equality and Diversity Committee. The college delivers good training to staff on equality issues and college managers have received appropriate training on Equality Impact Measures. As a result, a number of positive initiatives have been implemented including the election of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender officer and subgroup as part of the student union. This is having a positive impact on challenging stereotypes and improving the experience of learners with protected characteristics.

The majority of the college's accommodation is good and is well maintained. However, in a few learning areas, accommodation does not meet the high standards of the majority of the college's accommodation. Overall, the college provides good learning environments and most classrooms and workshops are attractive and well resourced. Most learners have good access to a useful range of resources and information and communications technology equipment. In the most recently built facilities, there is industry standard equipment and high quality learning environments. These include Built Environment at Ammaford, Animal Science and Motor Vehicle at Pibwrlwyd and Art and Design at Jobs Well.

The college has comprehensive library facilities on each campus. These are well resourced and play a central function in teaching and learning activities. An increasing number of learners are accessing resources from the library due to the 'Six Book Challenge', which has successfully promoted literacy development across the college.

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

Leadership: Good

The principal and senior management team provide strong and clear leadership. The current principal was appointed in 2010 and has had a significant impact on the culture and ethos of the college since his appointment. The college strategic plan and mission statement make it clear that equality of opportunity and improving the experience of all learners is fundamental to all aspects of the college's work. These ambitions have been put into practice and are routinely demonstrated across the college.

The principal undertook a re-structure of the senior management team in 2010 and made a new appointment to the team in 2013. The team has been re-energised through clearly defining their roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability. This has had a very positive impact on the college's wide range of activities. Managers are empowered to bring about change in a dynamic and supportive environment.

The principal and the senior management team communicate the strategic direction and ambition of the college to all staff well. The senior management team members work effectively together to make sure the key strategic priorities of the college are achieved. Communication between managers and staff across the college is good. Managers and staff at all levels attend a wide range of appropriate meetings. These meetings have a strong focus on monitoring performance, setting targets and improving standards.

Staff and managers use a comprehensive range of management data and information well to monitor performance in key areas, including attendance, completion and attainment. They use this information well to identify underperformance and areas where they need to improve. Senior managers know the college's strengths and weaknesses well. They prioritise key areas for improvement appropriately and allocate enough resources to achieve their aims. However, many changes are recent and there has not been enough time for them to impact fully on key areas, such as teaching and learning.

Senior managers support all staff well in carrying out their roles. Staff at all levels across the college understand their roles and what is expected of them in terms of striving for excellence and challenging learners to achieve their full potential.

The college has appropriate arrangements to manage the performance of all staff. It has recently introduced a revised system that links staff performance to key college priorities, including teaching and learning and management skills. Performance management is supported well by a comprehensive range of continuous professional development activities.

College governance is robust and influential. Relationships between governors and senior managers has improved significantly over the last three years. The Board of Governors has a clear vision for the college and provides rigorous challenge to the principal and senior managers. Governors receive regular detailed and comprehensive reports relating to the performance of the college. They use this

information well to challenge the principal and senior managers on the achievement of key performance indicators, including standards achieved by learners, the Welsh language provision and finance.

Both experienced and newly appointed governors have a wide range of educational, industrial and commercial skills and expertise. They understand their roles and responsibilities well. The governors give good levels of support to the principal and senior management team in establishing a clear vision, ambition and setting the strategic direction for the college. The Board of Governors has effective procedures to monitor and report on its own performance.

The college works very well with a wide range of partners and stakeholders and responds well to local needs and national priorities. It works effectively in partnership with Carmarthenshire County Council, schools, employers and the community. These partners work together well on a range of developments, including 14-19 provision, literacy development, bilingualism, economic regeneration and the reduction in the numbers of those not in education, employment or training.

Improving quality: Good

The college has very good procedures to evaluate and improve its performance. It uses the outcomes from these procedures well to inform and plan for improvement. Self-assessment is carried out at course, curriculum area, functional area and whole college levels. The process is detailed and evaluative and is underpinned by a range of robust sources of evidence. The college is improving consistency through a structured and rigorous approach to review and moderation. Recent work has taken place on the standardisation of functional area assessments.

The Gâr iSystem, live on-line management reports and a data dashboard are used extensively by staff and managers to review data and to evaluate college performance. There is live desktop access for all staff which enables them to monitor attendance and retention performance effectively.

The Quality Improvement Group, the Curriculum and Quality Committee and the Curriculum and Standards Committee are responsible for monitoring all aspects of quality. They undertake this work by adopting a challenging, but supportive ethos.

The college places a strong emphasis on improving learner experiences and this is reflected in the strategic priorities of the Curriculum and Standards Committee. The college has a well-established system for the regular observation of teaching and learning. It has set challenging targets for almost all lesson observations to be good or excellent.

Arrangements to gather the views of learners on the services provided for them are very effective. Learner views are collected through surveys and campus and curriculum area groups. As a result of listening to learners' views, the college has made changes to timetables, assignment design, library provision and transport arrangements.

Staff are involved extensively in networks of professional practice outside the college, which include Colegau Cymru Networks, Sector Skills Councils, employer groups and schools. The Innovate project started in the college in September 2012 and involves staff in supported experiments in teaching and learning. This has involved the creation of professional communities which aim to achieve excellence in teaching and learning. In 2012-13, 126 full-time staff are engaged in developing their professional practice in over 35 supported projects. The college has achieved high levels of engagement in the first year of this initiative.

The college has responded well to the recommendations of the last Estyn inspection.

Partnership working: Excellent

The principal and senior management team place a high strategic priority on working in partnership. The college works very effectively with a wide range of partners that include the local authority, schools, employers and other providers of education and training. The partnerships are well established and there is a high level of mutual trust between partners. The college works very effectively with these partners to provide a wide range of learning opportunities across Carmarthenshire.

The college is a major partner and provider in 14-16 and 16-19 developments. The college works very well with the local authority in planning new developments, such as the re-organisation of secondary schools in Dinefwr and the provision of vocational courses in secondary schools in Carmarthenshire.

A formal joint governance arrangement with the local education authority has been established for three learning clusters and the Welsh medium cluster in Carmarthenshire. This is a highly innovative and effective governance arrangement consisting of staff and managers from the college, the local authority, schools and employers working together to manage the provision. This arrangement promotes co-operation, significantly removes unhelpful competition between providers and enables the college, schools, employers and the authority to plan and deliver the 14-19 curriculum effectively to meet the needs of learners and employers.

The extensive vocational provision for pupils aged 14-16 is strongly supported by the secondary schools within the three geographic catchment areas and county-wide Welsh Language cluster (Partneriaith). This is highly successful and provides increased opportunities for learners to progress to further education. It contributes significantly to transition arrangements and provision for more able and talented learners. As a result, approximately 1,000 school pupils access courses at the college every week.

The college contributes significantly to reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training in Carmarthenshire. The college provides effective programmes that meet the needs of learners most likely to become disengaged from learning.

The college has excellent and long-established links with a wide range of employers across many learning areas, including Engineering, Construction and the Built Environment, Health and Social Care, Landbased Studies, Sport, Leisure and

Tourism and Performing Arts. The college works in close collaboration with these employers to meet their training and development needs. These relationships have significantly improved outcomes for learners and increased the number of learners in sustained employment. Local and national businesses work in partnership with the college to provide a wide range of work experience for learners.

The college works in partnership with six secondary schools and a commercial partner to operate a vocational skills centre for construction. This partnership has provided learners for the shared apprenticeship programme and to the creation of excellent job opportunities and career paths for construction learners.

At higher education level, the college has responded well to the Welsh Government's regionalisation plan. It has developed an excellent partnership with University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The university validates the higher education provision for around 950 learners. Through this relationship, the college has successfully developed the first Joint School of Creative Arts. This programme bridges further and higher education by providing additional resources and progression opportunities for learners through the medium of English and Welsh. This partnership raises the aspirations of college learners by working closely with learners on higher education programmes.

Resource management: Good

The college manages its resources very well. It has maintained a stable financial position for several years, delivered surpluses annually and has no substantial borrowing commitments. Financial management and planning is strong and managers have delegated budgets that they use appropriately to support the delivery of the curriculum. Senior managers monitor budgets effectively and the college has successfully diversified its income to reduce its reliance on core Welsh Government funding.

The college uses external benchmarking information well to review its performance. Managers compare their performance to other colleges in Wales and this informs their decision making.

Overall, the quality of accommodation is good. The college acknowledges that it needs to improve certain parts of its estate. It has commenced the process of determining its priorities for development and updating its estates strategy. As a result of its sound financial management, it has substantial reserves that it can draw upon to commence this process.

The provision of ICT equipment is good and the college analyses usage in detail. Information on utilisation is used to inform decisions about the removal and replacement of equipment. There is a rolling programme of replacement that ensures learners have good access to up-to-date hardware and software to support learning, including software tools for Welsh language development on every computer.

The college places a strong emphasis on sustainability and has achieved the Green Dragon award at level 4. It has successfully reduced its carbon footprint and this has been benchmarked very favourably against the further education sector in Wales.

The college has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced staff. The college deploys staff effectively and monitors their utilisation well. The training and development needs of staff are identified well through strategic and operational planning and appraisal. There is a comprehensive training and development programme that meets the needs of staff and the development priorities of the college well.

Overall, outcomes for learners are good. The college manages its finance and learning resources well and therefore provides good value for money for its learners.

Appendix 1

Learner satisfaction

Learners' views on the college were gathered by the Learner Voice Wales survey (2013). Over 1,800 learners responded to the survey. Around a third of learners rated the college as very good overall and a further 47% rated the college as good overall. Most learners think that the course they are on is about what they expected or better than they expected. These are broadly in line with the results for all colleges in Wales. Around 70% of learners think that the information they receive from the college is good or very good and around 71% of learners think that the college is good or very good at key health and wellbeing measures, such as keeping learners safe, supporting healthy lifestyles and understanding different backgrounds. Around 85% of learners think that teaching and training at the college are good or very good. These are near to the averages for all colleges in Wales. However, the percentage of learners thinking that teaching is very good in their learning area varies widely from a low of 25% to the highest at 74%. Around three quarters of learners think that the help and support they receive from the college is good or very good. The survey shows that 25% of learners described themselves as fluent in Welsh around 20% of learners at the college prefer to learn in Welsh and English compared to the average 11% for all colleges in Wales.

Appendix 2

Learner Output Reports for 2011-2012 show that overall completion rates have slightly increased from 88% to 89% and the overall attainment rate is down on the previous year from 94% to 89%. Six subject sector areas have a successful completion rate over 85% and eight areas have a successful completion rate between 75% and 84%.

Historically success rates for all courses at Coleg Sir Gâr improved from 70.3% in 2008-2009 to 81.5% in 2010-2011. The overall success rates for all colleges in Wales improved from 78% to 81.2% over the same period. College success rates for long courses improved from 69% to 80.8% over the same period. Success rates for all colleges in Wales improved from 73.8% to 78.7% over the same period. Attainment rates for all courses improved from 80% to 92.7% over the same period and the average attainment rates for all colleges in Wales improved from 85% to 90%. For long courses, attainment rates improved from 80.7% to 92.8% from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011. The average attainment rates for long courses in all colleges in Wales improved from 84% to 89% over the same period.

Successful completion rates for 2010-2011 were above 85% in six subject sector areas. These were Retail & Commercial Enterprise, Hair & Beauty, Retailing, Hospitality, Hair & Beauty and Independent Living Skills. These comprise around 27% of all college provision. Fourteen subject sector areas have a successful completion rate between 75% and 84%. These comprise around 60% of all college provision. In 2010-2011, two areas had a successful completion rate below the average for all colleges in Wales. These were Leisure Travel & Tourism and Business Administration and Law.

When colleges are ranked according to their overall successful completion rates, Coleg Sir Gâr was ranked 7th out of the 22 colleges in 2010-2011. This was an improvement on the 10th ranking in the previous year.

Successful completion rates for National/Extended Diplomas at level 3 in 2010-2011 are good at 78% compared to the average of 72% for all colleges in Wales. Successful completion rates for Agored Cymru units were good in 2010-2011 at 91% for level 1 and 93% at level 2. The averages for all colleges in Wales were 84% and 85% respectively.

Successful completion of key/essential skills improved from 80% in 2009-2010 to 82% in 2010-2011. This improvement ranks the college at 6th when compared to other colleges in Wales.

In 2011-2012, 95% of learners achieved the core of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification at Advanced level and 94% achieved the diploma. The averages for Wales were 92% and 88% respectively. In the same year, 87% achieved the core at Intermediate level and 85% achieved the Diploma. The averages for Wales were 82% and 76% respectively. At Foundation level, 94% achieved the core and 91% achieved the Diploma.

Of the 17 National Diplomas studied at the college, 37% of learners achieved DDD, and 64% achieved DDD-MMM profiles. On the National Diploma Health and Social Care, 96% of learners achieved DDD. Of the 14 Extended Diplomas, 22% achieved DDD*-DDD and 55% achieved DDD*-MMM. On the level 3 Diploma in Childcare, learners achieved 91.7% A*-C grades. On the Diploma Foundation Studies (A&D), 50% of learners achieved a distinction.

Of the 11 First Diplomas at the college, 25% of learners achieved D* and 11% achieved D. On the First Diploma Health and Social care, 65% of learners achieved D*. In 2011-2012, 49% of learners on the 13 level 2 Diplomas achieved A*-C grades.

In 2010-2011, at A level, 99% of learners achieved A*-E grades against an average of 97% for Wales, with 50% achieving A*-B. At A level maths, 55% achieved A* or A. The average for Wales was 44%.

At AS level, 91% of learners achieved A-E against the average of 88% for Wales.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Huw Collins	Reporting Inspector
Mark Evans	Team Inspector
Stephen Davies	Team Inspector
Christine Hooper	Team Inspector
Sandra Barnard	Team Inspector
Bernard Hayward	Team Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector
Sharon James	Team Inspector
David Finch	Peer Inspector
Eurwyn Edwards	Peer Inspector
Simon Robson	Peer Inspector
Guy Lacey	Peer Inspector
Vanessa Morgan	Peer Inspector
John Morgan	Peer Inspector
Dr Andrew Cornish	Provider Nominee