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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Report of visit

Level of follow-up: Estyn monitoring

Wrexham Adult Community Learning Partnership

**Grove Park Road
Wrexham
LL12 7AA**

Date of visit: March 2013

by

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



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The monitoring team

Liam Kealy	Reporting Inspector
Gill Sims	Team Inspector
Kevern Kerswell	Wrexham Adult Community Learning Partnership representative

Outcome of monitoring visit

Wrexham Adult Community Learning Partnership is judged to have made good progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2011

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the partnership from any further follow-up activity. The link inspector for Yale College will maintain contact with the partnership to support future developments.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Develop a clear analysis of what learners and the community need from adult community learning

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The partnership has undertaken a robust analysis of what learners in the community need from adult community learning (ACL). Partners have worked well together to carry out extensive consultation work with current learners and adults who did not take part in learning. As a result the partnership has a clear strategic analysis of learners' and community needs.

Partners conducted a range of consultation activities with about 250 adults who were not taking part in learning. Staff held events in all Wrexham libraries, in Careers Wales's Wrexham office, and in community venues. In addition staff at Yale College surveyed participants attending a community diversity event.

Coleg Harlech Workers Educational Association (North Wales), Yale College, and Wrexham's Family Learning provision, also organised 36 focus groups involving a further 250 adult learners in the community. Careers Wales also provided up to date Labour Market intelligence to help the partnership make decisions about the type of learning it offers.

The partnership has made good progress to strengthen its arrangements to involve learners in developing the curriculum and the delivery of provision.

As a result the partnership has been able to identify the learning needs of adults in the Wrexham area and produce a curriculum plan based on these needs. The curriculum plan also takes good account of national priorities for adult community learning.

The partnership uses the information from the needs analysis well to contextualise learning and vary the provision that it offers to different groups of learners. The partnership makes good use of a planning tool to set out and agree the curriculum that it offers to learners. The tool provides a good platform for partners to make sure

they target the curriculum appropriately, that it engages new learners and offers progression to learners, at the same level or to higher levels of learning.

Recommendation 2: Improve the use of shared data in planning, monitoring and quality development

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The partnership has introduced an effective procedure for gathering data. It collects data from all providers on a useful spread-sheet that allows the partnership to view all data simultaneously. The Curriculum Quality Group review and analyse the data. This group reports to the ACL management group through regular presentations. The ACL management group is effective in holding the Curriculum Quality Group accountable for the collation and use of data.

The partnership uses the data effectively to evaluate the current provision and make sure it meets the needs of learners. For example, it analyses learner trends such as the male to female ratio on courses. The partnership also examines learner post-code data to make sure it is recruiting learners from appropriate areas and monitor how far learners are travelling to various courses at different venues.

The Curriculum Quality Group monitors all learning programmes from enrolment to attainment of qualifications and successful learning outcomes. The partnership now has a more thorough understanding of learner achievement. It uses data appropriately to measure learner outcomes against other providers and against partnership targets. The partnership set targets for this year for learner outcomes to be in line with other providers. The partnership now intends to set more challenging targets, to make sure all learners achieve to the best of their ability.

The partnership uses data effectively to make sure new courses and proposals for future programmes are relevant to the learning needs of the county; and that they match the strategic aims of the partnership. However, verified partnership data is only available for 2010/11. As a result, the partnership is not able to evaluate trends in outcomes for learners and demonstrate how well it is improving standards for learners

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the council develops an inclusive commissioning mechanism to ensure that provision of learning best meets the needs of learners and communities

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The partnership has worked well to develop and implement a commissioning framework. The partnership is using the framework well to refocus the use of the community learning grant to deliver provision in the community. The partnership has put good arrangements in place to monitor the use of the grant and improve accountability.

As a result the partnership is able to make sure that it delivers more provision in community venues and that the curriculum addresses the needs of adult learners in Wrexham.

The commissioning framework has already had an impact on the range of courses available and attracted new learners to the provision. The partnership has introduced an additional 68 courses, involving 460 learners from January 2013.

The partnership has also adopted a set of minimum quality and safeguarding standards which drive the commissioning framework. The partnership uses these standards to define minimum quality assurance requirements of all providers in Wrexham; to set out collaborative arrangements clearly and facilitate good operational compliance and to deliver the best possible outcomes for adults in Wrexham. The standards are a pre-requisite for the delivery of provision and for on-going changes in provision. The standards provide a baseline for a shared quality assurance model.

The commissioning framework has had the effect of identifying and bringing a range of extra resources (financial and physical) to ACL. This means that the partnership is able to make better use of a wider range of resources available for adult learning.

Recommendation 4: Develop a common, shared approach to quality assurance across the partnership

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The partnership curriculum quality group works well within an open and honest relationship.

The partnership has produced a useful Self Assessment Report that is an honest and appropriate assessment of the work of the partnership. The Self-Assessment Report shows clear progress in the way the partnership has developed a shared approach to quality monitoring.

The partnership has reviewed and revised the structure of the Quality Development Plan. This is a useful and detailed working document that contains specific short and measurable targets. There are appropriate time scales and it clearly identifies the person responsible for completing each action. The curriculum quality group reviews the quality development plan on an on-going basis. It tracks progress through a useful scale of percentage towards completion. A few actions within the plan are not focused on how they will have a positive impact on learners.

Providers within the partnership now have high expectations of each other and there is an effective expectation of accountability and challenge.

The partnership has introduced service level agreements (SLA) to manage work with third party providers and maintain quality. For example, the partnership is using the

SLA effectively with a local, high user venue to set specific targets and accountability.

The partnership has further developed its existing practice of cross provider observations. This is a robust and effective process. The partnership has planned the observation process well to draw attention to the partnership key themes. For example, Welsh language and culture. All judgements in the observation process focus appropriately on the impact of provision on the learners. The curriculum and quality group analyse the observation forms and use the information to plan staff training and continuing professional development. There is a robust process for moderating the observation forms that includes an objective audit by an external quality consultant. The judgement profile for teaching and learning across the partnership has improved.

Recommendation 5: Complete actions necessary to address those recommendations not fully addressed from the last inspection, particularly those for teaching, assessment of learning and for safeguarding

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The partnership has worked well to address all the recommendations from the 2005 inspection. The partnership has addressed many of these recommendations by improving needs analysis and joint curriculum planning. The improvements the partnership has made to its arrangements for the shared use of data and quality assurance has also addressed issues identified in 2005.

The partnership has also addressed other recommendations appropriately. It has improved opportunities for adult basic education learners to extend their learning. ESOL provision now offers a suitable range of qualifications for learners. The partnership has strengthened its arrangements to improve teaching via training for tutors and by auditing how tutors plan learning. This includes authorising schemes of work.

The partnership has addressed how it helps learners to record their progress and reflect on their achievements by focusing on the use and quality of individual learning plans through observations of teaching and learning, standardising content and by encouraging learners and tutors to make better use of short term action plans. Nevertheless, there are a few outstanding issues regarding the use of SMART targets in individual learning plans (ILPs) in adult basic education.

The North Wales Welsh for Adults centre has worked well with the partnership to address the recommendations regarding Welsh for Adults provision in Wrexham.

Final Comments

Since the last inspection the partnership has improved arrangements for leadership and strategic direction for ACL in Wrexham.

The Wrexham Learning Partnership Board, comprising of senior leaders from the local authority, further education institutions in the area, Higher Education Institutions, and schools, provides a governance and scrutiny function for the ACL management group alongside the 14-19 partnership and work-based learning consortium. As a result the Learning Partnership Board is better able to maximise opportunities for learners of all ages to take part in learning across settings.

The Learning Partnership Board is responsible for authorising the work of the ACL management group and has supported the group well to make important changes to how it delivers learning to adults.

The ACL partnership has improved its processes for strategic planning and management. Partners have agreed roles and responsibilities, strategic priorities, and aims and objectives. This has improved collaboration between partners and enables the partnership to match provision to the needs of learners. A curriculum and quality group effectively manage processes for needs analysis, curriculum planning and quality assurance.

Importantly, the college and the local authority have improved arrangements for the operational management of the partnership. The college has seconded a member of staff to lead on improving curriculum planning and quality assurance and a senior manager to chair the ACL management group.

During the monitoring visit inspectors discussed a range of next steps with the partnership. These include setting targets to make sure that performance is amongst the best in Wales, extending the use of Welsh as a medium for teaching and learning and making sure that teachers make effective use of ILPs in all programme areas. Inspectors also discussed how well the partnership fits in with other local authority provision, such as Families First and work-based learning.

The work that the partnership has undertaken to develop a commissioning framework and needs analysis and curriculum planning represents best practice in the sector.