



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

A report on
Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Community Education Network
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by

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About Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Community Education Network

The Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Community Education Network was established initially in 2003. In its current form, the two main delivery partners are two colleges from Grŵp Llandrillo Menai (Coleg Menai and Coleg Merion Dwyfor), providing about two thirds of delivery, and Adult Learning Wales, providing the remaining third. A very small amount of provision is provided directly by the councils of Anglesey and Gwynedd. The chair of the partnership is a senior leader at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.

In 2017-2018 the partnership had about 1150 learners, which is part of a trend of a declining number of enrolments over the last few years.

The partnership serves a largely rural area and includes the Snowdonia national park. Parts of the area, in particular in south Gwynedd, are sparsely populated and there are relatively infrequent public transport connections. The area has some of the highest proportions of Welsh speakers in Wales. Fifty-seven per cent of the population of Anglesey and 65% of the population of Gwynedd are Welsh speakers.

Anglesey has a relatively high proportion of retired residents, at 18%, compared to the UK average of 14.7%. Gwynedd has a slightly lower proportion, at 12%. There are areas of deprivation across the counties, notably in Llangefni, Holyhead, Caernarfon and Bangor. Across the partnership, 31% of enrolled learners live in 40% of the most deprived areas of Wales and 34% of learners are unemployed or economically inactive.

The Welsh Government community learning grant for 2018-2019 was £7,033 for Gwynedd Council and £11,723 for Isle of Anglesey County Council.

Much of the current provision is based at the college's campuses across the counties, as well as community venues such as libraries, community centres and the premises of partnership organisations.

Summary

Most learners produce strong written or practical work and make sound progress in their learning. They develop useful skills in practical sessions, practise and discover a range of methods in numeracy sessions and use language patterns, grammar and vocabulary in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) sessions well. Retired learners in community settings make steady and sustained progress in developing different digital skills over time.

Nearly all learners feel safe and welcomed in class. They are enthusiastic about their work and participate well in sessions. They make new friends and develop perseverance and resilience. They gain in confidence after previous poor experiences of learning.

Most teachers provide well-sequenced and well-paced lessons that help the learner to develop skills, knowledge and competence sequentially. They develop positive relationships with their learners and engage their learners' interest. They provide useful and encouraging verbal feedback and they monitor and support learners well as they work.

The partnership offers an appropriate range of literacy, numeracy, digital skills and ESOL courses in line with the Welsh Government's national priorities. Most of the partnership's provision is based in the college's main centres, while provision in other community-based centres is more limited in number and variety.

The partnership supports learners well in overcoming a range of barriers to their learning and their personal development. The partnership has established a clear vision with appropriate aims, objectives and policies that focus suitably on meeting many learners' needs. Leaders promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language in adult learning well, and are proactive in addressing training needs for local employment.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve support for learners with additional learning needs
- R2 Work with all partners to review and plan community-based provision that caters fully for the needs of the area
- R3 Improve communication of the partnership's offer to all prospective learners
- R4 Make full use of the views and contributions of learners to drive improvements

What happens next

The provider will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most learners produce strong written or practical work and make sound progress in their learning.

In English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes, many learners make worthwhile progress. A majority use language patterns, grammar and vocabulary well, appropriate to their level. Most listen carefully and are eager to contribute orally in class and to engage with their tutor and each other. As a result, they develop their speaking and listening skills well. Most entry level learners develop basic reading skills suitably. Most intermediate level learners develop a deeper understanding of meaning when reading. They are able to read instructions and match them accurately to sentences that convey the same meaning. Most entry and pre-entry learners make sound progress in writing in English script, and nearly all develop and practise pronunciation well, for example in distinguishing between P and B sounds.

In numeracy sessions, level 1 and 2 learners use, practise and discover a range of methods for multiplying large numbers and decimals. They are beginning to understand how spreadsheets can carry out calculations automatically, through use of formulae. Most learners make steady, or better, progress and develop confidence and ability, given previous unhappy experiences with mathematics. A majority of learners present their mathematical working well. A majority are able to perform mental arithmetic competently when multiplying integers or refer to multiplication tables suitably.

In literacy and communication sessions, the majority of learners write well according to their level and ability. They use well-formed sentences to form short written responses to tasks, for example when describing the history of rugby and football in Wales and their role in Welsh culture.

Retired learners in community settings use their tablet computers competently to search e-shopping sites or to list items for sale. They attain units to accredit their digital competence, and make steady and sustained progress in acquiring and developing different skills over time.

In practical sessions such as sewing, most develop strong hand-sewing and machine skills, use decorative stitching to enhance their product, and improve their measuring and spatial awareness through preparing and placing patterns and fabrics. They learn economical ways of sourcing and using materials.

Many learners across the partnership use individual learning plans or reflective journals to plan and reflect on their learning well, and find them a useful aid to monitoring their progress. Many present their written work well and maintain ordered folders, although a few have folders with disordered notes which inhibits these learners' ability to plan and organise their learning.

Across the provision, learners speak and use Welsh naturally as part of their studies. In community classes, Welsh speaking learners speak with each other and their

tutors in Welsh, and freely switch between languages as part of bilingual conversations. In ESOL classes, where learners may be unfamiliar with Welsh, learners gain an understanding of basic Welsh phrases and greetings which they use as part of their lessons and life around the college.

The most recent published data (Learner Outcomes Report, 2017 – 2018) for the partnership shows that, overall, learners successfully complete their courses at rates equal to the national average. This shows an uneven rising trend over the last three years. Most subject areas have success rates generally above or within a few percentage points of the national average, with only a very few areas below the national averages.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all learners are enthusiastic about their work and participate well in sessions. They interact well with other learners, support each other and make new friends. They show respect and consideration for each other's contributions and opinions. Most maintain their concentration successfully during sessions.

Nearly all feel safe and welcomed in class. Most benefit from a useful induction and understand safeguarding and health and safety procedures. They understand how values such as tolerance, and freedom from bullying, physical and verbal abuse relate not only to learning activities but also to family, community life and workplace environments.

Many learners with previous poor experiences of learning benefit from attending courses such as 'Get skilled up' and 'Skills for further study'. Many begin to develop perseverance and resilience. These learners gain in confidence, and many are able to relate better to others and to more successfully integrate into society as a result of their learning. Many gain the confidence to progress on to other learning, apply for work or seek more satisfying and sustainable employment. All courses of this type are based in college premises and a few learners report that, although they value the classes, the long distances they needed to travel impact on their wellbeing.

Many learners in ESOL classes engage well with activities which are relevant to their current life situation. These learners, many who have had to start new lives in an unfamiliar country and a few refugees who have lost their original homes and businesses, gain self-confidence and begin to restore their self-esteem. Many case studies demonstrate how learners have come from a low base to become more prosperous and integrated into local life.

Many learners in the few community skills classes such as patchwork and quilting and sewing machine skills find their learning therapeutic. For example, learners who work at challenging jobs, or those with mental health issues and physical illnesses, find the courses alleviate stress and help them forget their everyday worries. A few learners who are full-time carers report an increase in the quality of lives through attending classes, which may be the only social interaction they have away from home each week.

Many learners across the provision use, practise and develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills naturally through their learning activities. Many also gain

an understanding of budgeting and sustainability, for example how to purchase fabrics for sewing projects cheaply or source from charity shops. Many learners in digital skills courses use their skills to keep in touch with relatives. Many are able to demonstrate the impact their learning is having on life outside the course, for example, through being able to word process documents, email minutes of community organisation meetings to members or finding the best value products by using online searches.

Nearly all learners, including those who have previously struggled in education, are willing and confident to explain how their course is supporting their wellbeing and personal development. However, a few learners feel that the partnership does not always respond to their feedback and that they would benefit from a wider range of courses in the community. In a few cases, the start or end times of programmes aimed at reengagement with employment means that learners who are parents miss the start or end of courses in order to collect children from school.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Nearly all tutors plan effectively. Most teach well-sequenced and well-paced lessons that help the learner to develop their skills, knowledge and competence sequentially. ESOL tutors plan and structure their lessons helpfully, so that learners develop the four language skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking naturally through discrete and mixed skills activities.

Nearly all tutors develop positive relationships with their learners and engage their learners' interest. They provide useful and encouraging verbal feedback, for example in ESOL and literacy classes, to develop pronunciation, sentence structure and vocabulary. Most tutors monitor and support learners well as they work, and provide helpful individual coaching. However, in a very few cases, tutors do not monitor learners' in-class independent work effectively enough.

Most tutors mark learners' work regularly and they provide helpful written feedback. However, in a few cases, tutors' written feedback does not provide sufficiently clear guidance to learners about their next steps in learning.

Many tutors skilfully embed digital skills well into their sessions. For example, tutors encourage learners participating in an ESOL classes to use mobile devices to research topics in class. In courses such as patchwork, tutors embed literacy and numeracy skills into classwork, for example through measuring and calculating the material required for patches.

Most tutors use a wide range of resources effectively to support and enhance learning, and take advantage of learners' mobile devices, interactive white boards and helpful teaching software. However, in a very few community settings, lack of Wi-Fi connectivity hinders learners' opportunity fully to use their mobile devices in digital literacy sessions.

Nearly all tutors have up-to-date learner tracking sheets that show the progress that learners are making. They use individual learning plans effectively to help learners review their own progress.

In ESOL classes, the curriculum provides interest and challenge appropriate to adult learners' interests and abilities. Learners take part in activities that engage them in their community, such as planning an activity to raise money for charity. Tutors plan activities that engage learners with a range of topics, such as festivals (Bonfire Night, St Dwynwen's Day, Christmas), living in Wales and the UK, climate change and education. The timetabling of drop-in sessions for ESOL learners prior to taught sessions provides useful time for learners to revise previous language and to engage with new language at their own pace. An innovative pilot of virtual reality as a teaching tool helps to enhance and enliven the curriculum and to model the use of language in unfamiliar situations through, for example, allowing learners to take part in virtual city tours prior to visiting the city itself. The partnership provides an appropriate range of activities that support learning, such as international evenings where ESOL learners and members of the public experience and appreciate each other's food, language and culture.

The partnership offers an appropriate range of literacy, numeracy, digital skills and ESOL courses in line with the Welsh Government's national priorities. Overall, it recruits well to these courses. The partnership offers much of its provision in respect to literacy, numeracy, digital skills and ESOL in the main centres, such as Bangor, Holyhead and Caernarfon, while provision in other community-based centres is much more limited. This means that a minority of learners have to travel some distance to attend classes. In a few cases, such as for 'Return to learn' and 'Introduction to child care' courses, the partnership adjusts the timing of the start of sessions to enable learners who are parents to take and collect their children from school. However, the partnership does not do this for all classes and, in a few cases this leads to learners who are parents arriving late or needing to leave early, thereby missing parts of the sessions and disrupting the flow of the class.

The partnership works with a small number of other partners to provide a few additional opportunities for learners in local communities. It provides a small number of cost-recovery sewing classes which are popular and for which there are waiting lists. One partner works with the local health board to deliver healthy eating programmes to service users and staff, while another partner provides opportunities in conjunction with the library for parents and children to learn to code together. However, while these are useful programmes, they are limited in number and variety.

In a few cases, the partnership helps learners and tutors to turn courses which are long-standing and which the learners value for social reasons, into clubs, thereby usefully freeing finance to support new classes.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Tutors across the partnership maintain a clear focus on developing learners' confidence, health, wellbeing and sense of social responsibility.

Tutors highlight the importance of attending all sessions and how this relates to success. They are mindful of learners' commitments in their daily lives and are usually flexible when working to help learners get the most out of their sessions. This helps to ensure strong attendance by learners.

The partnership identifies learners' support needs via application interviews and tutor observations as well as through learners' self-declarations. The partnership has

provided useful training to help tutors support learners with additional learning needs. However, arrangements for identifying learners' additional learning needs and monitoring the progress of these learners are inconsistent across the partnership. In a few cases, the partnership draws on additional learning support funding to directly support relevant learners. Overall, the partnership does not allocate additional learning support funding well enough to assist eligible adult learners.

The partnership provides valuable support to help learners overcome a range of barriers to their learning and their personal development. Tutors are effective at sensitively addressing learners' needs as part of sessions, helping them develop and overcome a wide range of issues including social anxiety, literacy and hearing impairments. They celebrate the achievements of vulnerable learners to help build their self-esteem. Tutors draw suitably on the partnership's learner services teams to support learners with specific problems such as drug or alcohol misuse. These staff work with specialist external support agencies appropriately to help learners.

The partnership provides learners with useful advice about student finance and how to apply for financial support. Additionally, the partnership provides learners who face financial hardship with grants towards course, travel and childcare costs.

The partnership promotes its provision via posters and social media. Many learners become aware of these learning opportunities via word of mouth and, for relevant courses, around half of learners are referred by their local job centre. However, the partnership does not provide a convenient way for learners to find details of all learning opportunities available in their localities. Most learners take part in useful induction activities when they join their classes. Arrangements for the induction of learners who are late to enrol are inconsistent across the partnership and, as a result, learners who are late to enrol may miss out on useful information.

A majority of tutors take advantage of a programme of enrichment activities to encourage learners to consider important topics such as cultural diversity and healthy eating. In a few sessions, planned activities integrate healthy living into the learning. For example, ESOL learners discuss a healthy diet as part of their English language discussions of food. In addition, the partnership provides valuable sessions to support learners recovering from substance misuse.

The partnership's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Tutors raise learners' awareness of keeping safe, including radicalisation and extremism as part of induction activities, and the partnership has developed useful reference literature for learners.

Leadership and management: Good

The partnership has a clear vision with appropriate aims, objectives and policies that focus suitably on meeting many learners' needs. The partnership has established an ethos of working collaboratively in delivery of courses in the key priority areas of essential skills and ESOL. However, this vision does not extend fully enough to include the wider offer of its partners available in the area.

Leaders concentrate clearly on prioritising national and local priorities, for example, in contributing towards Welsh Government's policy of promoting and facilitating the use

of the Welsh language in post-compulsory education. In addition, the partnership is proactive in addressing training needs for local employment, such as in the aeronautical industry, following the uncertainty regarding the future development of nuclear power in the area.

On the whole, managers understand their roles well and work effectively to drive forward strategic priorities and improvement planning. There is a clear cycle of quality assurance activities with appropriate structures and processes. For example, the operational, quality and strategic groups work well together to plan and oversee provision and quality assurance. These groups strike an appropriate balance between support and challenge in the way they analyse standards and plan provision. However, there is limited participation by a sufficiently wide range of organisations. The partnership has a limited overall strategic view of provision outside of Welsh Government priority areas, and, as a result, the partnership offers only a narrow range of community-based provision.

Senior and middle leaders set appropriately high expectations for staff and learners and most staff understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and undertake them well. Overall, leaders have maintained high standards of provision and know their main strengths and areas for improvement. The partnership defines relevant and measurable actions for improvement in specified and realistic timescales and allocates responsibility for their delivery appropriately. In a few aspects, the provider's self-assessment does not reflect its provision accurately enough, for example on the impact on learners' wellbeing.

The partnership operates a rigorous system of teaching and learning observations. The main providers have clearly defined observation cycles, observing all tutors in either a one or two year period. Observations identify good practice and areas for improvement suitably this informs the continuous professional learning programme, for example, in promoting the use of digital technology to enrich learners' learning experiences. The main partnership members work well together to incorporate the best elements of their respective quality assurance observations and to monitor the impact of professional learning activities on learning and teaching. The partnership is effective in maintaining and improving standards.

The partnership provides valuable professional learning activities for staff, including themes such as bilingual teaching, health and wellbeing. It is currently upskilling members of staff to identify the growing threat of 'county lines' exploitation of vulnerable learners by organised crime gangs. Tutors discuss their training needs with managers at appraisals, and relevant targets are set for tutors who need to improve their performance. Appropriate procedures are in place to manage tutors who do not fulfil their commitments.

The partnership has a sound understanding of its income and expenditure and manages its budget for adult learning provision appropriately. In a few instances, the partnership has been successful in obtaining new sources of funding, such as a digital development grant from Welsh Government. The partnership has appropriate levels of suitably qualified staff and resources to deliver provision. Accommodation is generally sufficient to support teaching and learning.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the partnership and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a partnership's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

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