



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

A report on

National Star in Wales - Mamhilad

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

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

About National Star in Wales - Mamhilad

National Star in Wales (NSiW) is a non-residential specialist further education college. It provides placements for 15 learners aged 19 to 23 years with a range of needs, including complex learning difficulties, physical disabilities and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).

The college curriculum offers personalised learning pathways with goals for learning and independent living. The college's mission is 'to enable people with disabilities to realise their potential through personalised learning, transition and destination services'.

The college is located on the Mamhilad Park Estate, near Pontypool. The accommodation includes a sensory classroom, a digital literacy classroom, a therapy room, sensory room, 1:1 breakout room and a kitchen for the development of cooking and life skills".

National Star in Wales is part of National Star Foundation and shares key functions with National Star College. These include technical services, estates management, human resources, health and safety management, staff training and development, and financial support. The college has a director of service and a programme manager. Overall strategic leadership for the college is provided by the Director of Services and National Star Senior Management team.

Main findings

Strengths

Nearly all learners engage well in sessions and make strong progress from their starting points. They are happy, courteous and polite with peers, staff and visitors.

Staff know learners very well and have high expectations for their achievements. They plan sessions that are interesting and motivate nearly all learners. The tutors and facilitators support learners successfully to reach their individual targets. Their careful planning and support arrangements meet pupils' learning, emotional and health needs effectively.

The recent restructure of leadership ensures the college has consistent full-time leaders on site. Senior leaders provide strong and effective leadership of the college. Their robust cycle of self-assessment and improvement draws upon first hand evidence, including session observations and consultation with staff and other stakeholders. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement at the college. They have sound plans to address areas identified in need of improvement.

The college has responded positively to the recommendations from the last monitoring visit and has made significant progress against the recommendations.

Areas for development

The college is creative in its use of space and is well resourced. However, the available space, internally and externally, limits opportunities for learners to access a curriculum that meets their needs fully. Although leaders are actively seeking a more suitable premises, they have yet to secure this.

The college provides regular sessions for learners to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles. It provides weekly cookery and physical skills sessions, such as tai chi and dance, supplemented with walks and stimulating outdoor activities. However, the college does not do enough to support learners to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink.

Recommendations

The school should:

R1 Continue to strengthen the provision for learners to develop their understanding of how to make healthy choices.

R2 Ensure the environment enables learners to access a curriculum that meets their needs fully.

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

Recommendation 1: Ensure that tutors' planning promotes opportunities for independent learning in line with learners' abilities

The college's work to equip learners with the skills they need to lead a more independent life has been strengthened through a focus on staff training and careful planning. The schemes of learning, bespoke work experience programmes and daily timetables, that include a wider range of practical activities matched to individual needs, provide valuable contexts to develop learner independence and support their transition from college.

Staff at the college have undertaken valuable professional learning activities to help them improve planning to develop learners' independence. The staff have an agreed understanding about what independence looks like for each of their learners and how this will support them for their transition post college. Staff carry out research and planning for the use of a wider range of support strategies, such as, the use of peer role models, social stories and visual cues. In addition, there has been work to strengthen classroom practice and quality assurance activities in relation to teaching.

These developments have had a positive impact on learners who are becoming increasingly confident and independent, such as, when making sandwiches for their sandwich shop, presenting on local radio or meeting and guiding visitors. Further, as a result of the training and the ongoing coaching and feedback they offer to each other, staff have increased their awareness of how to promote learner independence and when to step back.

Recommendation 2: Increase opportunities for learners to participate in work-related activities

The college has strengthened the opportunities for learners to participate in work-related activities. It has developed positive relationships with a range of employers, both on site and externally, to enable learners to experience work-related opportunities in line with their interests and potential future destinations.

On-site opportunities include running a social enterprise which has its own dedicated budget. This 'tuck trolley' service requires learners to purchase stock, deliver and serve customers and account for the trolley takings. Recently, having audited their sales, and noted the most popular purchases of customers, learners are promoting healthier options by charging less for fruit.

Current external work opportunities include working in a pet and reptile centre, at the Canal and River Trust, a local café, and the National Museum of Wales.

Copies of the report

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

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.wales

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

© Crown Copyright 2020: 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: 29/04/2020