



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

**A report on the further education provision of
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai**

**Llandudno Road
Rhos-on-Sea
Colwyn Bay**

LL28 4HZ

April 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

This inspection was undertaken as part of trying out our new inspection arrangements. As a result, this report may be slightly different in format to other published reports for providers in the sector.

About Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Name of provider	Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
Any significant changes since the last inspection, e.g. changes in name of provider or campuses, merger, amalgamation or change in ownership	Not applicable
Number of learners on full-time courses of further education	4,840
Number of learners on part-time courses of further education	6,730
Details of the college's further education provision/programmes (ie more on the character of the college and its specialisms)	<p>Grŵp Llandrillo Menai was established in 2012 as a result of mergers between Coleg Llandrillo, Coleg Menai and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor. Grŵp Llandrillo Menai is a large further education college with around 11,570 FE learner enrolments (latest full year data relating to 2022-2023). Of these, 4840 are full-time and 6,730 part-time further education enrolments. The college's 2023-2024 funding allocation for FE provision is approximately £47.1m.</p> <p>The college delivers a wide range of vocational and general education courses across different levels and a large geographical area covering Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd. Grŵp Llandrillo Menai operates across campuses in Rhos-on-Sea, Llangefni, Dolgellau, Rhyl, Bangor, Parc Menai (Art & Design), Parc Menai (Business@), Glynllifon, Pwllheli, Pwllheli (Hafan), Dogellau (CaMDA) Abergele and Caernarfon. Glynllifon is a land-based campus with a working farm and residential facilities situated on the Glynllifon Estate near Caernarfon. Independent living skills (ILS) programmes take place at five of the campuses and at one community setting.</p>
Number of learners with Individual Development Plans (IDPs)	340

Number of learners who are looked after (CLA):	101
Percentage of learners who speak Welsh at home or identify as Welsh speakers	41%
Number of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds	415
Percentage of learners from the most deprived areas (top two quintiles in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation)	26%
Percentage of learners claiming Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	28%
Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff directly employed by the college	697 teachers 430 learning support workers
Ownership of the college (stand-alone further education corporation or wholly-owned subsidiary of a higher education institution)	Stand-alone further education corporation
Date of CEO appointment	April 2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	27/02/2017

Summary

Across Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's wide range of provision, most learners are happy, well-motivated and proud of their progress. Many develop strong subject or vocational skills. Learners behave well across all campuses and are respectful, considerate and polite.

Many learners have good attendance and arrive on time for lessons. However, how well teachers challenge poor attendance and punctuality is too variable.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and experience. They are approachable and friendly, and support their learners well. Learning support assistants provide effective support to learners with additional learning needs who have an individual development plan. Independent living skills (ILS) learners make sound progress towards their individual targets and planned progression destinations.

Many teachers plan their lessons effectively. They share clear learning objectives with learners and use an appropriate range of teaching approaches. The majority have high expectations of learners.

Bilingual teaching and learning is a strong and notable feature of the college. Teachers plan and deliver bilingual lessons skilfully and are strong language role models. They swap seamlessly between Welsh and English, including the use of appropriate subject terminology. However, too few learners with high standards of spoken Welsh choose to complete written work or assessments in Welsh.

Many teachers provide useful and constructive written and verbal feedback to learners. However, around half do not use questioning techniques well enough to stretch and challenge learners.

Most learners use learning technology well and have strong digital learning skills. In vocational areas, teachers and learners benefit from professional and realistic learning environments, which help learners to develop relevant skills and prepare securely for employment.

Learners on most vocational and general education programmes successfully complete their qualifications at rates at or above the national averages and when compared to learners of a similar background. However, there is a need to improve high grade attainment on graded provision, including vocational and AS/A level qualifications.

Across all campuses, there is a welcoming, open and respectful culture where diversity is celebrated, and staff and learners develop positive relationships. Most learners enjoy coming to college and feel safe and secure. There is a well established safeguarding culture with strong working relationships between teaching, well-being and safeguarding teams and relevant outside agencies.

Learners benefit from access to a wide range of support services that are well suited to their needs, including counselling, well-being support, a mental health practitioner and a college nurse. They value a range of enrichment activities, including lunchtime clubs, active well-being sessions, skills competitions, trips, visits and guest speakers.

The Grŵp and its partners, including schools and local authorities, have established highly effective transition processes into college which support learners well across a variety of access routes. In the latter stages of their learning programmes at college, learners also receive helpful information and guidance on progression opportunities, including further and higher education and employment.

Senior leaders and governors have established an effective group structure that supports and promotes each constituent college's unique identity and community links. This helps them respond appropriately to the social and economic characteristics of the different communities and localities they serve. The college is an active member of the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership. The college also plays an important role in widening the offer of courses available to pupils across the region, both for 14 to 16-year-old and sixth form pupils.

The governing board has a clear overview of the work of the Grŵp and they provide regular and effective challenge to senior leaders. Overall, senior and middle leaders use information well as part of self-evaluation and monitoring arrangements. However, these do not consider the quality of teaching and the standard of learners' work well enough and arrangements for evaluating learner grade attainment are

underdeveloped. Staff benefit from a wide range of professional development activities, including useful 'review and evaluation days' to help sharing of good practice and drive improvement.

Senior leaders plan and manage the college's finances well and take a proactive approach regarding economic trends, funding changes and technological developments. This enables the college to maintain its wide offer of courses across all the geographical areas it serves, as well as investing in the continued development of college facilities.

Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the college continue to improve:

- R1 Improve the impact of teaching on the quality of learning, with a focus on questioning, formative assessment and stretch and challenge
- R2 Improve high grade attainment on graded provision, including vocational and AS/A level qualifications
- R3 Address issues of poor learner attendance and punctuality consistently across campuses

What happens next

The college is not in follow-up. In accordance with section 80 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the provider will prepare and publish a written statement of their action plan in light of the inspection report. We will consider progress against the recommendations in our regular link inspector visits.

Main findings

Inspection area 1: teaching and learning

Across the Grŵp's range of provision, most learners work at the appropriate standard for their starting points and prior attainment. Most make sound progress in their learning and against their qualification aims. Many display strong subject or vocational skills. For example, level 2 engineering learners use lathes, milling machines and metalwork tools with skill and precision to make items of good quality. Digital media learners create and edit videos, and develop storyboards and scripts for short films. Beauty therapy learners identify fragrant products to enhance relaxing facials using a variety of massage techniques. A-level French learners present a topic with confidence and answer spontaneous questioning from their peers. AS religious studies learners discuss the merits of different perspectives on the nature of God.

Learners are supported well by their teachers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are approachable and friendly. They praise and encourage their learners well, establish good rapport and respectful working relationships with them. Nearly all learners listen respectfully to their teachers and peers, are considerate and conscientious, and are polite to visitors and staff.

Most learners are engaged, happy and motivated in their sessions, and are proud of their progress. Most learners work well independently and commit suitably to their tasks to bring them to completion. Many, when provided with opportunities to engage in group work, do so effectively.

Spotlight on bilingual delivery

Many learners and teachers at the Glynllifon, Llangefni, Dolgellau and Pwllheli campuses are Welsh speakers. At these campuses, the language of learning switches seamlessly between English and Welsh. Teachers prepare and present bilingual teaching materials, and learners are free to respond to teachers' questions, or to engage in class conversations, in either or both languages.

Teachers are strong language models in both languages and are careful to say full sentences with information or instructions fully in both Welsh and English, so that learners hear the correct terminology and language structure in both languages.

Bilingual teaching and learning is a strong and distinctive feature of the college. Teachers plan and deliver bilingual lessons with skill. At Glynllifon, Llangefni, Dolgellau and Pwllheli campuses, where there is a relatively high level of Welsh speaking in the underlying population, learners use spoken Welsh as the natural language of learning, speaking with teachers and peers in Welsh. Learners' standards of oral Welsh are high. Learners and teachers deploy translanguaging techniques and swap seamlessly between Welsh and English appropriately, using subject terminology in both languages. Teachers are strong language models in both languages. Although in these campuses much of the teaching and learning takes place in Welsh, only a few learners choose to complete written assessments or other written work in Welsh. Where learners do complete written work in Welsh, the quality of their writing is generally good.

At Rhos-on-Sea and Rhyl campuses where there is a relatively low level of natural Welsh speaking in the underlying population, very few Welsh speaking learners use Welsh as the language of learning, even with other Welsh speaking learners. At these campuses, learners who are not Welsh speakers do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough through their studies.

Learners with additional learning needs who have an individual development plan benefit from the support of learning support assistants in class and make sound progress in sessions. Learning support assistants also provide effective support for those learners who do not have an individual development plan but nevertheless struggle with some aspects of their learning. Overall, learners who have additional learning needs make sound progress and successfully complete their programmes at rates marginally below the college average.

Nearly all ILS learners make sound progress over their time at college when working towards their individual targets. They also make positive progress to their planned destination, for example, community support, employment or mainstream courses. Most make strong progress in developing their digital skills and using digital resources and software to support their learning. They learn about the important skills they will need in the workplace and practice these through opportunities to volunteer and complete work experience, for example in local tourist attractions. In a few cases, these opportunities lead to paid employment. This represents significant progress for these learners. In a few ILS sessions, learners' progress is hindered by paper-based activities, such as cutting and sticking, that do not reinforce learning meaningfully.

Many teachers plan their sessions suitably. They provide learners with clear learning objectives and use a range of appropriate teaching approaches to support them to recall prior learning, develop understanding and knowledge, and apply this to new contexts. This ensures that many learners make sound progress in their learning and towards their qualification aims. Most learners work well independently on tasks and projects. Many stay on task and sustain their concentration.

The majority of teachers have high expectations and use their enthusiasm and expertise in their subject areas effectively to plan and deliver sessions to secure strong learner progress. They provide a good balance between teacher explanations and activities, and they use a wide range of meaningful, relatable and engaging resources to secure strong engagement. For example, in access to higher education healthcare, the teacher's knowledge and experience about the structure of airways and the working of the pulmonary respiratory system inspires genuine curiosity and interest in learners.

In sessions where teaching is strongest, most learners display strong subject or vocational skills. For example, marine engineering learners service outboard engines, diagnose faults and document their work accurately. IT learners use programming languages competently to write new apps for mobile phones. Agriculture and animal care learners weigh lambs and test cows for tuberculosis with confidence and care.

Teachers and learners benefit from professional and realistic learning environments that effectively simulate a real work setting using appropriate equipment and materials. This helps learners to develop relevant skills and prepare securely for employment.

A minority of learners are passive in learning and are reluctant to contribute to class discussion. A minority of learners do not challenge themselves to do better and are content with a moderate pace of progress and lower grades. Sometimes, this is due to the shortcomings in teaching.

In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not balance teacher expositions and learner activities well enough. These teachers do not engage learners sufficiently and, as a result, some rely too heavily on their teachers' explanations or the contributions of a few learners who tend to dominate discussions. In other cases, teachers do not adapt tasks, questions or teaching approaches well enough to meet learners' differing needs, or they provide tasks that keep learners busy but do not

stretch and challenge them sufficiently. This limits the progress of more able and talented learners in particular. A few independent learning sessions are not always facilitated as productively as they could be and learners' progress in these sessions is modest.

Spotlight on hybrid teaching

A small number of sessions are delivered using hybrid methods – with some learners physically present in the class and others joining online. The teacher plans the session carefully with a variety of phases including teacher exposition, individual activity, video clips and collaborative group work.

The teacher uses tools such as digital interactive whiteboards to make sure that learners all contribute and share their ideas. Learners in different locations collaborate on the same task. The teacher gives learners clear timelines to work on each task and the pace of learning is appropriate. Learners stay focused and productive and enjoy the session.

Most learners use learning technology effectively and have good digital learning skills. They use the e-learning environment confidently. For example, in a hybrid teaching session, learners use online collaborative learning tools well to share ideas, contribute to group activities and communicate with their peers remotely. Most learners produce digital written work that is accurate and well presented, although a few make uncorrected errors such as not capitalising 'I' or use poorly structured sentences. Teachers ensure that learners understand and use subject terminology accurately. However, there are weaknesses in the clarity of a few learners' handwriting and written work. For learners on vocational programmes, this affects their ability to keep accurate and legible records that are necessary for the workplace. It also disadvantages those learners undertaking written external assessments. In subjects where mathematical skills are an essential component, a minority of learners struggle with the mathematics or numeracy concepts required for the course they are studying.

Many teachers circulate among learners, assessing their work and providing useful verbal feedback and advice. A few use developmental questioning and humour to skilfully steer learners towards more considered or accurate responses and to stretch and challenge learners' thinking, for example during class discussion. In these cases, many learners participate willingly in classroom or small group discussions, offer well-considered responses and use subject specific terminology effectively. However, around half of teachers do not use a wide enough range of questioning techniques to stretch and challenge learners. In a few cases, formative assessment is too brief to be meaningful. A few learners are insecure in their prior learning and subject concepts, affecting their ability to layer new knowledge onto strong foundations. This is exacerbated where teachers do not check learners' knowledge, understanding or progress using formative or diagnostic assessment well enough to ensure that learners are making secure progress.

Generally, teachers provide helpful and constructive written feedback. For example, they acknowledge where learners correctly refer to key terminology and concepts and achieve assessment objectives. They also identify clearly where learners have made errors and provide corrections in some cases. A few tutors provide very

detailed formative written feedback, which provides clear guidance to learners on what needs improving and how to improve the quality of their work. Where the quality of written feedback is not as effective, often this is because teachers do not explain clearly to learners how they could improve their work.

The Welsh Government's 2022-2023 post-16 consistent measures show that, overall, learners on most vocational programmes successfully completed their qualifications at rates at or above the national averages and when compared to learners of a similar background. Successful completion rates were above the national average for level 2 and access to higher education courses. Success rates were slightly above national averages at level 1, and equal to the national average for level 3 vocational courses.

In 2022-2023, the college had approximately 225 A level learners. Learners undertaking general education programmes successfully achieved their qualifications, usually three or more A levels over two years, at a rate slightly above the national average. Many learners continued from year 1 into year 2 of their studies. However, the proportion of learners achieving A* to C grades at A level was notably lower than national averages, and slightly lower than average when compared to learners of a similar background. The grades learners achieved for the skills challenge certificate were also notably lower than national averages.

Learners successfully completed their qualifications at the strongest rates in subject areas such as manufacturing technologies, health and social care, and agriculture. Successful completion was substantially below national averages in business management, public services, engineering and administration.

To improve teaching and learning further, the college should focus on:

- the development of Welsh language skills of learners at Rhos-on-Sea and Rhyl campuses and the proportion of learners who carry out written work in Welsh
- tasks, questions and teaching methods to provide sufficient stretch and challenge to all learners, and in particular to the needs of more able and talented learners
- the proportion of learners achieving higher grades in graded provision, both on vocational and A level programmes
- the range of questioning techniques to assess learners' knowledge and understanding
- teaching sessions to balance teacher expositions and learner activities well enough
- successful completion in business management, public services, engineering and administration

Inspection area 2: well-being, care, support and guidance

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai provides a welcoming and respectful culture for learners across all campuses. As a result, most learners enjoy coming to college and feel safe and secure. During their course of study, staff and learners develop positive relationships based on mutual respect.

Nearly all learners demonstrate positive behaviours and are attentive and polite in sessions. This is a notable strength across the college. Where learners fall short of these high expectations, staff respond swiftly and respectfully, offering support and training to these learners using a restorative approach. This further aids the development of respectful behaviours.

Across all campuses, the college embraces an open culture where diversity is celebrated. The tutorial programme provides full-time learners with valuable opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in important areas. For example, they learn about radicalisation, anti-racism within the context of Stephen Lawrence day or world hijab day, as well as celebrating Welsh culture. However, the quality and consistency of tutorial programme delivery are too variable across campuses.

The college provides a range of highly beneficial support services across all campuses to meet the needs of learners particularly well. For example, the college provides study skills sessions, counselling, well-being support, a mental health practitioner and a college nurse. Many learners are aware of the wider support available to them and feel confident to access this, one noting that 'support is only an email away'.

Spotlight on supporting learners' physical and mental health

The college has two pivotal specialist roles to assist learners: a college nurse and a mental health practitioner. The nurse, in the role for three years, supports learners with specific needs, ensuring access to specialist equipment and completing risk assessments for various conditions. This year, 450 learners have received support from the nurse.

The recently introduced mental health practitioner handles cases identified as medium to high risk, coordinating care plans with teaching staff and external services and supporting 80 learners to date during this academic year. Both roles, active across all campuses, aim to improve learner well being and involve ongoing monitoring, referrals to external services, and feedback from learners and their networks.

Many learners value the enrichment opportunities available to them including the library service, lunchtime clubs and events as well as the active well being offer. This offer provides a range of meaningful activities for learners to develop as responsible citizens. For example, in the Rhos-on-Sea campus, learners benefit from a fun silent disco experience and free sports sessions. In Bangor and Parc Menai, learners develop 'zines' to share information with their peers, such as on the connection between Welsh wool and slavery. Learners on Llangefni and Pwllheli campuses access libraries to use virtual reality headsets for recreation and to develop their interview skills.

The college provides further enrichment opportunities through community links, for example links with the Welsh Rugby Union to provide stadium visits, rugby practice and refereeing opportunities for learners, including for those on independent living skills courses. Across campuses, a range of initiatives provide engaging guest speakers including employers and industry specialists. Learners benefit from a range

of educational visits across programmes of study, such as a week long sailing trip for marine engineering learners in Scotland, to workshop skills in real world scenarios. Similarly, learners benefit from participation in a wide range of national skills competitions. Where this has the greatest impact, learners improve their resilience and develop confidence.

Leaders have established a secure safeguarding culture at the college. Staff respond swiftly to any concerns and communicate with internal support areas and relevant outside agencies effectively. This is strengthened by strong internal working relationships between teaching, well-being and safeguarding teams. For example, the college mental health practitioner works closely with teaching teams, external support agencies and parents and guardians to ensure that support needs are met in a timely manner. Nearly all staff demonstrate a strong understanding of their role in keeping learners safe and they value the appointment of a designated safeguarding person specifically for those learners with additional learning needs and those on independent living skills courses. There is clear and relevant signage around the campuses to support learners to develop an understanding of how to stay safe in relevant contexts, for example, signage in Glynllifon reporting on the Health and Safety Executive's figures relating to fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain.

The college makes effective use of their well-established information management system to record and share important information about learners including attendance, progress, safeguarding and specific support needs. For example, at the Dolgellau campus, leaders identified those learners falling below expected attendance who were then supported with study sessions in the library. Although these processes are in place to monitor and encourage attendance, a few learners do not attend well enough. Overall, many learners attend well and arrive punctually to lessons. However, in a minority of sessions, attendance and punctuality are not good and how well teachers challenge lateness is too variable, especially in classes at the Llangefni campus.

The college and partners have developed robust transition processes into college including for those who have not come directly from schools, those with additional learning needs, and learners with specific well-being needs. They have strengthened their relationships with local authorities, housing, social services, the health board and feeder schools to support transition processes. These teams work together to collect a range of useful information to develop beneficial pupil passports. As a result, many learners share that courses meet expectations and that they were well-supported through the transition process.

Spotlight on supporting transition to college

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai has significantly strengthened its relationship with its partner local authorities and schools to support the successful transition of learners into college. The college collects a range of helpful information including ALN, medical conditions, Welsh speaking status, whether young people are looked after, any disciplinary information and mental health needs. They use this information to develop beneficial 'pupil passports' which share this information with all relevant parties, ensuring that learners get the right advice and guidance, and ALN and well-being support. Where learners have high needs, the college also uses this

information effectively to plan individual transition. As a result, many learners report feeling well supported during this transition process.

Learners have plentiful opportunities to share learner voice and feel that the college teams listen to their views and opinions. In addition to accessible learner surveys and feedback via the tutorial system, learners are also represented via class representatives and student presidents at campus level. Those with these roles are proactive in their approach. For example, in Rhos-on-Sea student presidents are campaigning on behalf of the learners who have expressed concerns about proposed cuts to public and college transport. The college is responsive to learner concerns and provides learning and awareness-raising opportunities in response, for example in relation to peer-on-peer sexual harassment.

Throughout and particularly towards the end of their programmes, learners receive helpful information and guidance in relation to their next steps into further and higher learning opportunities, and employment. Where this is most effective, learners have a clear understanding of their progression routes and the requirements for success. There are examples of learners who have secured employment as a result of work experience and placement opportunities, as well as learners who have re evaluated their planned pathways based on course content and teacher advice. However, a few learners are unsure of their next steps or have unrealistic expectations due to variable quality of advice and guidance for learners.

To improve further, the college should focus on:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Consistency of tutorial programme delivery across campuses
- Consistency of advice and guidance for learners on their next steps

Inspection area 3: leading and improving

Under the leadership of its longstanding chief executive, Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai has successfully instilled and maintained an emphasis on the quality of the learner experience and on the needs of the communities it serves. Senior leaders have focused on the social impact of the college. The well-structured 2022-2027 strategic plan sets out five key themes, each of which has clear priorities and defined key performance indicators. These themes focus on leadership, community, learner opportunity and success, skills and knowledge and sustainability. This helps different stakeholders, including learners, staff members, communities and external organisations to understand the aims of the provider. Senior leaders ensure that the college's work addresses the priorities set out in the strategic plan well.

The governors are motivated by the core aim of ensuring that each campus and community centre is highly valued by their communities. They have a clear overview of the college's work and challenge senior leaders regularly and effectively to support improvement. Their emphasis on sustainability, safeguarding, finances, estates, learner success and learner grade attainment is helping to focus attention on these aspects.

The college has a strategic focus on staff well-being, teacher workload, professional learning and environmental impact. Valuable progress has been made in each of

these aspects over recent months. For example, through collaborative working between management and staff representatives, beneficial improvements to internal processes have helped to improve efficiencies and make the best use of staff members' time across the college.

Spotlight on staff and learner consultation

Leaders work considerably with staff and learner representatives to refine development plans and shape strategic priorities. They consult widely where appropriate to gather views on a range of topics. These range from practical issues such as improving learners' digital records, to fundamental considerations such as their core values. Local learner and staff member views have been used by leaders to inform and prioritise the estates development programme for different sites across the Grŵp.

Guided by the chief executive, senior leaders have successfully implemented a group structure that supports each constituent college whilst promoting each college's unique identity and community links. The coherent group structure provides centralised support, development, leadership and strategic direction where this is beneficial. Senior leaders recognise and respond well to the social and economic characteristics of the different communities and localities that each college serves. Senior leaders have invested in specific localities to ensure that the benefits of college provision and services are felt across the broad geographical area that the Grŵp serves. For example, the relocation of the engineering provision to a purpose-built facility at Rhyl has helped to raise the profile of the campus and to broaden the provision available locally.

Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai is responsive to regional and local employer needs. Senior and middle leaders adapt the provision on offer in response to labour market trends and learner demand. For example, large aerospace and wind turbine engineering firms have helped to shape the enhanced engineering programmes on offer at the Llangefni and Rhyl campuses. Learners undertaking these courses benefit from work placements as part of these programmes. These developments have required leaders to take strategic decisions, such as relocating the Bangor campus to Parc Menai and moving engineering provision from Rhos-on-Sea to Rhyl.

Leaders have maintained a wide offer of courses across the more rural areas. They use the Welsh Government's sparsity and Welsh language funding well to enable learners in these areas to pursue their vocational or academic interests and to engage with bilingual teaching. Diverse courses in subjects such as economics, engineering and independent living skills are available at rural campuses as well as in more densely populated areas.

The provider plays an important role in widening the offer of courses available to school pupils across the region to supplement their GCSE studies. Well-established, effective collaboration with Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire local authorities ensures that nearly two-thousand 14 to 16-year-olds from a wide range of schools engage with vocational courses delivered by Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai. Many of these pupils successfully progress to post-16 vocational provision at the college. Similar arrangements for school sixth form pupils have also been in place for several years. Nearly 300 16 to 19-year-old school sixth-form pupils take advantage of this to

access a range of level 3 general and vocational subject options in college as well as in their school.

Senior and middle leaders have a clear and detailed picture of provision and of how well learners achieve through robust self-evaluation arrangements. Using a comprehensive data tracking system, leaders and teachers use detailed real-time information about learner cohorts to identify trends and evaluate progress. This analysis is used well to inform self-evaluation and monitor the effectiveness of improvement initiatives. However, leaders do not consistently consider the quality of teaching and the standard of learners' work well enough as part of this process. This means that efforts to improve teaching, including through sharing good practice, are not always directed carefully enough.

Arrangements for evaluating the strength of learner grade attainment across relevant courses are not consistently applied. As a result, in a few cases, leaders do not accurately evaluate the strength of their learners' qualification outcomes and a minority of teachers do not do enough in response to motivate learners to achieve higher grades.

The provider's quality review process identifies and supports programmes where concerns have been identified. Middle leaders are successfully supported but also challenged to secure improvements as part of regular progress reviews. Leaders' wider work to secure improvements is effective. This is facilitated by focused improvement plans, which identify the key areas for development and specify relevant actions with appropriate timescales. Progress is regularly evaluated providing a clear overview of where improvements are making a positive impact and where further work is needed.

Staff members regularly take part in a wide range of professional development activities. The annual teaching and learning conference for all practitioners focuses on developing practice across a range of carefully identified priorities. For example, the 2023 conference included a focus on the use of restorative approaches and trauma informed methods to help build positive relationships with learners, reduce conflict and support attainment.

Spotlight on specialised professional development

Two teachers have forged close ties with a leading computer aided design (CAD) software company. They have benefited from extensive training on the advanced use of the CAD package, enhancing their knowledge and skills, which they then shared with learners and other staff members. Both attended the company's training conferences overseas in 2022 and 2023 where they presented to CAD practitioners from across the globe. The CAD software company has usefully donated a large 3D printer to the college to support learning.

Staff members use 'review and evaluation days' to enable them to share good practice and to work together to drive improvement. For example, the service industries team used this opportunity to collaborate and ensure that its bilingual and Welsh language provision meets learners' needs.

Spotlight on sustainable farming methods

The Glynllifon agriculture and food industries campus is promoting sustainability and animal care in response to the Welsh Government drive to develop sustainable farming and local food production. They have invested in adapting the facilities to minimise the environmental impact of dairy farming, including developing sheep milking facility. They are also working with external partners to enable learners to learn how to use a fully autonomous robo-tractor to maximise efficiency in farming.

Senior leaders manage the college's finances well. They plan proactively to take account of local and national economic trends, funding changes, and technological developments. They invest in college facilities in a cost-effective, prioritised way. Advanced facilities and equipment are put in place where this benefits learners and addresses regional and national priorities. Over the past five years, over £50m has been invested into the college's infrastructure utilising Welsh Government Sustainable Communities funding alongside prudent financial management, which has enabled the college to finance its contribution without requiring external loans.

To improve further, college leaders should focus on:

- Evaluation and improvement planning to improve high grade attainment on all courses leading to graded qualifications
- Consistently evaluate teaching, assessment, and the standard of learners' work as part of self-evaluation processes in order to inform effective improvement and sharing of good practice

Additional information

Safeguarding arrangements

The provider's arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults do not give any cause for concern.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- analysed the outcomes from the learner questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During the inspection, inspectors:

- met the chief executive, governors, senior and middle managers and individual teachers, instructors and support staff to evaluate the impact of the provider's work
- met learners to discuss their work, listen to them and gain their views about various aspects of their provider
- visited a broad sample of sessions, including classroom, workshop and online activities across the provision
- observed and spoke to learners outside of sessions
- looked closely at the provider's self-evaluation processes
- considered the provider's quality improvement plan and looked at evidence to show how well the provider had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinised a wide range of provider documents, including information on learner assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on learners' well-being, including the safeguarding of learners, and records of staff training and professional learning

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- reviewed the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with 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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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