



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Arolygiaeth El Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
For Education and Training in Wales



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection report

Pengwern College

Dates of inspection: 7–11 June 2004

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Pengwern College of Further Education
Type of college:	Independent, specialist, residential
Principal:	Melvyn Booker
Address of college:	Sarn Lane Rhuddlan Rhyl Denbighshire LL18 5UH
Telephone number:	01745 590281
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Chair of governors:	Linda Cooper
Charity number:	222377
Reference number*:	5680
Name of reporting inspector:	Joyce Deere
Dates of inspection:	7–11 June 2004

**charity or registered business number of the company running the college*

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

Pengwern College is an independent, specialist residential college for students with learning disabilities, situated in Rhuddlan, Denbighshire, North Wales. The main campus is set in 23 acres of grounds that include residential accommodation and a farm. Five additional residential units are located in the local community, in St Asaph. Pengwern College is one of three further education (FE) colleges that together form the Mencap National College. The Mencap National College is part of Mencap Education and Employment Business Unit. The Mencap trustees delegate their responsibilities to a board of governors who oversee the three colleges. The college's mission is 'to prepare students for the next stage of their lives'.

Currently, 60 residential students attend the college: 50 from England and 10 from Wales, the latter funded by Education and Learning Wales (ELWa). There are 17 students aged between 16 and 18, and 43 aged between 19 and 24. 40 students are male and 5 are from minority ethnic backgrounds. 26 students live in the community, 34 on the main site. The students have a range of learning difficulties and disabilities ranging from moderate to severe. These include students with autistic spectrum disorder and some with hearing loss. The college does not accept students with complex, multiple or profound disabilities. No students are wheelchair users, and none have high levels of personal care needs. The college curriculum is based on a Mencap award. The four strands of the curriculum are daily living skills, personal care and presentation skills, community and leisure skills and practical and vocational skills. Fourteen students take a national vocational qualification (NVQ) in one of three subjects: catering, animal care and horticulture.

How effective is the college?

Personal support for students is good, and the college has good examples of practical contexts for learning. However, although teaching and learning are satisfactory in vocational subjects, they are unsatisfactory in independent living skills and in literacy, numeracy and communications. Leadership and management are also unsatisfactory. The college's provision is inadequate. The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- personal support for students
- community projects as the basis for learning
- effective integration into the community for many students.

What should be improved

- the appropriateness of the curriculum for all students
- the management of the curriculum
- specialist resources
- understanding of the learning needs of students
- implementation of legal requirements
- the systematic collection and analysis of performance data
- the match between schedule and purchase orders and students' programmes
- quality assurance.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5)

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Vocational studies	Satisfactory: In the best lessons, creative and flexible approaches to teaching help students to develop new skills and knowledge. The practical contexts, including work training and experience are good. However, for the majority of students, insufficient value is placed on the skills they develop in practical contexts and their vocational achievements are insufficiently celebrated. The development of literacy and numeracy and ICT skills is poor.
Literacy, numeracy and communications	Unsatisfactory: The college provides a wide range of practical and realistic contexts to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. However, not all members of staff are able to make good use of this and much teaching is unsatisfactory. Resources are inadequate, as are assessment and recording of learning. The curriculum does not meet the needs of students. Management of the curriculum is poor.
Independent living skills	Unsatisfactory: Teaching is not sufficiently challenging in daily living skills. Planning and recording of progress are good in personal care and students are supported well. Provision for literacy, numeracy and communications are inadequate and the transition programme is ineffective. Programmes do not match the needs of students and there is insufficient co-ordination between the extended curriculum and daily living programmes. The management of the curriculum is poor.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The college has insufficient management information to enable managers to understand what it does well and less well. Achievements and destinations are not recorded systematically in order to analyse the college's performance. Quality assurance mechanisms have only recently been developed, and their application is insufficiently rigorous. The governors are very committed, but have insufficient information for them to be able to hold the college to account for its work. Strategic and operational planning is often poorly structured and lacks improvement and performance targets. Members of staff within the college recognise that the curriculum fails to meet the needs of many students and have introduced changes. These have not yet impacted on all students. Senior managers have been very slow to implement equal opportunities legislation. College self-evaluation paints a rosy and unrealistic picture. Financial management is unsatisfactory. The college provides unsatisfactory value for money and the college's provision is inadequate.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to social inclusion is good. Students attend the college from across England and Wales. Students have a wide ability range and, increasingly, more complex communication needs. Five students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. 40% of the students live in houses in the local community and the members of staff encourage them to integrate with local people. The college has some good examples of students being supported to challenge discrimination and to advocate for themselves. However, educational inclusion is not satisfactory. Although each student has an individual programme, many are not following appropriate courses, and there is insufficient specialist contribution to students' assessments and the programmes. Provision for literacy and numeracy has been recently introduced and is not satisfactory. The college is very late in responding to the requirements under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), and members of staff have had little training in the implications for their practice. Very little of the college premises is suitable for people with restricted mobility.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

The college provides good personal support and care for students, but guidance is not satisfactory. The induction process helps students to make a successful transition into college. Tutors and key workers work closely together. They provide flexible personal care and support that effectively meets students' needs. The members of staff work well with parents/carers and keep in close contact with them. The student council is effective in representing the views of students and successfully negotiating with college managers to secure new resources and activities. However, there is currently insufficient specialist support for students with communication, emotional or psychological needs, although the college has plans to address this. Specialist careers advice and guidance is inadequate.

Although the current ten leavers have had a careers interview, this is a recent development and students have had insufficient access to specialist careers advice.

Students' views of the college

Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

What students like about the college

- working with animals
- being with friends
- work experience
- sport
- support from members of staff
- being safe.

What they feel could be improved

- longer breaks
- getting up early for work
- noise
- washing up.

Other information

The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole

Achievement and standards

1. There are no significant differences in the achievements and standards of students aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over. The students are grouped according to ability and need, not by age.
 2. Records of students' destinations are not kept, so it is not possible to fully evaluate the college's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission to prepare students for their future lives. It is not possible to make comparisons over time in relation to the college's success in, for example, helping students to prepare for employment, to attend a mainstream college or to move into a less supported living environment. Summary records of students' progress are not kept, so year-on-year comparisons cannot be made. Students' progress and destinations are not analysed by race, gender or disability.
 3. The tracking of students' progress in the four strands of the curriculum shows that many students achieve their targets. However, these targets are not always meaningful. The learning goals are not sufficiently challenging for the more able students. Too often, for example, students who have been assessed on entry as able to complete daily living skills effectively, continue to have timetabled lessons in the day to practise these skills. The goals at pre-entry level 1 are too advanced for students with more complex needs, in particular, those with communication difficulties, and small steps of progress are not effectively measured.
 4. Other achievements made by students, particularly in practical areas, are not captured sufficiently, and the opportunity is missed to record achievements in, for example, farm work.
 5. Many students make progress in developing social skills for independence, particularly through their experience in the community houses. Those students who live in the community have opportunities to develop their social skills in a realistic environment, but this is less so at the college site. In the training for work programme, students are encouraged to develop learning skills and evaluate their work. However, in other vocational programmes, and in independent living skills, too few lessons encourage the development of learning skills and evaluation.
 6. In practical, off-site contexts, students demonstrate high standards of work. For example, in personal care, in work placements, in the community garden and in the local community dance project, students were actively involved and often showed skills of creativity. In the community café project, students were involved in planning the décor and design of the café, and could talk about what they had learnt with enthusiasm. However, in too many independent living skills lessons, students were bored, did not take pride in their work and could not recall what they had learnt.
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7. Rates of retention are high and in line with those in other specialist colleges. Attendance during inspection week was only 78% in independent living skills, although it was high at 97% in vocational subjects, in line with other specialist colleges.

Quality of teaching, training and learning

8. Much teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in literacy, numeracy and communications and in independent living skills. In literacy, numeracy and communications, the current objectives for students are very new and do not yet form an integral part of lesson planning and teaching. The few good lessons were all in community contexts. For example, in the community garden, a webcam was used to record the life and death of birds in a nest, and students were encouraged to use their skills to solve specific numeric tasks that involved time and frequency. However, there were very few examples of good practice. In many lessons the objectives for students were largely ignored, or not interpreted effectively for the varying abilities of the students. In independent living skills, too many students were repeating mundane tasks in artificial settings. Often, they had completed these many times before. Too often, little account is taken of the learning that takes place in the residences. However, personal care was taught effectively in the residences. The best teaching overall was in the newly developed work training projects and in work experience. In work training projects, such as car valeting in the community, students were able to use their daily living skills in a new context as well as developing new, transferable vocational skills, such as protocols related to using tools and machinery. Teachers encouraged students to develop skills of evaluation and problem solving. However, across the college as a whole, students are not sufficiently encouraged to develop these skills.

9. Specialist staff expertise is insufficient. Members of staff are suitably experienced, but not all are sufficiently well qualified in working with young people with learning disabilities and additional needs. They have appropriate, and, in many cases, extensive experience in supporting and caring for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college provides all members of staff with appropriate opportunities for continuing professional development in the care, support and guidance of learners, and in the management of residential provision, although there has been little opportunity for professional development in the implications of equalities legislation. The college has sufficient bilingual members of members of staff to provide support for Welsh-speaking students. Two-thirds of tutors are qualified FE teachers, but few are qualified to teach young people with learning disabilities and additional needs. None have a qualification in autism or in dyslexia. No member of staff in the college has a qualification in Care or Residential Care above level 3. Tutors without teaching qualifications and/or care qualifications are offered the opportunity to train, and some are currently being trained. The arrangements for input from specialist members of staff to meet the language and psychological needs of students are inadequate. No members of staff have been trained as speech and language assistants. The information and communication technology (ICT) skills of members of staff are underdeveloped, and few are able to use ICT as part of students' learning. Teaching staff have little non-contact time, and the college does not always have the capacity to cover for

absent staff. Students do not always receive sufficient one-to-one or specialist support where this is a requirement on the schedule and purchase order.

10. The residential accommodation and vocational areas are well equipped, and provide students with good, realistic environments for learning. The college buildings, grounds and teaching accommodation are well maintained and are continually improved. The college makes good use of the community as a resource to extend students' learning opportunities. However, buildings are not sufficiently accessible for students with restricted mobility. The college meets the requirements of the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW).

11. Resources in vocational areas are good and the college has up-to-date ICT equipment. However, there are insufficient materials for teaching literacy, numeracy and communication, and few specialist resources for students with complex language needs. The college library is inadequate, and there is insufficient ICT software. Students do not have enough opportunities to develop their independent study skills.

12. Initial assessments are not sufficiently specialist. Pre-entry assessments and baseline assessments are detailed. However, the college does not know enough about students' ability to learn or about their literacy and numeracy skills. Incoming reports from previous providers do not provide this information, and the college does not take steps to obtain information as part of its assessment procedures. The college does not make sufficient enquiries from schools or colleges about students' skills in independent living. The assessment does not accurately identify the needs of the more able students or of those with more complex needs. Until very recently, there has been insufficient assessment and monitoring of students' communication needs, as the college has been without speech and language therapy support for most of the academic year.

13. The college holds regular formal reviews of students' progress. Students' progress is monitored and recorded and is reported to parents, careers advisors and funding bodies. However, these reports do not provide a coherent overview of the progress made by students since their entry to the college. The recording of achievement is too limited and does not capture sufficiently the progress made by students beyond their behavioural objectives and targets. Students are not sufficiently involved in the evaluation of their work. The skills that students develop in work placements, in literacy, numeracy and communication and in sports and leisure activities are rarely recorded. Too little use is made of evidence from work experience and other activities to plan students' transition programmes effectively.

14. Despite the good practical facilities and opportunities for learning, the curriculum does not meet the needs of many students. Members of staff acknowledge in the self-assessment report that the provision does not meet the needs of the more able students or those with more complex needs. In the past year, the college has re-introduced more vocational programmes, and is planning both to expand this provision and to change its provision for students with more complex needs. However, the vocational programmes are currently limited in number and level, and current leavers have not all benefited from appropriate accredited vocational provision. Students are not always working at appropriate levels. There are examples of students with previous qualifications at level 1 following

programmes at entry levels 2 or 3. Many students are bored. The current arrangements for literacy and numeracy provision have only been in place for a few weeks, and are not adequately implemented. There are 12 students who study literacy and numeracy for two hours a week in partner colleges. The work placements and the introduction of work training projects, such as the bed and breakfast facility, have been successful. For example, one student working for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was motivated to apply for a permanent post as she had been so successful. The college intends to expand this approach so that more students who can benefit are able to undertake meaningful work-related activity.

15. The college recognises that arrangements for students' transition have not been fully effective, and is developing revised systems. Planning for leaving the college is formally considered at multi-disciplinary student reviews at the end of the first term of the year in which a student is likely to leave. A member of staff has recently been given responsibility for this area. A leavers' programme has been developed, which starts in the final term, but the college recognises that this is not sufficient.

16. The links between the extended curriculum in the residences and the formal teaching are not always effective, particularly in relation to daily living skills, where members of staff working in the day are not always aware of the activities undertaken by students during the evening and at weekends. The leisure programme is satisfactory. A few popular, regular activities are planned with students. These include swimming, karaoke and the opportunity to take part in a local community dance project. This project provides an excellent opportunity for students to use their creative abilities and meet local people. Students who do not take part in these regular activities decide within their houses how they will spend their time. An events group plans local trips, based on the information in local papers.

17. The links with parents/carers are effective. Parents/carers value the provision and can see the progress made by students as they mature. Personal care in the residences is good. The care plans for students have been recently introduced, and are thorough. However, risk assessments are not rigorous, and are not adapted to the needs of individual students. There is insufficient promotion of race and gender within the curriculum. Members of staff acknowledge that any training they have received on equal opportunities has made little impact on their practice. A notable exception is the support for students to claim their disability rights in practical contexts. Advocacy is now included in the recently re-introduced equal people programme. Students are very good advocates for the college, and for young people with learning disabilities. For example, they have been supported in challenging a local pub, which did not want them to visit during busy periods.

18. Personal support for students is good. The induction process is enjoyable for students and their families/carers. It helps students make a successful transition into college. New and prospective students and their families/carers receive accessible information that enables them to choose individual learning routes from within the range of courses on offer. Members of staff know the students very well. Tutors and key workers work closely together. They provide flexible personal care and support that effectively meets students' needs. Fortnightly tutorials are well documented. Students have good opportunities to

express concerns about issues concerning their timetables, residential, home or personal matters. The student council is effective in representing the views of students and in successfully negotiating with college managers to secure new resources and activities.

19. There is insufficient specialist support available to students, particularly those with language needs. Members of staff do not make sufficient use of alternative communication systems such as signing, objects of reference pictorial systems or of augmentative communication aids. The college has recently purchased speech and language therapy support from the local National Health Service (NHS) Trust, and plans to extend this provision in September. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties experience delays in receiving specialist mental health support. The college has not used its funding for students to secure the necessary specialist psychological support. At present, the level of provision is inadequate to meet students' needs as identified on the schedule and purchase orders

20. Guidance for students is not satisfactory. A careers advisor from Careers Wales has recently carried out guidance interviews for ten students in their final year. However, this is the first time that this has happened, and overall, there is not sufficient access to specialist careers advice for most students. Students have little idea of how they might progress from college into FE, training or employment.

Leadership and management

21. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Pengwern is one of three Colleges that make up the National Mencap College. Mencap sets the strategic direction for its colleges. Mencap trustees delegate their responsibilities to a board of governors who oversee the three colleges with a single chairperson and membership. The principal, supported by two vice-principals, reports to the Education and Employment Business Unit of Mencap. Pengwern has a clear mission statement that is communicated to all members of staff.

22. Four operational managers report to the two vice-principals, and take responsibility for different strands of the curriculum. They oversee the work of a group of personal tutors and key workers, and have a range of additional responsibilities which include developing the curriculum. The college recognises that the complexity of these arrangements sometimes leads to gaps in communication. Managers have recognised that the curriculum does not currently match the needs of all students and are in the process of redesigning and developing it. During the current year, work-related projects and activities have been successfully introduced for a minority of students. However, the provision for students with more complex needs is still being developed, as is the transition programme. The very recent introduction of revised literacy and numeracy provision has been too rushed, with insufficient time for adequate staff development and for members of staff to reflect on the implications for their work. The management of two of the three areas of the curriculum — literacy, numeracy and communications and independent living skills — has significant weaknesses.

23. Overall, the college has insufficient understanding of what it does well and less well. For example, data analysing students' destinations and achievements over time are not held,

and the college is therefore unable to measure its success against its own mission statement. The three-year development plan is structured around the key strategic objectives for the college. The college business and operational planning is coherent, although priorities are not broken into clear targets or costed. As a result, it is difficult for the college to assess its progress and improvement.

24. The self-assessment report focuses on the seven key questions of the common inspection framework, and draws together the outcomes of staff reviews of the quality of provision. The development plans for curriculum strands are the product of joint staff evaluations and feed into the self-assessment report. These plans are not costed and do not contain success indicators. Consequently, potential outcomes cannot be linked to quality assurance cycles. Self-assessment grades are all '2' ('good'), including that for leadership and management. These are significantly higher than the grades awarded by inspectors. Where the college has identified weaknesses, such as those that are fundamental to its curriculum, it has not attached sufficient significance to them in its grading.

25. Freshly developed quality assurance cycles are in place and cover key areas of the college's work, but have yet to link well together to provide a full picture of the college's work. For example, the curriculum review process has led members of staff to question the appropriateness of the curriculum, and changes are being implemented or planned. Staff monitor the quality of teaching in the college's partner colleges and have taken action to secure improvement where provision was not satisfactory. However, managers did not identify that the quality of the students' experience varies between the college site and the community, neither did they identify the significant weaknesses in teaching and learning.

26. Performance review and appraisal is a regular feature of the professional development of most members of staff. The outcomes of these activities do not always feed into the training programme. Staff have good access to training opportunities related to their roles, although the participation of staff in review and training activities is not systematically monitored or evaluated, and cover is not always available for staff to attend. Training in more specialist aspects of the college's work, and in equal opportunities, has been insufficient.

27. The college is keen to gather the views of its students and their parents/carers, and takes account of these views in its development. The student council provides a lively and helpful opportunity for students' to develop their self-advocacy skills. Students are encouraged to fight for their rights. For example, a long-term dispute with a national low-cost airline resulted in a change of policy and better understanding for their commercial members of staff of the needs of students with learning difficulties.

28. Governors are committed and work hard on behalf of the college. Managers and governors have agreed on the college's priorities. However, governors have insufficient information to enable them to hold the college fully to account. For example, they do not have comprehensive student destination data or detailed analysis of students' achievements against individual baselines. The governors do not ensure that the college meets its statutory responsibilities, particularly in relation to equal opportunities. The involvement of students is

a good feature of governance. Through self-evaluation, governors have recognised that change is needed and plans are under way to sharpen and strengthen their understanding of the college's work.

29. The college is insufficiently rigorous in its response to its legal responsibilities. The recently developed race equality and diversity policy takes account of the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, but its implementation is two years late, is not monitored, and there has been little training. Most members of staff are unaware of its implications for their work and the curriculum they deliver. The college's response to the requirements of the SENDA has also been slow and whilst members of staff are aware of some of the issues, many have yet to be fully trained in its implications for their work. A relationships and sexuality policy is being developed by Mencap, but is too early for its impact at Pengwern to be evaluated. Managers have not ensured that all members of staff know the name of the person in the college who has responsibility for child protection, as required under the legislation.

30. The college does not systematically collect and analyse data about student outcomes, although it is in the process of developing a management information system. Financial management is unsatisfactory. Not all students receive the full specialist or one-to-one support required in their schedule and purchase orders. The college does not provide satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Vocational studies

Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**.

Strengths

- creative and flexible teaching in the work training programme
- realistic working environments
- high-quality work placements.

Weaknesses

- too little emphasis on vocational and practical aspects of the curriculum
- inadequate development of ICT, literacy and numeracy skills
- insufficient recording of practical and vocational achievements.

Scope of provision

31. Most students take the practical and vocational strand of the curriculum. The college also offers NVQ level 1 in three areas. Two students are taking animal care, 12 are taking catering and hospitality and two horticulture. Catering and hospitality is offered in partnership with a local general FE college. Nine students are currently on work placement. More than half of the students have one session a week on a work training programme, which consists of community-based projects. These include: running a small bed and breakfast facility, church cleaning, a community garden project, a community cafe and car valeting.

Achievement and standards

32. The achievement of vocational qualifications is limited. At the time of the inspection, none of the students had attained the full NVQ level 1 award. For most students, the objectives used in the vocational areas are based around generic skills and students have little ownership of their own vocational achievement. However, for a minority of students, recent developments in the evolving work training programme provide valuable opportunities for the development and application of transferable vocational skills. In one lesson, three students involved in the community café project helped to design and plan the project, making decisions on décor and exterior landscaping, as well as deciding the order in which tasks should be undertaken. Evaluating their performance on completion, each student identified specific vocational activities they had achieved. They demonstrated the acquisition of new skills and perspectives, together with confidence in expressing opinions and ideas.

33. Attendance and punctuality were very good during the week of inspection.

Quality of education and training

34. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The best teaching and learning is in work-related activities and projects, where creative and flexible approaches to learning have helped students develop new skills and knowledge specific to employment, as well as to make progress in the development of personal and communication skills. In these lessons, teachers make good use of the practical context and encourage active learning and participation in a range of activities. In a work training lesson, three students were preparing a local church for a service. They decided who would undertake which task and what they needed in order to complete the tasks. The members of staff engaged in sensitive questioning so that students could understand what was expected of them. At the end of the preparation, the students were able to evaluate their work and could describe what they had learnt. In a lesson in the bed and breakfast facility, a student with significant communication difficulties answered the phone for the first time. Teaching and learning are less successful in the practical and vocational strands of the curriculum. Too often in lessons, there was insufficient emphasis on practical skills. Students were insufficiently challenged, poorly motivated and had little idea why they were undertaking practical tasks. Literacy and numeracy were not adequately integrated into the lessons, despite the objectives for individual students.

35. Practical resources are very good. The college uses facilities within the local community as well as on the main site and this enables students to learn within real-life environments. The majority of learning environments are well resourced. Students on the NVQ level 1 catering course, for example, have access to the production kitchen of a local general FE college, which is equipped to industry standard. The animal care department is spread over a large area that includes paddocks, pens, sties, hutches and barns for a wide variety of livestock. However, ICT resources are not used effectively to support learning. New, up-to-date computers are available, but members of staff have not been trained to use them. They have had insufficient training in ways to develop literacy and numeracy skills through practical activities. Teaching staff have expertise in their subject areas and an understanding of the vocational learning needs of the students, although not all staff understand how to help students to develop reasoning skills. The learning support staff are often very interested in the subjects being taught and provide valuable support.

36. Standardised lesson plans are used by all members of staff and include individual learning objectives, determined by the personal tutor. Members of staff evaluate lessons against generic objectives and use comments to inform planning. However, the student has little or no role within the process, and there is insufficient recording for many students of their progress in practical skills. Students on work-related activities are able to describe what they have learnt in these sessions, but this is not always the case in other practical and vocational lessons.

37. The college recognises that many students are insufficiently challenged by the current curriculum. The current emphasis on generic skills has resulted in too little value

being placed on students' other achievements, which are not valued and captured effectively. There are too few opportunities for external accreditation for the many students who could benefit. The specialist expertise of the members of staff teaching catering, horticulture and animal care and with the excellent resources are not used to their full effect. However, the recently introduced work-related programmes provide good examples of ways in which students can be involved in meaningful activities that challenge them. External work experience provides valuable work practice within the type of employment that may be a final destination for some students. One student on work placement in a local supermarket had earned the respect of colleagues and the shop manager through her ability to complete tasks using her own initiative. She had gained the promise of a reference for work in the outlet near to her home.

Leadership and management

38. The members of staff who lead and teach in the practical areas are aware of the shortcomings in the curriculum. They have recently introduced work-related projects and opportunities that have begun to vivify the curriculum, encouraging creativity and resourcefulness. However, the strategic management of the curriculum is not adequate, as there is still insufficient emphasis and value attached to the vocational skills developed by the majority of students, and members of staff have had insufficient training in the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Although the members of staff identified the weaknesses in the curriculum as part of the review and self-assessment process, the grading was too generous. The members of staff who work in the community are active in encouraging students to challenge stereotypes about disability, but they have not been trained to promote other aspects of equality through the curriculum.

Literacy, numeracy and communications

Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**.

Strengths

- realistic contexts for learning
- good development of communications skills in work training lessons.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- inadequate resources
- poor assessment and recording of learning
- insufficient provision for students with higher and lower levels of ability
- ineffective management of the integration of literacy and numeracy into the curriculum.

Scope of provision

39. All of the students have literacy, numeracy and communication included in the four strands of the curriculum. There are no discrete lessons on the college site. The majority of the students are working below the national target levels. The college has recently developed partnerships with two local general FE colleges, and six students attend each college for two hours a week. All 12 of these students are working towards accredited units at entry level.

Achievement and standards

40. At the time of the inspection, the arrangements for literacy and numeracy provision had only been in place for six weeks, and none of the students had achieved a qualification in literacy or numeracy. The standard of work in one of the general FE colleges was good, with individual programmes for students and stimulating activities. However, in many lessons at Pengwern College, students were either asked to produce work which was too difficult for them or they were not sufficiently challenged. There is good development of communication skills in the better practical lessons, in particular in the work training lessons in the community. For example, students are able to greet guests appropriately in the bed and breakfast facility. However, those students with greatest communications needs are not receiving specialist help, and make insufficient progress.

Quality of education and training

41. There is much unsatisfactory teaching; very little is good or better. In some of the better practical lessons, realistic situations are used well to develop communication skills, and in a few lessons, literacy and numeracy skills are integrated into the tasks. For example, in the community garden project, the tutor installed a webcam into a nesting box and then based various exercises on this, such as asking students to work out the number of times the chicks were fed in a five-minute period. In the unsatisfactory lessons, literacy and numeracy skills are neither reinforced nor developed, and recently developed objectives in these areas are ignored. Too often the varying abilities of students are not sufficiently planned for. Students with lower levels of ability are in some cases given the same tasks as the more able students and are then unable to achieve the lesson objectives. The more able students are not always challenged sufficiently.

42. Resources are not adequate. There are insufficient paper-based and ICT materials to develop or consolidate literacy and numeracy skills. Members of staff are in the process of making their own subject specific materials but in the majority of cases, these are underdeveloped. There is not enough use of realia to reinforce students' development. Several members of staff are undergoing training in literacy and numeracy, but too few members of staff have completed qualifications. There is no in-house speech and language therapist and no-one with a specialism in teaching students with dyslexia or autistic spectrum disorders. Arrangements for staff cover are inadequate. Feedback sheets on lesson plans identified several cases when lessons failed to meet their objectives because no-one was available to provide cover.

43. Assessment and monitoring of learning are inadequate. There is no initial assessment available for students who are above pre-entry level. All students undertake the baseline assessment, even if their records show that they are above this level and it is inappropriate. The college uses an additional computer-based assessment, but it does not always give an accurate picture, and is biased towards American English. Students' abilities are not assessed adequately. The objectives for literacy and numeracy in lesson plans are very new, and in most cases are very general, and not sufficiently subject specific. Students are not involved in the development of the plans. The objectives are taken from the literacy and numeracy individual learning plan, and are not changed with sufficient frequency to reflect developmental needs or progress that takes place over time. In some cases, the objectives cannot be achieved successfully, for example, one student had as his objective 'to recognise symbols representing common objects'. However, the member of staff involved had not had sufficient time to produce laminated symbols for the student. In some cases, objectives are carried over from one six-month review period to the next with no indication of needs already met or strategies to be used to improve learning. There is no formal sharing of progress within literacy and numeracy across the strands of the curriculum other than through the general objectives on the individual learning plan. In many cases, members of staff do not have sufficient time to plan for the effective integration of literacy and numeracy into their courses.

44. The curriculum does not meet the needs of most students. Provision for students with higher and lower levels of ability is inadequate and students at intermediate levels are receiving minimal amounts of tuition. Plans are in place to extend the partnership with local colleges, but at present there is insufficient provision of this type for the many students who could benefit from it. The current arrangements for the development of literacy and numeracy skills are very new, and as yet integration into the strands of learning is ineffectively managed. The college is aware of the need to modify and improve its provision.

Leadership and management

45. Management of the provision is inadequate. Members of staff have not had sufficient guidance from managers in integrating literacy and numeracy skills into their areas of learning. The communication skills of students with the highest level of need are not being met. Literacy and numeracy provision is viewed as an add-on by some members of staff rather than a fully integral part of the lesson. It is not clear how literacy and numeracy is developed in the extended curriculum or how information about students' development is shared amongst members of staff in a structured manner. All staff were involved in the production of the self-assessment report and identified many of the weaknesses found in the inspection. However, the grading was unrealistic. All members of staff have had an appraisal in the last academic year. The recently re-introduced equal people lesson explores useful aspects of equality of opportunity based on topics of relevance to the students, but few students attend this. Students and members of staff are active in promoting disability awareness amongst the wider community, but less effective in promoting other aspects of equal opportunities.

Independent living skills

Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**.

Strengths

- good teaching of personal care
- good practical facilities in the residences
- good personal support for students.

Weaknesses

- lack of challenge in many formal daily living skills lessons
- inadequate planning and assessment of literacy, numeracy and communication skills
- ineffective programmes that do not meet the needs of the most and least able students
- insufficient co-ordination between the extended curriculum and daytime programme
- ineffective transition programme
- inadequate management.

Scope of provision

46. Independent living skills are offered to all students. They are taught in formal teaching time and during the extended curriculum in the evenings and at weekends. The framework includes daily living skills, personal care and presentation skills, and community and leisure skills. Shopping for food is an integral part of daily living skills and students make frequent trips to local supermarkets as part of their course.

Achievement and standards

47. Achievements of targets is variable across the different strands of the curriculum. The college keeps a spreadsheet that shows that students often meet their targets, but this does not always reflect the actual achievements of students relative to their abilities. In daily living skills, individual learning targets for the more able students are sometimes set at lower levels than their previous achievement. For example, students who were initially assessed as competent in daily living skills follow programmes where these skills are practised for large proportions of their timetable. Targets for activities in the community are often more realistic, and for personal care are planned and assessed well. Generally, across all strands of

the curriculum, the targets set for students with more complex needs are too general to demonstrate specific progress.

48. Planning for progression within the college is confused. There are no clear standards or criteria by which students will be judged to have achieved their targets and progress to either more independent living, or to a revised timetable. Students do not all progress to living situations that provide them with the greatest opportunity to develop. This is particularly the case for those who stay on the main site and do not progress to community living.

49. Standards of work are variable. In formal daily living skills, standards are low. Students often repeat similar tasks using the same methods rather than developing improved techniques. They are not encouraged to work to the best of their ability or to take pride in what they do. On occasions, living skills, including food preparation tasks, are regarded as chores rather than opportunities for learning. In cookery, some students know when to adjust the heat settings to avoid accidents, but they demonstrate few useful cookery skills, and do not show that they make healthy choices for meals.

50. However, where skills are learnt and practised in realistic situations, students often work well. In the community, students make good progress in their understanding of road safety. They walk sensibly on footpaths and are able to locate the nearest pedestrian crossings. The more able students make good progress in developing an understanding of what to do in the event of being lost in a town. The majority of students can identify important warning signs and symbols.

51. The development of students' self-esteem and confidence is satisfactory. Through their involvement in the community, many students develop social skills that improve their self-esteem and confidence and enable them to use community facilities effectively with decreasing levels of support.

52. Attendance rates are low in this area. During the week of inspection rates of attendance on observed lessons were 78%, which is well below that expected in a residential college.

Quality of education and training

53. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but a significant proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. Formal lessons are not planned effectively to improve students' performance of daily living skills by providing a stimulating context; this is a significant weakness in this area. Too much teaching does not extend students' learning/skills sufficiently. Tasks such as cleaning and washing up are too often practised in isolation are not challenging. Students are bored and make little active response in lessons beyond obeying instructions. The prior skills and knowledge of the more able students are not effectively used to plan their programmes. Where activities take place in a realistic setting, the lessons are more successful. In the better lessons, mainly in personal care, students have very clear tasks that are carried out at appropriate times as part of their daily lives. The planning and recording are good. They

build on students' previous learning and emphasis specific skills. In other strands of the programme, the planning is often too general and does not describe the exact skills that will be developed in lessons. Overall, in all aspects of teaching, there is insufficient emphasis on problem solving and the development of learning skills.

54. Assessment and planning for literacy, numeracy and communications are very new, and are not satisfactory. Although targets for literacy, numeracy and communication are included in planning, teachers do not teach to these targets, nor do they take note of achievements in these areas. For the less able students the development of communication skills is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient input from speech and language therapists and behaviour plans are not consistently applied or planned. The initial assessment for independent living skills does not always include sufficient information about students' previous experience in this area.

55. All members of staff have sufficient expertise to guide students in the development of their practical skills. Most also carry out care duties that enable them to get to know students well. Learning support workers effectively support students and, on occasions, they teach lessons prepared by teachers. However, many members of staff have limited teaching qualifications and experience. This is most evident in their variable understanding of planning and assessment and of strategies to help students develop their learning skills. The members of staff are aware of this and many are training to become teachers. The college has good facilities for learning, with good resources in the residences. The community houses are particularly effective. Members of staff at the main site make good efforts to provide frequent access to the community, but the distance involved for students at the Pengwern campus means that most trips have to be taken by minibus, which limits possibilities.

56. Curriculum statements and schemes of work are now available for all areas of independent living skills. These provide guidance on the range of topics to be covered, but do not emphasise progression in learning sufficiently. The recently introduced ten-week transition programme is made up of appropriate activities for students leaving the college. However, the activities are not built around individual students' needs and insufficient use is made of students' work-related skills. The timing of the programme is too late to allow students time to undertake activities or qualifications that would be useful in their future lives. This is a significant weakness, since the mission statement explicitly refers to preparing students for their future lives. The extended curriculum is not well planned, and there is insufficient co-ordination of students' achievements and experiences in the evenings and at weekends.

57. Members of staff know the students well. Students receive good personal support that provides them with regular opportunities to discuss problems. Newly introduced tutorial arrangements are working well.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no systematic analysis of students' achievements to improve standards. The teaching observation scheme is

underdeveloped and it fails to identify the weaknesses in teaching and learning. The self-assessment report is insufficiently analytical and does not identify independent living skills as a curriculum area. The independent living skills programme is not coherently managed. The strands of the curriculum are managed by separate operational managers and the staff have recognised the need for greater coherence. In the previous six months, there had been increased communication and joint planning across the area. However, this has not yet had a significant impact on the curriculum. Equal opportunities and diversity are insufficiently promoted through teaching and the use of resources.

Notes