



The Cheadle & Marple College Network



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1. Assessment Information

Assessment Type	INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Assessor's Name	JOHN P G SMITH
Visit Date	3- 5 OCTOBER 2016
Client ID	C11814
Assessment Reference	PN 101352

2. Organisation – Background, Introduction and Overview

The Cheadle and Marple College Network (the College), formerly Cheadle & Marple Sixth Form College, is a College for Stockport located in the West (The Cheadle College) and East (Marple Sixth Form College) peripheries of the borough.

Its vision is *To create a unique, high achieving College Network within Stockport.* Its Mission is *To promote the highest quality education for our students, whatever their age, background, and ability; and to be recognised as outstanding within the community we serve.*

The College is run by the Principal and CEO, who reports to the governors and is supported by a Senior Leadership Team of Deputy and Assistant Principals, who in turn are responsible for teams of teaching, coaching and learner support staff across a range of specialisms, including curriculum delivery, pastoral and SEN support, employer engagement, careers advice and development, recruitment and progression. The College has recently introduced the 'House' system, in which students are organised into five relatively small house groups under the direction of Heads of Houses and with the support of House Monitors and student Peer Mentors. The aim is to help students integrate smoothly into college life and provide easily accessible contacts to identify and support any personal issues they may be facing, before they become crises.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) are a high priority across the College, and are integral to all student engagement, from pre-enrolment to exit and beyond, and a recent development supporting this commitment has seen the placement of 'The Learner Journey' in the stewardship of a Deputy Principal, co-ordinating a wide range of learner support services from recruitment, throughout learners' time at college and on to progression.

IAG begins when the College promotes its provision at assemblies in link or partner schools, and through careers events and open evenings, outlining the range of post school options including college courses, vocational and academic, university, and apprenticeships and so on. It continues at recruitment and admissions, when prospective students are able to explore whether the college would be suitable to support their longer term goals, and apply if they wish. The college also runs taster courses for those uncertain about which course/career to choose, following which they may or may not apply. The subsequent interview with applicants explores these factors in more detail and subject to entry criteria being met, learners are offered a place and invited to enrolment, where they meet course tutors, Heads of House and House Monitors, careers and pastoral support staff and have explained course content, support available, general life at college, and begin to develop a personal learning plan. At this stage, staff seek to identify any additional support needs, and are usually able to liaise with schools and other service providers to construct an appropriate support package where necessary. Students have a 42 day 'cooling off' period to enable them to switch courses should the course they are on turn out not to be to their liking.

Throughout their time at college, learners have regular personal tutorials which review progress and achievement against plans and targets, and also covering course content and contexts as well as discussions on a wide range of topical issues, self development opportunities and so on.

They are able in addition to seek support from, or via, peer mentors and House Monitors, who can help them with a range of issues or refer them to internal or external services where required, and learners are helped to develop action plans to help them overcome the issues or barriers. Progression is a recurring theme during staff/learner engagement, and includes a range of sessions on post college options including UCAS workshops and university visits, employment opportunities with work experience and employer visits, careers sessions with the resident careers officer, attendance at external events, through the Career Ready programme. Students with no settled destination at the end of the course have additional careers appointments to help them identify the options available; and can attend a Where to Now exit interview; students continue to be followed up, as far as is possible, after they have left.

3. Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- Throughout the Assessment it was clear that the College benefits from highly effective leadership and management; the recent restructuring was prompted by a clear recognition of the need for change to meet the new challenges now facing the sector, and has resulted in many changes that have impacted significantly on all staff in one way or another, yet senior managers have successfully engaged everyone in the process, bringing them alongside and securing their commitment and involvement; this has helped develop a strong team ethic, which was highly apparent, and staff appreciated the extent to which they were involved and their views sought, through the process and subsequently. (1.2)
- The House system, introduced as part of the changes referred to, is an imaginative and effective means of engaging, including and supporting all learners, enabling the early identification and addressing of issues before they become crises; the system is much appreciated by learners who referred frequently to the informal support they had received or recommended, and commented on how they all felt part of a wider community. (3.2)
- This is just one part, however, of a comprehensive and highly effective range of student support available, from a range of staff at all levels and throughout the College, providing individualised help with so many different issues and barriers, that interlinks and ensures that learners embark on the right programme for them and are able to stay on course and progress towards their goals – *'IAG is part of everyone's job'*; that it works is evidenced by the impressive retention, achievement and progression statistics. (3.2)
- Employer Engagement offers a highly imaginative range of employer contributions to learner experience and college performance; the College has an impressive network of local employers offering a wide range of experiential opportunities, with each able to determine the nature of their contribution in accordance with their own needs and capabilities. (1.8)
- The integrated quality review and improvement processes support the universal ownership and involvement in performance review and improvement, that ensure team and individual targets link directly to wider college aims and objectives; that teams continue to include a self assessment against the **matrix** Standard as part of their overall self assessment indicates an ongoing and lasting commitment to the ethos promoted by the Standard, and throughout the Assessment staff referred to the ways their views had helped to shape improvements – *'We're always looking for ways to improve'*. (4.5, 4.8)
- The harnessing and effective use of technology – through the Moodle, Pro-Monitor, LibGuides, social media – enables efficient ways for staff to monitor performance, provide access for learners to up to date information, and to stay in touch and fully informed on a day to day basis about events and deadlines, all of which contributes to the strong achievement figures. (4.7)

4. Areas for Future Development

A number of areas for future development were identified during the assessment which may develop or enhance the service delivered. These are detailed below and for the organisation to consider as part of its ongoing continuous quality improvement actions. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments.

- There is a range of promotional activities in place to help prospective learners gain insights into college provision and its relevance to them, while taster courses help to give them experience of life at college; managers commented that at some of these events past students had offered to provide input to sessions based on their personal, first-hand experience, and the College may wish to consider expediting its plans to expand and formalise this approach, perhaps by offering extra development for prospective 'ambassadors' to address school groups, parents evenings and so on. This would add positively to the information available to learners to aid their decisions, and offer an extra experience for alumni. (1.6)
- It was clear that the various services on offer are contributing to the achievement by learners of many softer outcomes, which are used to determine next steps and so on in the personal development of individuals; the College may wish to explore ways in which it can quantify, by cohort/group the extent to which learners are being helped to grow in these ways, to add weight to promotional messages and to act as a yardstick to measure overall college/staff performance in relation to these qualities. (1.5)
- As mentioned, the Leadership and Management of the College are of high quality, and the College may wish to consider seeking accreditation against the Leadership and Management Standard, as further evidence of its commitment to quality improvement and of the effectiveness of its management arrangements in anticipating and responding to external threats and opportunities, driving through the necessary changes, and securing staff commitment to the aims and objectives of the organisation. (1.2)

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals <http://matrixstandard.com/continuous-improvement-checks/>. These may include the Areas for Future Development above.

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation.

5. Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- Interviews with the Principal, a Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal, two managers and two partners.
- Group interviews with a total of eight managers, twelve members of staff, and fifteen learners.
- Telephone interviews with three parents and one partner.
- Review of key documentation, including the Strategic Plan, Self Assessment Reviews, performance reports, promotional materials, learner documentation; review of the LibGuide system and of the Cheadle & Marple College website.
- Feedback was provided to the Quality Manager at the end of the first two days and to the Principal, the AP Progression and Transition and the Quality Manager at the end of the Assessment.

6. Detailed Findings

1. Leadership and Management

The way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service

The College Objectives, as set out in the Strategic Priorities and Mission Statement, include key objectives relating to IAG, for example, to ensure high quality teaching, learning and assessment for students; to ensure they meet or exceed their potential and are able to progress with confidence into further education and employment; and to do this by providing outstanding levels of guidance and support, inside and outside the classroom. They support wider objectives relating to a reduction of worklessness and youth unemployment, meeting future demand for skills, equality and diversity; and targets to match or exceed outcomes achievements averages of Sixth Form Colleges and General Further Education providers.

Objectives and targets are set by the Senior Leadership Team, informed by reports and reviews of performance across the college, including setting targets for improvements over the previous year, and emerging policy developments that will shape delivery, and the Strategic Plan is approved by the governing body; each team compiles its own actions and targets to contribute to wider objectives, informed by self assessment review and quality improvement plans, and team plans are combined into the whole. Ongoing review and update is carried out at team level and fed to the SLT.

As mentioned, leadership and management are a particular strength of the college; the Principalship meets weekly to consider strategic issues impacting on current or future performance, while the SLT meets two weekly to review performance and local issues impacting. House teams meet monthly, and additional communication is achieved through regular one to ones between senior staff and managers, curriculum based and other specialist groups. Staff repeatedly referred to the way in which they were fully involved in contributing to plans and targets, and in reviews, commenting that the half-termly updates and weekly staff briefings, along with the college intranet bulletins, ensured that they were fully *au fait* with the current position and the direction of travel, and that despite operating across two sites, felt fully included and part of a bigger team or 'family'; they referred also to how they enjoyed considerable levels of autonomy when supporting students in terms of strategies adopted and activities undertaken. Managers averred that the restructuring and implementation of additional and effective communications channels represented a major improvement on the previous arrangements, describing the current situation as more holistic.

There are policies and procedures in place promoting confidentiality, equality and diversity, impartiality and confidentiality, and staff provided numerous examples of how these had operated in practice, referring, for example, to the extensive range of learner support available to facilitate access and continued attendance of students with special needs, such as classroom support, physical adjustments or specialist equipment to support people with disabilities, assistance with travel, meal allowances and extra independence training and support. They described how student cohorts were analysed to ensure they matched local demography; the House and peer mentor system is also effective at helping inclusion and integration of students from all backgrounds and of all abilities, and the College has worked with partners to establish supported internships for students with special needs.

Accessibility to IT can be supported for those with additional needs through the provision of specialist equipment, screen and viewing facilities and audio and text talk options. Staff explained that confidentiality of personal information disclosed was stressed from day one to students, who confirmed that they felt safe to share personal issues with staff, knowing that the information would remain confidential.

Staff explained that in their promotion of post-school pathways options they took pains to emphasise that there were other providers offering similar provision and that the College may not be the best place for them in pursuing their longer term goals, and that they had often referred enquirers to other providers, or to independent careers advisers when College provision was not appropriate. They recalled that the College values that they were expected to uphold included Moral Purpose, Integrity, Mutual Respect, Care for Others, Positivity and Transparency, and that these topics were regularly discussed in team meetings and one to ones.

Managers described how contacts with the Department for Education, including regular email bulletins, and with the Education Funding Agency and Local Education Authority, enabled them to stay up to date with legislative changes, such as the Education Act, Equalities Act and so on, and with policy developments, and allowed them to adapt provision and strategies accordingly; for example, the establishment of the South Manchester Learning Trust was in direct response to emerging policy on academisation and FE Area Reviews. Staff described how they had regular updates on safeguarding and data protection, along with training on the Prevent duty, and how they had established rigorous screening arrangements in respect of agency staff to ensure correct procedures had been followed and that applicants and visitors were who they said they were, in the interests of safeguarding students; all staff must undergo DBS checks, and employer placements are given a thorough health and safety audit before students are allowed to attend. There are effective security arrangements in place at the college entrance, and all under 18 students are required to sign out when leaving the campus, and external visits are planned in line with 1:8 staff: student ratios, in line with safeguarding rules.

Intended student outcomes are defined in the Strategic Plan, in terms of retention, achievement/success rates; in addition, 'softer' outcomes are described in various ways according to the nature of provision, for example, Employer Engagement seeks to improve employability through provision of work placements, volunteering, team work sessions, interview skills and techniques and so on, while Learner Support helps students improve their confidence and independence. These are established on an individual basis, through plans, in line with the new SEN framework, developed to address the individual's needs, and their achievement is measured through review of plans, which are adjusted according to the extent to which the desired goal has been met or requires additional action.

Students and parents described how they or their children had been helped to develop their personal skills:

'I'm much more confident and independent'

'More clear about where I want to go and how to get there'

'His life skills are so well developed since he started in college'

Services are promoted to prospective students and their parents/carers through the school assemblies referred to, open days and parents evenings, the Prospectus, the website and to students via word of mouth at admission, enrolment and induction, as well as throughout the year, through pastoral and tutorial sessions and via the Moodle. Promotion to employers is carried out through events and by regular telephone contact, and more recently, through the Gander on-line system used by three associated colleges in the Borough to engage with employers. The website contains extensive and comprehensive descriptions of the student support available, including on financial and transport help, student well-being, pastoral support, learning support, web accessibility and student access, as well as describing the extra-curricular opportunities that *'helps to ensure our graduates are mature, grounded and equipped for the next stages of their lives'*.

As described above, staff are fully engaged and involved in shaping services through their contributions to planning and performance review, and described various ideas they had put forward that had been taken on board, such as lunchtime study groups, cultural and personal development visits, provision of add-on sessions on independent travelling, posting photographs of Peer Mentors for easy recognition, creation of the Wellbeing Calendar, provision of a small room for students with anxiety to attend assemblies, revamped induction. Students were also able to describe how their views were regularly sought, through Student Voice, regular Survey Monkey polls and informally in tutorials or outside the classroom; they recalled for example how their feedback had resulted in later start times, more seating in the 'Hub', better IT software and the provision of laptops, additional leisure activities. Partner schools described how staff regularly consulted them about the type of engagement they required and adapted their contributions accordingly, while employers spoke about how staff sought their input on the exact nature of engagement activity they were able and willing to give, and how they specified the type of individual to fill a particular placement opportunity, rather than be required to accept random applicants.

Networking and partnership are key elements of the College's strategic and operational approach – links to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority help inform curriculum development in relation to future skills needs, as do links with the local Chamber of Commerce and Stockport Economic Alliance, which also help in the engagement with local businesses to provide employability support. Networking with two other colleges in the borough ensures provision is complementary and in line with demand and skills needs, and provides access to Gander a matching service that helps bring in placement opportunities for students, recruit employers to support the colleges, and to pre-notify upcoming vacancies.

Strong and recently much improved links with more than twenty five local schools offer a promotion and recruitment source, and partners from this grouping were able to comment positively on the responsiveness of College staff to their needs in terms of progression options, and the nature and timing of visits, college tours and so on. Meanwhile, the College engages with upwards of 1000 local employers, offering placement and experience opportunities for students, as well as providing a source of external speakers to come into college to talk to groups of students about life in their sector, the qualities of individuals they would be seeking to employ, and to offer tips and traps, and often more in-depth coaching on employability skills, interview techniques and the like.

In connection with this, participation in the Career Ready programme allows students to be paired with a business mentor who will help identify development opportunities and act as a sounding board for them.

Links with local statutory services and specialist support agencies ensure that any care plan in place for a student is synchronous with the support other agencies are providing to the individual, often supported by case conferences; such links also provide referral options when students present with needs the college is unable or not qualified to provide, such as counselling, homelessness, safeguarding issues and so on. Partners were clear about the benefits to their organisation of working with the college:

'They help us, we help them'

'Our [very good] figures are down to the College'

2. Resources

The assets invested and applied in providing an effective service

Resource need, supply and use are included in the planning and review cycle described above, with budgets established to ensure physical resources are in sufficient supply to deliver objectives. Staffing needs are determined by the demands of the curriculum and adjusted accordingly, and the College has arrangements with agencies to provide temporary cover from appropriately qualified people in cases of prolonged staff absence. The introduction of Pro-Monitor has further enhanced efficiency in terms of staff time and the speed with which at risk students are identified and appropriate support put in place, while improvements in the internal systems have seen a significant reduction in the use of paper, and a move to single, read only, dated versions of internal documentation, to ensure only the latest is used.

Curriculum and subject leads are responsible for ensuring printed textbooks and on-line references continue to be suitable for course content and that they are up to date in relation to sector developments and regulations, and staff have official websites that they can check for currency. Liaison with the Library ensures that sufficient printed materials are available, and the development of LibGuides now offers students access to a combination of printed and on-line textbooks, categorised as central to the qualification or of interest or further reading. Printed materials in the Library are reviewed and date stamped to ensure readers are aware of any potential limitations. Students have real time access to the latest supporting information, session slides, past and present, and to website links via the Moodle, to support their studies. Careers updates and opportunities are published in The Careers Bulletin, which is compiled regularly by staff who maintain links with external opportunity and event providers, and the dated bulletin is also available via Moodle. Access to university and UCAS websites and the National Apprenticeship site and local careers providers' sites ensure access to only the most recent progression information.

Staff job descriptions are generic in terms of qualifications required (sector specific and appropriate teaching/assessment qualifications for teaching staff, and IAG awards for support staff along with qualifications relevant to the role), but individual roles are adjusted in line with the changing needs of the service provided and with broader college aims and objectives. Staff explained that their individual roles and personal targets, which are reviewed regularly, feed directly into team targets and objectives, which in turn directly support wider college objectives; they described how each individual could see how their particular role contributed to the achievement of organisational aims, which they felt was an incentive to continue to perform at the top of their game.

Staff development is central to the College objective to ensure high quality teaching and learning, and there are regular INSET days to support this, as well as access by staff to a range of internal and external development opportunities, and particularly to statutorily required updates on safeguarding, data protection, Prevent and so on. Managers explained that all curriculum and appropriate support staff had participated in Tier 1 Careers Education IAG training on-line to develop an understanding of various progression routes and local labour markets, to help them focus on post-college options.

Staff explained that as far as budgets would allow, training is encouraged and supported, so long as it related directly to the job role or to potential improvements or innovations that could result.

'Things come through every week, but it must be affordable and what we need'

'We are encouraged to develop and define our roles'

They described various development they had undertaken recently, including safeguarding, child protection, self-harm, suicide awareness, FMG, Prevent, information skills, exam board updates, safer recruiting. They explained that they always review training they have attended, cascading learning to colleagues through team meetings.

Recently recruited staff described their inductions, which had been an introduction to the College as a whole and the systems in place, statutory and employee responsibilities; then to the details of the job itself; it had included work shadowing colleagues, reviews of policies and procedures, and introduction to other staff members, with daily reviews to ensure things were progressing smoothly and to identify any further development needs. It included also a session on social media safety to emphasise the safeguarding duty to students and to staff themselves. Staff confirmed that the induction had been essential in helping them to recognise the boundaries to their role and who to go to for support, and had been helpful in orientating them to their role:

'Helped me understand the dos and don'ts, the right way to go about things, and where I fit in with the College'

3. Service Delivery

The way in which the service is delivered effectively

LAG services are defined in promotional materials and media, and in student handbooks and the Moodle, and are reinforced at the early stages of enrolment and induction, and regularly revisited throughout students' time at college through the various tutorials and reviews described. Students confirmed that they had been clear from the beginning about the range of support and help available, and in particular, its purpose and the ways in which it could help; they also confirmed that support they had received had delivered on its promise.

Review of recent performance reports show strong achievement figures, for example, overall college achievement at 94.5% - the highest in the last 3 years; overall Level 2 achievement rates have improved by 3.6% from the previous year to 95.4%, 2.5% above SFCNA and 5.6% above GFE by 2.3% (2.7% above the national average of 92.9%); retention at 90.9%. Managers and staff averred that these figures demonstrated the effectiveness of the services in meeting objectives, and commented that because support services had become increasingly 'joined up' it had become more effective in recent years at identifying and addressing student issues across a wide range and ensuring support in place was synchronised, with Pro-Monitor, which holds records of every intervention with each student, ensuring that everyone working with an individual was aware of others' input.

Impartiality and objectivity are among the college values, and staff were clear about the importance of objectivity and impartiality at recruitment, explaining that putting someone on a course that was not right for them would ultimately damage retention and achievement figures, so would be counter-productive. They described various occasions when prospective learners, who wished to attend college with their friends, had been signposted to other providers whose provision was more aligned to their longer term goals. Staff described how they had supported students whose career goals had changed while on course, helping them to switch to an alternative and working with them to research local opportunities in the new career. Students commented positively about how they found all staff non-judgemental and supportive, and how they always sought to shape support around their individual, sometimes changing, needs.

'The support here is unrivalled'

Students described how at initial interview they had discussed the various options available to them in pursuing their longer term goals, such as appropriate courses, academic or vocational, whether an Apprenticeship might be more appropriate than university, and what each pathway would entail in terms of course work; they recalled how during reviews and careers sessions they explored potential progression options, including different universities and Apprenticeship providers. They described how additional sessions with careers advisers had helped them to understand the implications of each option open to them. All confirmed that it had been very clear that the ultimate choice had been theirs, reflecting that had they been pressured along a particular route they would probably have dropped out; equally, they were clear that the amount and quality of information and explanation they had received had helped them arrive at properly informed decisions.

'Lots more information so I could make a better decision'

Staff and students described how progression events had included providers of a range of offerings, including employers, Apprenticeship providers, and universities and so on, as well as university visits and employment placements, to ensure they had as much understanding as they could as to life after college. They described how access to UCAS and university websites, the National Apprenticeship Service and provider sites, and those of external careers providers, had helped them by enabling them to 'delve down' into details to support their decision making; students commented that it was also helpful that support and advice from a staff member were always available when they needed further explanation or interpretation.

'Talks through how to access and navigate on-line information'

'Made it make a lot more sense after they explained'

Staff recalled various referrals they had made to support students' attendance and progress, including to Learning Support for help with travel costs, to careers advice for further information, to social services and housing providers for help with domestic issues, to Student Wellbeing for additional help, CAMHS, drug and alcohol support, GPs; they confirmed that they always follow up referrals to ensure the support had been appropriate and effective. Students were also able to cite referrals that had helped them, such as to careers advice for additional sessions, learning support for help with meals and travel, additional websites for more information on particular careers.

4. Continuous Quality Improvement

The way in which the service provided is reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis

As mentioned, the planning and review systems that monitor performance against targets and objectives, and lead to the development of subsequent plans include target setting for recruitment, retention and achievement for the next year based on improvements over the current year, thus engendering a constant 'raising of the bar'; the self assessment reviews undertaken by teams also explore the extent to which objectives and targets have been met, and the reasons for any shortfall, and result in improvement plans to address the issue. Review is supported by the Pro-Monitor system, which staff described as a major improvement in tracking student progress and speedily identifying patterns that could suggest problems on the part of the individual, which can be instantly explored and addressed before they reach crisis.

Recent outcomes performance figures show, for example for 16 – 18 year olds, success rate 85.9% (1% below benchmark), retention, 90.9% (-3.6%) and achievement 94.5% (+2.4); the strategic plan has a number of key improvements, to increase retention rates for this group. As described above, the softer outcomes desired by students are defined directly in relation to the individual's needs, and action agreed to achieve them, for example to improve confidence to support independent travel, attend travel training sessions. Review determines whether the action was successful, or whether additional support is necessary, and if so to put it in place and review its impact. Staff commented that all students achieve their desired outcome(s), because support continues until they do so; however, staff are now exploring ways in which the college can quantify, by cohort/group, the extent to which learners are being helped in their personal development.

Feedback is sought from students through Student Voice, regular Survey Monkey polls and informally in tutorials or outside the classroom, as well as post event surveys, and staff described how feedback from this source resulted in more targeted invitations to external contributors, such as specific universities, employers in particular sectors, more degree apprenticeship providers. Additional improvements prompted by student feedback include changes to the ways in which study skills sessions are delivered. Feedback from staff is sought through team meetings and one to ones, and improvements made in response include introducing the use of Twitter to support flip learning, recording video tutorial clips to support learning of students with dyslexia, and then introducing the technique for all students. Feedback from employers is sought through regular contacts by the Employer Engagement team, and particularly post placement, and this has led to the creation of a 'menu' of offerings that employers can provide, to suit their needs, expertise and time available.

This regular contact allows the effectiveness of partnerships with employers to be regularly reviewed, and managers described how post placement review with students had resulted in some employers being 'Red carded' as the experience had not been sufficiently challenging or informative for the student. Partnerships with schools are also regularly reviewed, through ongoing liaison and contacts, and college engagement types and times are tailored to their needs; for example, college staff were asked to emphasise the rigorous entry criteria of college courses to help encourage school students to work hard to maximise their grades, with considerable success.

Quality assurance is, as mentioned, a particular strength of the college, with integrated processes, as described above, and also including impact evaluation of all activities, that support the universal ownership and involvement in performance review and improvement, ensure team and individual targets link directly to wider college aims and objectives, and foster an all pervading ethos of quality improvement. The quality improvement processes include rigorous monitoring of staff performance, through regular observation of teaching and learning, and a support package and plan to help address areas for improvement; the annual appraisal, and six monthly review, also review the extent to which individual targets are being met, exploring reasons for any shortfall, and look also at future roles and progression opportunities, and accompanying development needs. As mentioned, staff roles can be adjusted or fine tuned to ensure they continue to fit team and wider college objectives, and targets are also reviewed for their continued relevance in light of any major changes. Staff were clear that the way in which their performance was monitored, and particularly how they were helped and encouraged to improve and continuously raise standards, was supportive and positive.

The effective use of technology is another strength of the college, with an array of systems and approaches that have helped improve services across the organisation:

- Pro-Monitor enables real time tracking of student progress and records all staff interventions, making overall performance review quicker and easier and enabling early identification and addressing of individual student issues;
- The College Moodle allows students to access a host of learning resources, policies, and website links, and to access emails; an App supports access on mobile phones;
- The series of LibGuides developed by Library staff provides on-line access to additional reading material, classified for easy access by course subject and essential or desirable publications;
- IT suites allow student access to computers when they have none of their own; students access a host of websites to support their studies and to research progression options;
- The use of social media to support learning and to grow the community of college followers, helping to raise the profile of the college; use of video clips to support learners with dyslexia, and the array of web access support, including screen filters, audio and text talk, large keyboards and adjustable font size, all help to engage and support learners with a diverse range of abilities and needs.

The planning, monitoring, review and quality assurance processes outlined above combine to ensure that improvements are constantly identified and reviewed subsequently for their effectiveness; managers described how requested refinements to Pro-Monitor had been implemented and gradually fine tuned as a result feedback; staff described how recognising the need to gain qualitative feedback on work placements they introduced Work Logs for students to complete, but that review found that rates of return were low, so they introduced a system whereby House Monitors would collect them; however, this approach led to the discovery that students had not been impressed with the layout and format of the books, so a focus group was held, and feedback gathered resulted in a more concise version being issued, and return rates improved.

7. Conclusion

The Assessment highlighted an organisation that has gone through many recent significant changes, emerging as a much improved college, that enjoys highly effective leadership and management and which has secured the commitment of all staff to its vision, values and drive for improvement. Supported by effective and comprehensive quality assurance arrangements, the support provided to students from staff across the college is highly appreciated and valued, and its effectiveness is evident from the impressive performance figures. This is a forward looking college, but with the wellbeing of its students always central in the thinking of everyone.

NB: Continued accreditation is subject to annual Continuous Improvement Checks at twelve and twenty-four months following assessment and three-yearly on-site accreditation reviews. If checks/reviews are not undertaken in a timely way this will have an impact upon your organisation's accreditation.

8. The matrix Standard Evidence Grid

Element 1 Criteria		Met	Strength	AfFD
1.1	The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims.	✓		
1.2	The service is provided with clear leadership and direction	✓	✓	✓
1.3	The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery	✓		
1.4	The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service	✓		
1.5	The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service	✓		✓
1.6	The organisation promotes the service in ways which are accessible to all those eligible to use it	✓		✓
1.7	Clients and staff influence the design and development of the service	✓		
1.8	The organisation establishes effective links with other appropriate partnerships and networks to enhance the service	✓	✓	

Element 2 Criteria		Met	Strength	AfFD
2.1	The organisation uses its resources effectively to deliver the service	✓		
2.2	Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive	✓		
2.3	The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service	✓		
2.4	Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development and provided with opportunities for career progression	✓		
2.5	Effective induction processes are in place for all staff	✓		

Element 3 Criteria		Met	Strength	AfFD
3.1	The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect	✓		
3.2	The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives	✓	✓	
3.3	The service provided is impartial and objective	✓		
3.4	Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions	✓		
3.5	When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including access to technology	✓		
3.6	Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate agencies or organisations	✓		

Element 4 - Criteria		Met	Strength	AfFD
4.1	The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives and identifies improvements	✓		
4.2	The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery	✓		
4.3	The organisation evaluates feedback on the service to build upon its strengths and addresses any areas for improvement	✓		
4.4	The organisation evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships and networks to improve the service	✓		
4.5	The organisation defines quality assurance approaches which are used to improve the service	✓	✓	
4.6	Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, are reviewed and evaluated to improve the service	✓		
4.7	Effective use is made of technology to improve the service	✓	✓	
4.8	The organisation continually reviews improvements to help inform the future aims and objectives of the service	✓	✓	