THE CHEADLE & MARPLE COLLEGE

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1. Assessment Information

Assessment Type	ACCREDITATION REVIEW
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Assessor's Name	JOHN P G SMITH
Visit Date	8 – 10 OCTOBER 2019
Client ID	C11814
Assessment Reference	PN104537
Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by	5 OCTOBER 2020
Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by	5 OCTOBER 2021
Accreditation Review on-site visit to be conducted by	5 OCTOBER 2022

2. Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives & Outcomes

The Cheadle and Marple College Network (the college), formerly Cheadle & Marple Sixth Form College, continues to operate from campuses in the west (The Cheadle College) and east (Marple Sixth Form College) peripheries of the borough of Stockport. As well Sixth Form provision the college delivers Adult and Work Related learning.

The college, whose Mission is *to provide the highest quality education for our students whatever their age, background and ability and to be recognised as outstanding within the community we serve*, is run by the Acting Principal (pending the completion of a re-structuring which has resulted in changes to some senior management posts), who reports to the Board of Governors and is supported by the Principalship senior team of Acting Principal and Assistant Principals, who continue to be 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.

Provision is promoted in a wide variety of ways, including through 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; and through taster courses and taster days for local schools, when prospective students have an opportunity to try 'hands on' experiences. Since the last Assessment the college has increased its use of Student Ambassadors to promote provision, and these individuals attend the events referred to and are able to give prospective students their perspectives and experience of courses, the student support on offer and life in college generally.

Services to employers are promoted by the Employer Engagement Team and Work Related Learning Team, directly to local employers (and the college has built a large, and growing network of loyal local businesses), and also through Gander, a local authority initiative designed to engage employers with learners across the borough. The college website contains detailed information about college provision, and crucially, about the support available for students throughout their time at college.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) are central to all college activities. The promotional activities described enable students to decide whether, and for what course, to apply, or to seek alternatives elsewhere. Applicant interviews provide opportunities for students to receive more in-depth information about course content, potential career options, support available, enrichment opportunities and so on, and the application process also elicits information about any additional support needs the individual may require, with links to schools and other service providers made to ensure consistency of support. At enrolment, students meet course tutors, Heads of House and House Monitors, careers and pastoral support staff and receive detailed explanations of course content, career and pastoral support available, and general life at college, and this leads to the development of a personal learning plan. 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 students receive subject and pastoral tutorials, regular progress and personal reviews, have access to employment experience opportunities and careers events and activities, and sessions on post college progression opportunities. Since the last Assessment the college has placed greater emphasis on alignment of course content with careers, and through the House system, learning mentors, learning support and wellbeing teams, students are able to access the full range of support; including additional personal support and counselling if required. Students commented on how effective the House system was in providing speedy access through known and familiar contact points to support on all issues.

Student outcomes are defined as the ability to work independently, development of skills to fulfil potential, increase confidence and aspiration; improve career awareness and employability. The personal learning plan referred to helps students to target their development needs and regular in-depth reviews, of course work, personal development and enrichment, work experience and careers/progression awareness enable them to update plans, address any areas in need of development, and track their progress toward their desired goals.

The use of Unifrog and in particular, the encouragement to staff and students to record every activity and intervention, has been a positive way of improving review and self-reflection by students of the extent to which they are developing their personal skills, and align with career and progression preferences; students commented positively on the way their time at college had supported their personal development: *I'm more certain of my career path; I've had loads of work experience; It's improved my social network; I'm much more confident; Doing this has widened my perspective on careers I can pursue.*

The aims and objectives of the service support the Strategic Plan priority *to ensure students make excellent progress, with confidence to higher education or employment*, and targets for retention, achievement and progression, and also align with the Gatsby Benchmarks; they include to provide guidance and support inside and outside the classroom, ensure IAG is impartial, includes information on progression pathways and is provided in students' best interests.

The success of the service in achieving these aims and objectives is measured in various ways: the Principalship meets fortnightly to review performance across all facets of college activity in line with strategic priorities and action plans. Since the last Assessment the college has introduced performance reporting on a per site basis that has improved the quality and focus of data and aligns better with the different types of provision on offer. Regular team meetings also review their own performance in relation to their plans and targets, and senior managers described how the changes in some posts, referred to above, had brought greater synchronicity to the provision of student support, and in particular the embedding of careers across the curriculum. Monthly all staff meetings and weekly staff briefings look at wider issues impacting across the college as well as highlighting any particular issues that need addressing. There are also regular curriculum health checks that lead to action plans for adjustment and improvement where necessary. All the reviews referred to are informed by the comprehensive data on Unifrog and ProMonitor which allows 'deep drilling' to aid review and evaluation.

Review of recent performance data highlights student completion rates at 93.44%, with 80.33% of students progressing to higher education and 13.11% to employment. For access students the higher education progression rates from Humanities and Science subjects were each 100%. The figures highlight the effectiveness of services in ensuring students access the right course and that the support they receive motivates them to complete and progress toward their chosen career destination.

All staff are involved in the planning, review and quality improvement approaches, which, as well as the ways described, include contribution to the development of team plans in line with strategic priorities, and ongoing review as described. The Self Assessment Review (SAR), which has been updated to align with the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), is completed at team level, and an improvement since the last Assessment has been the introduction of SARs for each staff member. Integrated processes of review, compliance and quality monitoring evaluate compliance and performance and instigate improvements. The thoroughgoing review to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) highlighted a number of areas where data was being captured unnecessarily, and the process has encouraged a greater culture of continual questioning of the reasons for certain activities and processes and reinforced the commitment of staff to continuous improvement.

Staff performance is monitored through the ways described and via regular one to ones with managers and the Annual Professional Review, and a recent innovation has seen the introduction of the Individual Growth Plan, linked to Teaching Standards, in which staff highlight their aims, ambitions, plans and training needs, and this is regularly revisited and updated and forms the basis of the Professional Review. Since the last Assessment the college has dropped formal teaching and learning observations, and increased the use of learning walks; and has encouraged more peer observations to increase cross-curriculum sharing of good practice, facilitated by the introduction of peer observation 'pods' through which staff can engage with each other and agree on themes for each to observe.

Feedback from students is sought at various stages, including through regular surveys and following work experience placements, attendance at careers and other events, Student Voice forums and so on. Feedback from staff is gathered through the performance monitoring described and through the termly Staff Forum. Feedback from partners is sought through regular contacts and at the end of events, or work experience placements. Feedback is evaluated and acted upon as part of the ongoing review process as described.

Improvements implemented through these approaches include inviting employers to careers days to describe the job roles they have; a new work placement route to accommodate T Levels; seeking joint employer/student feedback on work experience placements; work briefs provided by small employers unable to offer a placement but which enable students to develop projects needed by them; an incentive points system for CPD undertaken by staff; a Careers in the Curriculum audit; adjustments to career events to match with HE provision; training for teaching staff and subject tutors on Gatsby Benchmark 4; Careers Enrichment days when curriculum areas put on events; and staff training session on Unifrog to ensure maximum usage; audit of staff mental health and wellbeing.

Additional improvements include Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) targets and teaching strategies shared on ProMonitor with staff teaching students with EHCPs; a new student engagement process to 'filter out' non-committed individuals; encouraging schools to deliver Independent travel training to SEN pupils to facilitate their access to college; and introduction of the Vocational Excellence booklet to enable students to track their development.

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.

- The restructuring referred to has had a beneficial impact on the management and delivery of IAG; student support is now more holistic and 'joined up', with staff working more closely together, and this, along with the Gatsby benchmarks, has raised awareness among all staff of the central role careers education should take during the student journey, with such innovations as Careers in the Curriculum and Careers Enrichment Days introduced to provide useful vehicles in support of student ambition and progress. (1.2)

- This, along with the continued successful House system, and greater emphasis on whole person development, has maintained the effectiveness of the IAG provided, which is reflected in the performance results, and enthusiastically in students' own testimonies. (3.2)

- Networking and partnership continue to be key strengths of the college; long term and mutually beneficial links with local schools provide a ready source of recruitment, increased links with local authority services have enabled the college to enhance its inclusivity for SEND students, offering a wider range of Entry Level and progression options, while growing links with local employers, directly and via Gander, have increased the work experience and career development opportunities available for students. (1.8, 1.3)

- Quality assurance and improvement strategies continue to drive innovation, and have been further enhanced since the last assessment, through, for example, the curriculum health checks, the re-alignment of the SAR with the EIF and greater devolution of staff responsibility for performance review, and the Review highlighted numerous improvements implemented as a result. (4.5)

- Staff welfare, development and performance monitoring are also a key strength, and despite the difficult circumstances pertaining, continue to ensure staff commitment to the aims and values of the college, and innovations such as the individual growth plan, the CPD incentive points scheme, individual self review, peer observation and increased teaching and learning walkthroughs have helped consolidate this and increased ownership of plans, strategies and high quality delivery of service. (4.6)

4. Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is; or to give insight to practice seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in anyway lacking. 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.

- The additions to the quality assurance processes referred to, and in particular, the momentum given to critical review by GDPR, has prompted further exploration of ways to improve individual team objectives and targets, and the college is encouraged to expedite this review to achieve full alignment of all functions with strategic objectives. (4.5)

- The Vocational Excellence Progress Review provides students and staff with an excellence means to measure improvements across a range of skills, knowledge and behaviour, and the college may wish to consider adding more soft skills to the Review to reflect wider personal growth in such areas as careers awareness, work readiness and so on. This would enable students to track their whole person development progress and underline the effectiveness of the teaching and experiential approaches in place. (1.5)

- The college has exponentially increased its use of Student Ambassadors for promotional purposes and to provide insights to prospective students on the range of experiences on offer in college; it may be beneficial to consider having Ambassadors on hand to provide support and reassurance at interview evenings. (1.8)

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 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, please see Section 1 for dates.

5. Methodology

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

Visit to the C&M Cheadle Campus

Interviews with the Acting Principal, two Assistant Principals, four senior managers, fourteen staff members and one partner

Telephone interviews with one governor, three partners and two students

Group interviews with a total of six staff members and twenty five students

Review of key documentation, including the Strategic Plan, the CEIAG Plan, performance reports and statistics, analysed feedback, student documentation, promotional material; and the C&M website

Feedback was provided to the Quality Manager at the end of each day and to the Assistant Principal and the Quality Manager at the end of the Review

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

- Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
- Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy Assessment Services Ltd that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
- Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
- Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrix@assessmentservices.com.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
- Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause Assessment Services Ltd and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
- Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
- Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by Assessment Services Ltd and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to being a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
- Be aware that Assessment Services Ltd reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.

Whilst accredited the organisation will be signed up for IAGonline - a community website for all **matrix** holders. Once signed up, any employee of the organisation can join the community and access regular posts and join specialist interest groups for support and discussion.

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