



STOCKTON RIVERSIDE COLLEGE ANNUAL UPDATE 2016/17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stockton Riverside College continues to be a good college, as judged by Ofsted (December 2017) and in terms of Higher Education by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (May 2017). In 2016/17 Stockton Riverside College strengthened its Board. It remains financially robust and has invested heavily in technologies. The College has established itself as a partner that stakeholders wish to work with, including Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, schools, employers and the Third Sector. Our Enterprise Strategy is growing in impact and our response to the SSI closure was outstanding. Employer engagement activity, including apprenticeships, is well developed and effective. Increasingly the College is successfully focusing on inclusivity, building on firm foundations. As a good employer we are increasingly prioritising the health and well-being of our staff as well as students. Student achievements are mostly well above national rates, teaching and learning is good and improving, and student satisfaction levels are high. Safeguarding is effective and careers advice and work experience leads to positive destinations for the majority of our students. There are still things we need to improve but we are making good progress. In summary students come to College, they enjoy their time with us, are safe, and achieve their qualifications and then go on to positive destinations.

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FOR ANY QUERIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Report is to update Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council members on the position and performance of their local College (Stockton Riverside College) with particular focus on the academic year 2016/17.

Corporation Board, financial sustainability and investment

For 2016/17 the College strengthened its Board. We appointed a very experienced Chair (Mark White), and a new Vice Chair (Richard Poundford) with a strong economic development background, along with two governors from the private sector, and two governors with school improvement backgrounds. The College is financially sustainable, consistently delivers small surpluses, with strong cash balances, and therefore is able to provide staff with pay rises every year.

Ofsted (See Attached)

In December 2017 we received our Ofsted Inspection that concluded that the College continues to be good. Highlights include:

The College's "leaders and governors have a clear vision to place Stockton Riverside College at the centre of the local community and ensure that local learners receive a good-quality educational experience. This focus has resulted in a culture of high expectations for learners and staff that is both challenging and supportive."

"Leaders, managers and staff ensure that learners successfully develop the skills and knowledge that employers need. Learners understand the importance of punctuality, dressing appropriately and communicating effectively. Learners benefit from professional resources and environments, as well as high-quality input from employers and external experts that enables them to develop their skills further."

"Where relevant, most learners benefit from very well-planned, helpful and relevant work experience placements that support them to practise their subject-specific skills. This helps them to make informed choices about their next steps."

"Learners and apprentices receive good initial advice and guidance that prepare them well for learning and ensure that they are starting the right course. They receive good-quality careers guidance during their courses that prepares them well for what they want to do next. As a result, most learners and apprentices move on to employment, or further or higher education, on completing their qualifications."

"College staff have productive relationships with employers and offer a flexible approach to learning depending on the employer's needs. Employers are active in the planning of apprentices' on- and off-the-job training and monitor apprentices' progress closely. Where employers are not working effectively with apprentices, senior leaders take the decision to stop working with these employers. "

Higher Education

In May 2017 the College's Higher Education (HE) provision was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The review concluded that the QAA continues to have confidence in the College's HE provision in relation to both academic standards and the quality of the student academic experience.

Highlights of the published report include:

"Governance structures are embedded and the Board takes the opportunity to respond and challenge, enabling the Corporation to demonstrate effective oversight of academic governance and risk."

"The College upholds sound assessment practice through its broader strategic approach."

"Student feedback channels and engagement mechanisms are well established."

"Work-Based Learning (WBL) is embedded in all higher education programmes through workplace study, industry placements and/or projects on real issues."

HE success rates were good in 2016/17, reflecting the significant improvement (+7.4 pp) made in 2015/16. HE student satisfaction is also good with National Student Survey (NSS) results above sector averages in all but 1 of 22 key areas of focus. Improving this area (access to course specific resources) is an area of focus in 2017/18.

Partnerships

We have established ourselves as a partner of choice. We are currently planning to merge with Redcar and Cleveland College at the start of the academic year 2018/19. We collaborated with the Council to further develop the Skills Academy and we are working hard with partners to develop the Borough's Alternative Curriculum Strategy. Working with local schools, a new Key Stage 4 Transition pilot is having a positive impact on students when they progress to College via data information transfer. Our Enterprise Strategy chaired by our Vice Chair brings together local business leaders and agencies to directly influence College strategy via our Enterprise Board and successful collaboration with local enterprise agencies (e.g. Five Lamps, Prince's Trust) helps students set up their own businesses. We have created a Logistics Academy with a well-attended Local Advisory Board led by national and local employers to provide work experience can career opportunities for students, including Tees Valley Combined Authority, PD Ports, KP Snacks, Clipper, Northern Rail and Nestle. Our response to the SSI closure was outstanding. Led by NETA, we delivered over 1,000 courses to ex-SSI workers, which DWP were delighted with.

Employer engagement, apprenticeships and inclusivity

In 2013/14 we had 163 apprenticeship starts and this increased to 510 in 2016/17. The College has developed a robust work based learning infrastructure including department work based learning co-ordinators and work experience co-ordinators. Sector based work academies have responded to employer demand in recruiting to new vacancies (including Health and Social care, Hospitality, Manufacturing). We have also increased inclusivity (widening participation). We currently provide high quality provision for 126 High needs learners and we are working with thirteen local schools delivering 14-16 provision. We are the primary provider of ESOL services across the Tees Valley and use our purpose built Skills Academy to reduce NEETs and provide services for Electively Home Educated students. We deliver extensive Prince's Trust provision across the Tees Valley and surrounding areas, supporting the reduction of NEETs. 'Looked After Children' in 2016/17 performed very well (95% achievement rate). We are currently piloting a very successful collaboration with a local community centre, providing apprenticeship opportunities and work experience for students in their cafe. The venture is expected to expand to include three more community centres in 2017/18.

The College as an employer

The College is a good place to work. 88% of the 47 benchmarked staff survey questions place the College in the upper quartile of colleges and the remaining 12% of questions score above average. In December 2016, off the back of very high results and very high participation rates (85%), 93% of staff said they would recommend the College as a good place to work (our highest ever score) and 94% would recommend the College to family and friends. In 2016/17 there were more staff social events than ever before, organised by our Staff Association. Co-ordinated through our HR Department, staff organise a wide range of clubs and activities, including lunchtime walking, mindfulness classes, running clubs, circuit training etc. We purchased 10 Fit Bits so staff could borrow a Fit Bit for a month before deciding to purchase one – almost half the people that borrowed one bought one. We have an extensive staff benefits system including significant retail discounts and we recently received an award for organisational health and wellbeing.

Investment in technologies

We have, in recent times, invested heavily in technologies. New 'live' finance and information service systems empower and enable staff. To ensure transparency from the top to the bottom of the organisation we utilise user friendly dashboards, including a new Governors dashboard. We are implementing a new HR system which will bring payroll in-house and ensure a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to employer engagement. We are also delivering a high spec Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. From a student perspective, we evidence a 3 year trend of improvement in the consistent quality of Virtual

Learning Environment (VLE) sites across the College. The above is all supported by an embedded Business Planning and Performance Review system that brings together finance and quality improvement into one conversation.

Student achievements

Our Achievement rates for 16-18 students, students aged 19+, and apprenticeships are in Quartile 1 across GFE colleges (AoC data). Between 2013/14 and 2015/16 (the last published rate) the National Rate (NR) for Education and Training (ETF) programmes declined across both 16 – 18 (-1%) and 19+ programmes (-0.6%). Over the same time period the College's 16-18 performance improved by +4.8 percentage points (pp) and by 2.3 pp for 19+. The gap between the College's performance and NRs is increasing. The College's achievement rates are now consolidated well above national rates. In 2016/17, compared to NRs, the College was +4.4pp for 16 – 18 and +6.8pp for 19+. Apprenticeship timely achievement rates have also been consolidated well above NRs (+13.4 pp, 14/15; +9pp; 15/16; +15.2pp, 2016/17).

2016/17 has also been a year of significant progress in English and maths. College rates are now above NR for: 16-18 GCSE English high grades (+9.7pp); Functional Skills English (+18.6pp); Functional Skills maths (+18.3pp); Adult GCSE high grades in both English (+5.3pp) and maths (+16.6pp) and Adult Functional Skills in both English (+17.4pp) and maths (+8.7pp). The 16-18 GCSE maths high grade rate also improved but remains below NR (- 1.5pp) and we need to improve it. In terms of progress measures we expect to be above NRs for maths and just below for English. Progress measure performance have improved in both English and maths. However there remains work to do. We need to improve attendance at English and maths classes and actions are in place.

Teaching and Learning

A risk based approach to lesson observations has enabled greater focus in supporting and challenging those that need it most, resulting in a 3 year improvement in the outcomes of initial graded observations to 87.8% (+17.8% compared to 2014/15). Accuracy of lesson observation grades are double checked via external consultancy over and beyond internal quality controls. In 2013/14 there were 47 lessons observed that were initially graded less than good; in 2016/17 there were 18. The 452 learning walkthroughs and 36 developmental observations have also had significant positive impact. In 2016/17 the College's performance improved across all Value Added measures, for example at A level Average point score per academic entry improved from C- in 2015/16 to C in 16/17; Applied General from Dist- to Dist; Tech level from Merit+ to Dist-. In 2017/18 we will fully roll out ALPs and implement Markbook to further drive improvements. We still have more work to do in ensuring all students fully achieve their potential in higher level programmes (Value Added) and, again, actions are in place.

Student satisfaction

There is a 3 year trend of high student satisfaction with Teaching Learning and Assessment at 93% (mid-year Learner Survey) in 2016/17 (+1% pp compared to 15/16); learners understand their rights (93%), feel safe (98%) and use technologies (95%) – all in Upper Quartile (UQ) of GFE colleges. Similarly high UQ student responses to questions relating to the development of English & maths skills, and Individual Learning Plans. A broad range of mechanisms are used to gather information regarding learners views, including student reps on our Board, regular Principals Forums (often attended by governors as observers), course feedback groups and extensive learner surveys. Participation rates in learner surveys are high at 80%+.

Safeguarding

Highly accessible and well-structured records are significantly enhanced through the implementation of the Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) implemented in November 2016. Highly effective monitoring systems are in place in respect of safeguarding training, ensuring very high levels of compliance.

Work experience

Almost all students that planned to undertake work experience did so (1074 learners were due to undertake planned work experience, 94% completed work experience). Those that did not complete work experience were enabled to develop employability skills via other methods. Over 1000 learners engaged in Myworksearch activities to develop their employability skills. Activities included; preparing for work, CV writing, creating a covering letter, preparation for interview. 428 A level learners participated in the development of employability skills through the development of core competencies using UNIFROG

Student destinations

The most recent validated data for 14/15 clearly evidences that the College's strategies to improve destinations had worked. For 15/16 our own data evidences further improvement, for example:

- ✓ For 16-18 year old learners, 95% of L2 learners and 98% of L3 learners evidence a positive destination.
- ✓ Overall 95% of 16-18 year olds learners achieved a positive destination.
- ✓ In 2015/16 224 learners achieved employment at the end of their course, compared to 152 learners in 2014/15.
- ✓ Over the last few years over 90%+ of learners achieved a positive destination

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