**Area Reviews – College Visit Information**

**Local Review area: Black Country**

**College name:** **Sandwell College** **Date of Visit:**  **Adviser name(s):**

Colleges are asked to populate this with some key information and send it to us prior to the visit as a basis for the discussion. The adviser(s) will then finalise the form with information gained during the visit and send to the college for fact checking. It will then be shared only with the review team in its entirety. Key information will be extracted to support developing an outline college picture for the report shared with the steering group, but this document also used to support discussion and assessment of possible options with the team as the review develops.

|  | **Data tables/ Trend graphs/Pie charts/ Evidence base** | **Commentary**  **(Bullet points plus brief comments**) |  | | **Notes** | |
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| **College overview** |  | * **Sandwell College is a very strong college; it is well led, effectively governed and has undergone transformational improvement** of the new College campus in 2012 and the appointment of a new leadership team. The College is forward looking and has a clear vision and strategy for the future. * It will continue to work with partners to increase participation post 16 in traditional college courses but also apprenticeships * It will improve education in the communities it serves in Sandwell and West Birmingham by contributing to school improvement * It will improve progression by developing a University Centre with its partner university * Its development aim is to create a ‘Group Educational Organisation’ * It will play a leading role in collaboration to benefit its learners, employers, and the Region   **The questions posed by Area Review - our response**   * **Often Larger:** The move to a group structure will increase the overall size as well as leading to a coherent educational progression for students from primary to potentially Higher Education. Our anticipated group size within the next 2 years will be upwards of £50m in terms of turnover, however, the rationale is not simply a drive to growth, as there are many poor large colleges, rather it is to meet our focus on improving educational opportunities for learners. * **More resilient:** The College is diversifying, thus making it less dependent on a single public income stream. It is also changing its organisational structure which will give greater flexibility in delivering its activities according to the needs of the ‘particular’ market. * **In addition, it is committed to working with other colleges and providers in the West Midlands to seek mutual benefits in areas such as apprenticeships, quality improvements, joint bidding, and sharing of resources and services. This should lead to income and profit growth along with economies.**   **An effective college**   * **All aspects of Sandwell College performance have improved significantly.** * The College’s finances are now outstanding. * It has an Ofsted judgement of ‘Good’ (May 2014) with many outstanding features. * The current position is a major success story and a complete turnaround from a College that did have a poor financial position, requiring SFA support and a judgment of only ‘satisfactory’ by Ofsted. * The transformation is built upon a re-engineering of its operations with a focus on learners; this ranges from improved links to local schools and the journey into the college. We carefully monitor each application and ensure regular contact; we have an efficient and effective interviewing and ‘keep in touch’ strategy. * We have concentrated on retention and support of learners with the improvement of pastoral systems with dedicated managers focussed on acting as learner champions and central resources monitoring and proactively encouraging learners to attend. The College has a focussed approach to identifying those at risk and has appropriate intervention strategies. This approach specifically targets those who would potentially become NEET. * Financially the College has improved with a reorganisation taking place based upon a business review which identified cost savings; in particular the College utilises a system of ‘lean management’ with a single leadership team. In 2014/15 this process yielded a saving of £1.1m from its staffing costs. * The College’s SFA financial rating is judged ‘good’, based on 2014/15 annual accounts and the computed health score. For 2015/16 based on the latest management accounts financial health is now ‘outstanding’. However, financial analysis of any business cannot be on a single year; the key is the trajectory, forward business planning and cash. Turnover is an irrelevant measure if profitability and cash generation cannot be achieved; the college is positive in both these areas. * The College has written to the SFA requesting revision of its rating to outstanding. The current position is as a result of a clear financial strategy to contain costs, improve efficiency and deliver improved profitability. The College is of the view that profitability is not an end but rather it adds to its cash position and cash resilience. * Sandwell College has a projected turnover of £29m (up from £19m in 2013/14), so is important both educationally and economically to the region, with growing numbers of students and a staff of c350. * Leaders and managers have overseen success rate improvements in all funded areas to above national rates. They are in excess of 86% which places the College in the upper quartile for success in the sector. * The number of funded 16-18 students studying at the College has increased by 40% on 2013/14 numbers, which will increase to 50% in 2016/17. The EFA has partially funded the increase of c600 students in 2015/16; this will result in a surplus in the current year of approximately £1.5 million and £1.9 million in 2016/17.        * The College has achieved a transformational relocation from three poor quality campuses (in Oldbury, Smethwick and West Bromwich) which were not fit for purpose and were expensive to run, to new £125m facilities at Central Campus and Central Sixth Centre in West Bromwich which offer state of the art learning facilities. The development of the new accommodation had wide ranging support from local and national agencies, funding bodies, politicians and stakeholders. * The move allowed consolidation into what is widely regarded as one of the best learning facilities in the country, with inspirational learning spaces which motivate increasing numbers of students and promote learning well. This is important in an area where the housing stock where many students live is poor. The personalised and inclusive environments support collaborative as well as formal practice, and are flexible in the face of changing needs. Specialist Engineering facilities include advanced CNC machines, Digital Design suites, Construction workshops and Health facilities, including an operational Dental Surgery and a simulated Hospital ward. Laboratories exceed high end industry standards. * ***Provision*** - The College offers provision in all 15 subject sector areas, although a few SSAs are small (e.g. Animal Care) and are being phased out. The majority of 16-18 students follow full-time courses, adults mainly follow part-time courses. Highest numbers are in Preparation for Life and Work, Health, Public Services, ICT, Business Administration and Law, Retail, Engineering, Construction and Sport which align well with LEP priorities. Half of students study at Level 3. * ***Ofsted (2014) judged that ‘the College attracts and welcomes a tremendously diverse student population, working very well together and with a diverse staff’.*** * The College continues to grow, particularly for 16-18s. In 2014/15 of the 6,766 enrolled on **Learner Responsive** provision, some 3,000 were 16 -18. In 2015/16, the College enrolled 3,500 - significantly exceeding its EFA allocation yet again. * The College has sensibly re-introduced **A level provision** in the light of local needs effectively addressing a) demands from potential students and b) the small and sometimes under-resourced A level school provision in the area (evidenced by recent critical inspection reports on size and breadth of local schools/academy sixth forms). Increasing numbers of successful students (c450) study AS/A2 qualifications across a broad range of subjects. * In **Employer Responsive** provision - also forecast to grow, to date there are 1,037 Apprentices (up from 667 in 2014/15). Largest Apprenticeship provision is Science (Dental Nursing) offered regionally (STEM is a LEP priority). The College also offers Traineeships to those not yet in work or Apprenticeship-ready and also delivered courses for c1,800 unemployed adults in 2014/15. * The College has **HE provision** (c150 students) delivered through its own HEFCE contract and via partnership arrangements with its local university. This is forecast to expand. Main curriculum areas are Early Years, Business Studies, Creative/Digital, Engineering and Teacher Education. * The College offers a variety of vocational programmes for c90 **school pupils**, typically through day release over 1-2 years, or on a part-time basis.   **The local area in overview:**   * Sandwell is a metropolitan borough formed in 1974 comprising six towns; Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. Sandwell resident population is the largest in the Black Country and has proportionately a younger population. * The critical Birmingham wards the College serves are: Lozells & East Handsworth, Handsworth Wood, Soho and Ladywood. * The Sandwell and West Birmingham travel to learn area has a resident population figure of 484,000. * Of the Black Country boroughs, Sandwell is the largest and has the largest growth in its resident population.  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Area** | **2001 Population** | **2014 Population** | **2001-14 % Growth** | | Dudley | 305,052 | 315,799 | 3.5% | | Sandwell | 284,594 | 316,719 | 11.3% | | Walsall | 253,333 | 274,173 | 8.2% | | Wolverhampton | 238,016 | 252,987 | 6.3% |  * There are a rising number of school leavers:      * ***Deprivation:*** Sandwell has high levels of widespread and fairly uniform deprivation. The worst areas of deprivation follow the industrial belt running diagonally (NW to SE) across the borough. Sandwell is the 13th most deprived Local Authority in England (out of 326); a position that has deteriorated, relative to other Districts. As reported nationally West Bromwich is the second most deprived town in the country next to Oldham. Unemployment and intergenerational worklessness are high: 9.6% of the local working age population, compared to 6.2% in the West Midlands and 5.7% nationally. An increasing number of students come from Birmingham, which is ranked 11th (IMD 2015). It should be noted that the 4 Black Country Boroughs are markedly different in the key socio-economic indicators. * ***Transport links***: the College is close to J1/M5; West Bromwich bus station is opposite and the Metro link next door takes just 15 minutes to Birmingham City Centre. The College’s heat map represents the good transport networks available in and around Sandwell and West Birmingham. * ***Travel to Learn patterns*** - The College primarily serves Sandwell metropolitan borough and the West Birmingham area (key boroughs - Lozells and East Handsworth, Handsworth Wood, Soho and Ladywood). 51% of students are from Sandwell, 33% from Birmingham, 6% Dudley, 6% Walsall and 5% from Wolverhampton.   **2014/15 recruitment analysis:**    **2015/16 recruitment analysis, showing increasing numbers of students coming from West Birmingham wards in addition to core Sandwell wards.**     * ***Ethnic Origin and gender of students*** – the College serves all its communities well. Significant numbers (56%) of students originate from minority ethnic backgrounds, principally of Indian, Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage. 44% are White (not necessarily White British). Just over half (57%) of College students are female; this reflects the high number of women in Health and Social Care (priority Black Country LEP and Birmingham and Solihull LEP areas). * ***Other post 16 providers*** - The College is a leading member of The Black Country Colleges (BCC), comprising the seven BC FE colleges, working in partnership together and with other stakeholders to fulfil the aims of the Black Country Devolution Agreement. This long-standing and mature partnership is committed to cooperating with the BC Area Review to ensure a successful and sustainable BC FE sector which will support the twin LEP (BCLEP and BSLEP) and Combined Authority aims of Growth and Reform. Other BCCG college members are Halesowen, Dudley, Walsall, City of Wolverhampton, Stourbridge and King Edward VI College. * There are twenty schools with sixth forms (over 2,500 learners) within Sandwell borough, a number of which (47%) are graded inadequate or require improvement. Achievement rates at age 16 have declined by 3% in Sandwell and remain low, compared to the rest of the country. When screened most students applying for places at Sandwell College screen lower than their actual GCSE grades in English and Mathematics. * There are 17 schools with sixth forms within West Birmingham (including 4 selective grammar schools). Achievement rates at age 16 for the non-selective schools ranges from 41% to 55%, with a similar decline in 5 GCSEs A\*-C as in Sandwell. * The qualification attainment picture among 16 to 24-year olds is challenging |  | |  | |
| **Governance** |  | **Ofsted (2014) judged governance of the College as *‘strong with governors providing particularly good challenge and support to senior managers Governors are well informed about the College and recognise strengths and areas for improvement’.***   * The College has 13 independent members, 2 staff members, 2 student members and the Principal. Terms of office vary up to four years; eight of the current 13 independent governors are in their first term of office; similarly 3 of the 4 staff/student governors are also in their first-terms. * Reporting to the main Corporation are 4 sub-committees: Audit, Search, Remuneration and Learner, Quality and Curriculum. * **The Chair**, John Tew joined the Board in late 2007 and became Chair in May 2008. John is a retired Managing Director of a West Bromwich based insurance brokers and has extensive commercial and financial expertise. He is Vice-Chair of the Search and Remuneration Committees and is also a member of the Learners, Quality and Curriculum Committee. John is a former president of the Black Country Chamber * **Vice-Chair**, Ann Brook joined the Board in June 2012. She is a senior lecturer at Birmingham City University, a member of the Institute of Internal Auditors, the Institute of Risk Management and an external examiner for the Open University. Ann is Chair of the Remuneration Committee and a member of the Audit Committee. * **Vice-Chair,** Ninder Johal joined the Board in June 2013. He is Managing Director of a Creative Music event production company and is President of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership and Chairman of the Black Country Asian Business Association. He is a member of the Remuneration Committee. * Other Governors include the Chief Executive of Sandwell Local Authority, a Vice-Chairman of a Multi Academy Trust, a Skills Ambassador for a Sector Skills Council, a retired Headteacher working at a Special School in Sandwell, Chartered Certified Accountants, local business people and those with significant teaching and inspection experience. * The Board is conscious that the College, whilst located in the Black Country, recruits mainly from one borough in the Black Country i.e. Sandwell, with its other main recruitment and learning community based in Birmingham, thus in terms of learner recruitment, the College does not see itself as focused simply or solely working in the Black Country, apart from its core community. It sees its link to the wider Birmingham conurbation of increasing importance. The College is developing increasing relationships with Birmingham City Council and undertakes delivery in Birmingham. It is a member of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce as well as the Black Country. It has natural travel to learn links with Birmingham and an increasingly high performing ‘academic centre’ which is not offered by the FE colleges in Central Birmingham. * Ideally it would seem an appropriate and sensible approach to join some of the outcomes of the Birmingham review to work being conducted in the Black Country, particularly in light of the Government’s agreement to devolve a number of powers to a new Combined West Midlands Authority. These areas would include work to drive up the number and quality of apprenticeships, a common approach ultimately to meet the Combined Authority’s skills agenda. * The Board's vision for the College sees it evolving into an education group with progress for young people at its heart, having a wider role to support improvements in the educational provision.      * The College Group will have a turnover of upwards of £60m. The Board see no reason why this cannot be achieved. |  | |  | |
| **Leadership and Management** |  | **Ofsted judged (2014) ‘*the College is well-led and managed. Leaders and managers have worked hard, and successfully, to improve significantly the quality of provision, and of its estate, since the previous inspection. Teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners are now good. Student numbers have grown significantly and the College’s drive for inclusion continues to attract many students with lower than average starting points and previous attainment…* *Managers’ engagement with external stakeholders is excellent’.***   * At the start of the 2014/15 academic year, the College undertook a restructure at both senior and middle management level saving the College over one million pounds in management costs. * The restructure also provided for a management team with a sharper focus on curriculum, quality and the core business of the College. The changed management structure has had a direct impact on delivering: * A new Strategic Plan - developed by Governors, Senior Managers, Staff and students * A matrix system of management which involves all staff members across the college. Bringing interdisciplinary expertise together, for example this can be seen in the College’s improved student journey * A College with a financial notice to improve to outstanding within four years. * Careers academies that include stakeholders * Careers boards with employer engagement * Increased recruitment at the same time as improving quality and success rates * Work experience to over 1,300 students in the industry they are studying * A successful merger between the Sandwell local authority’s apprenticeship training arm (Future Skills) and the College, leading to improved Apprenticeship provision in the Borough * Concordat with the local authority on delivery at the Central Sixth Campus, including a full A level offer * A changed culture at the College to a truly outward facing institution, including schools’ partnerships. This work continues through the recent engagement by Birmingham City Council to assist in improvement within their sixth forms   **An experienced full time team make up the Senior Leadership team (SLT):**   * **Graham Pennington** – (Principal and Chief Executive) holds a BSc Hons and MSc in Economics and is a qualified accountant with over 25 years’ experience of the FE sector. He was previously Senior Vice Principal, then Deputy Chief Executive of Salford City College, one of the largest colleges in Greater Manchester and part of the leadership team that successfully undertook a three college merger in Salford to form Salford City College. Since 2013, Graham has worked with the Governors and SLT to improve quality (recognised by Ofsted in 2014 when they judged the College as good). Graham led the development of ambitious growth plans, which resulted in a 40% increase in 16-18 students in three years. He also worked with the team to ensure a sound financial base with a drive for efficiency. * **David Holden** (Vice Principal) is a qualified teacher with a degree in Economics and an MSc in Management. He has 30 years’ experience in the FE sector working in a range of colleges in a wide variety of roles; he has held senior leadership roles as Assistant Principal and then Vice Principal, so has extensive and successful experience of curriculum management and quality improvement. David was the Ofsted Nominee at the last inspection; the College achieving an improvement to Good. David also led on the recent successful merger with Future Skills, the Local Authority’s Apprenticeship arm. David is currently leading on the College’s Academy Trust programme. * **David Hawkins** (Executive Director Finance and Resources) is a CIMA-qualified accountant and has worked at the College for over seven years. David has been instrumental in improving financial management in the College. He has had significant roles in both the Central Campus new build project and conversion of the former ‘Public’ building, West Bromwich, into the College’s sixth form centre. Prior to joining Sandwell College David worked for over twenty years in the Construction sector holding senior posts at companies such as Miller Homes and Bryant Homes. Since joining the College, David has added further responsibilities, including IT provision and health and safety management. * **Matt Lamb** (Assistant Principal Sixth Form & GCSEs) was responsible for the successful set up of Central Sixth, which now has over 450 students and an increasing reputation for quality. Matt has been teaching for almost 20 years in colleges and universities and has been a manager for 12 years, successfully running both academic and vocational provision. Matt was educated at universities in Bristol, Birmingham, London, Worcester and Oxford and has a BA (Hons) in Politics and History, and several Higher Degrees including a PhD. As well as teaching, Matt is involved in politics as a local councillor, cabinet member and parliamentary candidate. * **Kirsti Lord** (Assistant Principal Curriculum) began her career as a part-time lecturer and joined the Senior Leadership Team in 2015 and is currently working with curriculum teams to set up two new Careers Academies at the College. In previous roles, Kirsti managed Creative and Performing Arts, Science and Humanities, Functional Skills and Pastoral Support systems. Before working in Further Education, Kirsti worked in a variety of settings including retail and the health sector. She is a music graduate and toured professionally in the 1990’s, she has maintained her music industry contacts. * **Ann Llewellyn** (Director of Adult Community and Foundation Learning) started at Sandwell College in the mid-1990s as a volunteer, supporting students with English and maths. Her passion for teaching English, maths and ESOL flourished and she became a full time employed literacy and ESOL specialist. Ann led the ESOL Department from being unsatisfactory’ to ‘outstanding’ in May 2014. Prior to working in FE, Ann spent 10 useful years as a Police Officer in the West Midlands Police. She has successfully developed the College’s Traineeship programme and is working on initiatives to promote community education and re-engagement with hard to reach learners. * **Kate Whiting (**Executive Director of People and Corporate Services) has a degree in Politics and developed her career firstly in HR. She is a qualified member of the CIPD, with over 12 years’ experience in the FE sector and has previously worked within local authority and NHS settings. At South & City College Birmingham she went on to become Clerk to the Governors and held the position in addition to her HR role for over six years. Kate worked on the successful merger of two large colleges, leading on both staffing and TUPE issues, in addition to governance and legal elements. Kate has responsibility for the College’s student admissions, marketing, schools liaison, HR and Apprenticeship provision. She has undertaken a fundamental business review leading to improvements in the learner journey and increased enrolments. * **Roxana Pal (**Director of Exams and Funding Data) joined Sandwell College in 2013 as Director of Funding, Information Services and Examinations and has overall responsibility for all MIS functions. She has 10 years’ experience of working in the FE sector, in various MI related functions. Prior to joining the sector, Roxana trained in modern foreign languages and worked in local government and private industry outside the UK. * **Ann Sheridan** (Director of Quality, Learner Studies and Innovation) has a Master of Arts Degree in Leadership and Management in Education and has worked in the FE sector for over 22 years. She has held a variety of roles in FE colleges from lecturer in Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy to Head of Curriculum, Head of Teacher Education and has also owned her own business. |  | |  | |
| * **Strategic Planning** | Strategic plan | * 2014 saw senior leaders and the Board develop a new vision for the future of the College which is about a wider engagement and improving educational opportunities and attainment in its learning communities. * The Vision for the College sees it evolving into an education group with progress for young people at its heart, having a wider role to support improvements in the educational provision. The College is creating a variety of routes for young people to progress into further study and employment and securing the core college within a structure with a wider remit and diversified funding envelope. Many of its students are from challenging backgrounds and have not attained well at school; over 2,000 are retaking Maths and/or English. * As part of this vision, it has completed formation of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) which will provide a through pathway for learners up to potentially completing HE courses. The College also recognises that many of its young people may wish to study locally and is expanding its Higher Education offer to meet this need. Proposals have received positive feedback from key stakeholders including the Regional Schools Commissioner. * The College’s transformation sees the separation of its work with companies and employers into organisations with potential private sector backing - aimed at blending the best of private sector expertise and practice with the College resources and infrastructure. The aim is to significantly increase numbers of Apprenticeships and enhance Apprentice provision. * Adult work for those aged over 24 is focused on skills acquisition for those returning to, or entering, the workplace. The areas covered by the College in Sandwell and West Birmingham have adult populations with low qualification levels, in many instances below Level 2. It also intends to support students from non-traditional backgrounds to take advantage of Access to HE. * The *Strategic Plan* is based on recruitment, retention and results over the next 3 years and aims: * To significantly increase the number of students who benefit from the opportunities that it offers * To be seen as the natural College of first choice for our learning communities * To continuously improve in order to provide outstanding teaching and learning, and for this to be recognised by Ofsted * To engage with stakeholders and employers and to be regarded as a trusted partner who listens, responds and delivers excellent training and education * To play a leading role in the improvement of skills and education in the communities it serves * To ensure its courses and qualifications are relevant and equip learners to successfully progress to further study or employment * To invest in its staff to ensure they have the ‘cutting edge’ skills and qualifications they need in order to give students the best possible experience of the College and outcomes from their studies * To be financially stable and solvent, so that it can invest in improvement. |  | |  | |
| **The College Curriculum** |  | ***The College attracts and welcomes a tremendously diverse student population, working very well together and with a diverse staff*…*Data shows no significant achievement gaps in the College’.* (Ofsted 2014).**   * **The Black Country LEP (BCLEP)** wants to ensure that the region has a labour market with the right levels of skills and qualifications to meet the needs of businesses from the area’s priority growth sectors. Five transformational sectors are seen as securing most economic growth because of their export potential and supply chain opportunities and five enabling sectors are seen as crucial in terms of the wider economy and quality of life in the Black Country. * There is a lack of young people qualified in **STEM** subjects to replace the ageing workforce, which links to poor careers advice and an unattractive image of the Engineering sector in schools. The replacement pool of employees suitably qualified in skilled occupations is limited with skills shortages at Levels 3/4 for Engineers and technician staff. * There are also general qualification deficits, with the workforce lacking Level 2 qualifications and managers lacking Level 4 qualifications. Management teams require more leadership skills to unlock growth export opportunities in high value markets. There has also been a general underinvestment in sectors which requires high level numeracy, IT, literacy skills and is more dependent on higher level skills.  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Black Country LEP** | **Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP** | | Transport Technologies  Environmental Technologies  Advanced Manufacturing  Building Technologies  Business Services  Healthcare  The Visitor Economy  Retail  Public Sector  Sports | Logistics  Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies  Automotive and Manufacturing  Digital and Creative and ICT  Construction  Business and Financial Services  Healthcare  Tourism and Hospitality  Food and Drink  Life and Health Sciences |  * The leading source of employment growth in the Black Country LEP area (in absolute terms) is forecast to be health and social care (+10,000), followed by construction (+4,000) and support services (+4,000). * The proportion employed in middle-ranking occupations is somewhat higher than the UK average: jobs in administrative, skilled trades and caring/leisure roles account for 36% of employment in the LEP area, compared with 32% in the UK. * In the LEP area, the occupations where (internal) skills gaps are most prominent are machine operatives and staff working in caring, leisure or other services. External skill shortages are most common for associate professional roles and skilled trades. * The College is delivering provision in both transformational and enabling LEP sectors as defined in the Black Country LEP strategy document “Made in the Black Country: Sold Around the World” and is actively seeking to bridge the skills gaps in the region. * LMI data obtained from RCU also indicates that the highest proportion of employment in the Black Country is in occupations liked to the Health and Social Care, Retail, Service industries sectors. * In terms of school leaver projections in the College’s core recruitment area, these are set to increase for the next three years. (RCU projections) * The College utilises Vector to provide it with insight into the student market, showing the College’s penetration and market share in key Priority Areas. * The College offers provision in all subject sector areas with highest numbers of students in the areas of Preparation for Life and Work; Health, Public Services and Social Care; ICT; Business Administration and Law; Engineering and Sport.      * The Chart above indicates year-on-year growth for young people, most notably in ***Health and Care*** - a key area of specialism for the College. * In order to respond better to employer need and student demand, the College has re-organised its operations, replacing Departments with Skills and Careers Academies, each of which has one or more Advisory Boards. * The new Academies align the College’s curriculum more closely with employer needs with employers encouraged to be actively involved in the operation of the College. The new Academies are also designed to assist students following academic pathways in determining appropriate career paths when they progress to higher education. * The College sees a ***general FE offer pre Level 3*** as critical to the area’s success and curriculum planning with other institutions is important for a broad-based offer to be sustainable but with an increasing focus on specialist routes (both within classroom and with employers) from Level 3 onwards. * The College has excellent internal progression rates. This has been achieved through a curriculum that offers seamless progression through qualification levels from Level 1 to HE. * ***English and Mathematics* -** Many of the students entering the College have low attainment at GCSE. The College has therefore seen a massive increase in the numbers studying either Functional Skills or GCSE. The number of starts in English functional skills has doubled in the past two years from roughly 500 students to over 1,000 with a similar increase in Maths from 800 to 1,700. The situation is even more marked, with a trebling of starts in GCSE; with English starts increasing from just over 200 to 700 and Maths increasing from a little over 100 to 500. This is from 2012 to last year. The College has invested heavily in supporting the delivery of English and maths, recruiting a number of specialists to deliver GCSE and increasing the management capacity in this area, in addition to the development of a bespoke area for the teaching of English and maths. * **Ofsted 2014 judged ‘*Leaders and managers put students first in the priorities and management of the College, and understand the challenging social and economic environment in which their students live. They promote successfully a vision and strategies to improve the prosperity and wellbeing of the College’s local communities, including employers……Apprenticeship provision meets much needed demands from employers. The College is now very much a regional Centre of Excellence for Dental Nursing and has longstanding Customer Care provision for a large national car breakdown company (the AA)’*.** |  | |  | |
| **Curriculum rationalisation/**  **specialisation** |  | * A full curriculum review was undertaken in 2012 prior to moving into the new campus. A number of subjects were removed at that time including hospitality & catering, gas & electrical engineering. The College took a view of the cost effectiveness of the delivery in those areas and the resources already on offer from other institutions. * The College continues to review its curriculum based on LMI and demand. The College is in a position of having exceptional growth in student numbers and increasing applications. As a result all courses have buoyant demand and excellent class sizes. Should this position change or there is a strategic need to adapt in any particular subject area the College is willing to review such provision. * **The College is focussed on particular critical future developments in its natural areas of specialism which has been supported by investments in teaching, learning and infrastructure:** * Employment demand in the **Healthcare sector** is growing, with numerous career paths from Caring to Clinician. Employers still report the sector as having the highest proportion of skills gaps (over 30%). * The College already has a range of qualifications and career paths including Apprenticeships. It is now the largest core curriculum area in the College and learner numbers are increasing year on year. Its Health, Care & Life Sciences Academy will build on its broad curriculum offer at Levels 1-5 delivering a range of vocational and academic health and social care qualifications; development will include working with key partners to meet emerging skills gaps including Leadership and Management around institutional change; Assistant and Advanced practitioner roles; Technology in Health Care including navigator/facilitator roles; Multi-disciplinary work; Health Skills for non-health specialists * Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust is a large employer and has plans to improve healthcare in Sandwell. It is in the process of developing a new £300m hospital in the Sandwell borough of Smethwick. The College has met with the local Trust with a view to developing a joint employment and upskilling programme. Part of the development includes potentially a seconded advisory post from the NHS into the College to assist with the next phase of development. * The Strategic Economic Plan for the Black Country identifies Business Services as a major enabling sector in supporting business growth. This can take many forms but most organisations require business infrastructure skills such as finance, human resources, marketing and legal advice. The College has a long track record in some of these areas and it is launching a major revamp, adding a portfolio of professional courses and improved progression routes for young people, enabling students to study from levels 1-5 with relevant professional qualifications embedded into Higher level curriculum. * The Digital and Creative sector is an important part of the UK economy. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including telecommunications; computer programming and consultancy; publishing; films and music; programming and broadcasting; design and photography; and creative arts and entertainment. The boundaries between digital and creative are becoming increasingly blurred and employers increasingly seek a fusion of creative and technical skills, combined with business and softer skills. * The new Talent Studio within a reconfigured Central Sixth building will contain an i-Make Centre - a centre of Digital Excellence encompassing three new industry equipped Digital studios, FabLab, DigiDesignLab and the LaunchLab and i-Create, a new Skills and Careers Academy. This will create a synthesis between Engineering, Science and Creative design (STEAM). The total project investment is estimated at £9m with a bid to the Black Country LEP for part funding. This will enable a broad offer of design, digital and engineering courses up to levels 4 and 5. |  | |  | |
| **Areas of specialisation** |  | **Current outstanding specialist areas:**   * ***Health:*** The College regards this as an outstanding curriculum area; Health is by far the biggest single curriculum area in terms of both adult and 16-18 student recruitment with 613 students enrolled across a broad range of courses. Success rates for the SSA are high, for 2014/15 the overall success rate was 89%. In addition to the classroom-based provision, the College also delivers Apprenticeships in Dental Nursing and Pharmacy, and the College’s A level provision provides a route into medicine and medical professions. Resources are good; in addition to exceptionally well equipped science labs the College has developed a simulated ward and dental lab which provide realistic working environments to better equip students for future careers. The Health department has a range of excellent industry links which provide high quality placements; in addition, the College has a jointly funded post with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust and this, together with an employer advisory board, provides up to date industry links and knowledge to ensure a relevant curriculum for all learners. * ***Motor Vehicle provision:*** When the College moved from 3 sites to 1 purpose built campus it invested heavily in resources for the provision of both motor vehicle mechanical courses and for motor vehicle body repair courses. These resources now exceed industry standard. Workshops span two levels incorporating a car lift to the second floor; the workshops are equipped with a full range of diagnostic and repair equipment in addition to state of the art paint spray booths and equipment. Staff in the area have specialist and up to date industry experience and knowledge. Success rates for the SSA are 88.5%. The College has grown 16-18 provision in this area and is now also focussing on income generation through commercial courses, notably MOT testing, ensuring that local companies are compliant with new legislation. * ***Level 2 skills with people into jobs enabled through ESOL:*** This provision was judged to be outstanding by OFSTED in 2014. ESOL has continued to offer an outstanding learning experience to 14-15 year olds, 16-18 year olds and adults, resulting in superb success rates of 90% for the 16-18 learners and 92% for the adult learners. It also has an excellent record of progressing learners into vocational areas and through levels enabling better employment prospects. The provision is also accessible to all, both in terms of when and where it is delivered; delivery takes place at a number of community venues such as faith organisations, primary schools, Sure Start and voluntary organisations. Start times are also flexible with courses available in the morning, afternoon and evening. * **Programmes for the unemployed:** The College works in partnership and collaboration with employers, JCP and DWP to inform the delivery of programmes that lead directly into employment. Sector Based Work Academies (SBWA) are designed by employers with job vacancies, and the curriculum team to develop and promote learning opportunities that lead directly into employment. All learners completing the SBWA are guaranteed an interview. Current SBWA are being offered in conjunction with Tesco, McDonalds, West Bromwich Building Society, BT, together with several other SMEs. * **A levels:** Central Sixth was established in 2012 following extensive research into the A Level offer made by other institutions in the area. There was clearly a need in Sandwell for a traditional academic offer in a college environment. An initial offer of 25 subjects across the broad range of academic subjects was offered. This offer was successful in recruiting more than 1,200 applications. The curriculum offer is being continuously reviewed based on the number of applications made, local skill requirements, national priorities and suggestions made at open events. STEM subjects are a particular government priority and the sixth form offers the full range of STEM subjects to learners. * Central Sixth offers students a choice of either three full A Levels or four if they have a particularly strong GCSE profile. The vast majority of sixth form students do three full A Levels which contrasts with other establishments in the area who combine A Levels with vocational qualifications. For example in 2014-15 89% of Central Sixth students achieved at least three full A Levels. This compares with 78.7% across England and only 67.4% in Sandwell. This is important as it gives students a better opportunity to access a wider range of higher education provision including more prestigious universities. Skills success rates are also good in both English and maths at 95% in 2014-15. In addition to their study programme, learners engage in voluntary work placements, travel training, independent living skills, art, social enterprise, sports, Disability Football Academy, and horticulture. The extensive range of enrichment opportunities includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award, residential experiences, educational trips and visits, inter-departmental activities, community engagement projects and vocational tasters. A key part of the programme is to increase learners’ independence; this is supported through a fully equipped flat which is extremely effective in developing learners’ every day living skills. * **Engineering:** manufacturing remains twice as important in the Black Country compared to nationally, accounting for 12% of total businesses against 6% nationally. The Black Country is a key components provider to the overall Midlands Aerospace cluster ‐ which is itself equivalent to 3% of Global output. Currently GVA per resident in the Black Country is £5,467 below the UK average and unchanged could eradicate £6.2bn of potential output by 2030.Engineering has been a rapidly growing area at the College, with enrolments increasing by 38% between 2013/14 and 2015/16.  In 2015/16 there were 164 starts on Level 3 specialist engineering courses and 62 starts on Level 2.  Success rates in the area have increased from 85.9% in 2012/13 to 88.5% in 2014/15.  The area is well resourced with a number of lathes, milling machines and CNC machines in addition to 25 seats of Seimans CAD software, which has been sponsored by TRAC tooling (Chromalloy Group, specialising in Commercial Aviation).  The resources available to deliver engineering have been enhanced by the 2015 launch of the Fablab, which is also increasing engagement with industry. The Fablab is a design and prototyping facility based on the Michigan Institute of Technology model of International Fabrication Laboratories. The lab offers extensive enhancement to curriculum; for example; engineering, computing and art and design students utilising the 3D printing, laser cutting and shopbot facilities to design and create original products for enterprise purposes and access to live briefs from industry. The facility offers expertise and resources to local businesses to provide design solutions and create prototypes in a cost effect way. It is also open to the public for small scale projects, offering additional opportunities for community engagement and volunteering opportunities for students.   **The College considers its partnership working to be an outstanding feature of its corporate and social responsibility in the community:**   * ***Local Authority and student* support:** The College has excellent joint working relationships with the Local Authority which are effective in supporting learners. The Vice Principal sits on a number of Authority boards including the Safeguarding board, the Prevent board, the Troubled Families board and the Corporate Parenting board. These links have enabled the College to ensure a full inter agency approach to Safeguarding and targeted pastoral support for vulnerable learners. These relationships have directly informed the College’s Safeguarding and Prevent policies and procedures. * ***NEETs:*** The College has been highly effective in supporting the drive to reduce NEET’s in Sandwell. Although Sandwell is one of the most deprived Boroughs in the country it also has one of the lowest levels of young people classified as being NEET (3.2%). The College sits on the Raising Participation Age Board; this is chaired by the Councillor responsible for education and it monitors and implements actions to reduce young people in this category. The College has changed its delivery model for 16-18 provision in response to this problem by introducing 3 different start points for courses throughout the academic year. Students can start courses in September, January and for short courses at Easter. In addition, Traineeships have recently been introduced and start points for these are even more flexible, allowing students to begin studying at the beginning of any month. * The College also delivers programmes for young people in danger of becoming NEET; What Next programmes are specifically aimed at young people that were disengaged at school. It caters for a range of students including those that didn’t attend school and those that attended Pupil Referral Units. Provision is both flexible and provides students with early success, which increases confidence. This provision is delivered at a range of levels with a focus on English, maths and employability skills at its core. * ***School links:*** The College offers 14-16 vocational provision in all curriculum areas as an addition to local schools curriculum; in addition it offers ESOL provision to this age group on a more substantial basis. Although small, this curriculum area is growing as schools use vocational provision as an incentive for children to work hard on subjects included in Progress 8. * Led by a member of the College’s senior management team, the school links team have been very effective in building links with schools in Sandwell, the Black Country and Birmingham. Taster days are delivered to a range of school year groups and this, together with highly effective advice and guidance, has been successful in improving the transition of children from school to college. * Supported by the Local Authority and encouraged by the Regional Schools Commissioner, the College is in the process of becoming an Academy sponsor and intends to develop a Multi Academy Trust; it has a Governing Board and resources needed to make a real difference to the quality of education in the Borough. |  | |  | |
| **High needs provision** |  | * This year has seen a significant increase in the number of High Needs students; originally funded for 32, the College recruited 50 HNS. * All High Needs provision is funded through the EFA. The majority of learners are from the Sandwell Borough. **It is anticipated that this number will continue to grow in 2016/17** and the College is in discussions with the Local Authority to commission additional high needs numbers. * The College delivers both SLDD and MLDD programmes which have outstanding and sustained success rates (95.5% in 2014-15 and 95% in 2013-14). * Functional skills improved in both English and Maths from 93% in 2013-14 to 95% in 2014-15. * Study programmes offer a comprehensive range of learning experiences including English and maths, PSD and Employability programmes. In addition students engage in voluntary work placements, travel training, independent living skills, art, social enterprise, sports, Disability Football Academy, and horticulture. * The extensive range of enrichment opportunities includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award, residential experiences, educational trips and visits, inter-departmental activities, community engagement projects and vocational tasters. Students are fully integrated into College life. This diverse study programme ensures students gain confidence in their everyday lives and prepares them for independence and work. * **The College intends to grow and develop this area to support students with moderate to severe learning difficulties going forward from currently 50 to 62 learners.** |  | |  | |
| **Class sizes** |  | * Average Class size is 20. Nb the VAS College Based category (9) relates to LLDD/ High Needs provision.   C:\Users\341830\AppData\Local\Temp\XPgrpwise\56F2B5E9SC-DOMGWSTAFF-PO100175683913114C1\IMAGE.png |  | |  | |
| **The Quality of Provision** |  | * The College was inspected in May 2014 and was graded good across all aspects with many outstanding features. * Motor Vehicle, Health and Social Care, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, Foundation Learning and Business Management were all judged good. ESOL provision was judged outstanding * **Ofsted inspectors confirmed that ‘*the College* *is well led and managed in the best interests of students, noting that leaders and managers have excellent engagement with external partners and their ambitious vision enables them to meet the diverse needs of its local communities which effectively promote economic and social regeneration’.*** * The Ofsted inspection report also highlighted that * *The majority of students made good progress, and that success rates have improved year on year.* * *Progression between different levels of study and from College into higher education, employment or further study is very good.* * *Teaching and learning are good or outstanding.* * *High levels of support ensure that students achieve, despite the wide range of barriers to learning they face.* * *Leaders and managers have excellent engagement with external partners and their ambitious vision enables them to meet the diverse needs of its local communities which effectively promote economic and social regeneration.* * **Quality Assurance -** Ofsted judged that *‘comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance, with course review and self-assessment at its heart, drives up performance. A well-conceived annual cycle for improvement, for staff, governors and students, policed by the Head of Quality and improvement, results in sensible improvement actions. Continuous review and moderation, with rigorous and realistic target setting, helps make the process meaningful to teachers and managers. …..Self-assessment of the college’s strengths and weaknesses, and improvement planning, are robust. Students’ views are collected, and used well, to contribute to judgements. Teaching, learning and assessment have improved through the college’s reliable, and developmental, observation process. Since the previous inspection, the college has continued to develop the range and scope of its curriculum, but with the quality of what it does firmly in mind. Senior leaders actively pursue the theme of employability’.* * **The College’s Self-Assessment Report 2014/15 (SAR)** identifies key strengths and judges itself as being good overall. It highlights that the Senior Leadership Team continues to be ambitious and is driving the College towards outstanding. * In order to do this the College’s Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) focusses on key areas for improvement. * **Key Strengths** * Overall success rates have improved and exceed national averages. * Teaching, learning and assessment are good * Clear strategic vision is provided by senior leaders * Governance is strong * Outstanding learning resources and accommodation enable students to achieve * Accurate robust lesson observation process is linked closely to performance * Accurate, comprehensive and rigorous self-assessment is informed by the views of students and employers and has driven up performance * The promotion of equality and diversity and the safety of students is paramount * **Focused areas for further improvement** * Value added needs to improve still further for Level 3 students * English and maths results require further improvement. * Increase the proportion of teaching, learning and assessment that is outstanding * Ensure all students have the opportunity to do work experience. |  | |  | |
| **Teaching and Learning** |  | **Teaching and learning observation process*:***   * The College has a comprehensive and robust observation process. All teaching staff and training assessors are observed 4 times within an academic year (1 formal classroom observation and 3 compulsory peer observations); together with a mentoring process and learning focussed staff development. This has had a real impact in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the College. In addition to the teaching and learning lesson observations, Lead Reviewers also assess the quality of the following: * Samples of students’ marked work to assess the effectiveness of feedback provided by tutors in supporting students to improve their knowledge, understanding and essential employability skills, including the marking of English and maths. * How e-Tracker and targets set were helping students to improve and progress. * The virtual learning environment and its ability to provide interactive resources which helped students to progress. * Meet with a group of students to gain feedback on their experience with regard to their course work and the College. * ***The current observation profile*** judges **91% good or better** teaching, learning and assessment. A minority of lessons (8%) require improvement and just 1% are inadequate. During the academic year 2014-2015, 4 members of staff left the College through the quality performance improvement capability process. * **Key strengths** * 91% of teaching, learning and assessment is good or better. * Teaching, learning and assessment are predominantly good, with many examples of outstanding teaching. * Majority of students make good progress compared with their starting points. * Expectations of students are high which results in the majority being challenged which enable students to extend their knowledge skills and understanding. * Early assessment is effective; this provides teachers with results of initial assessment to plan and develop individual students’ and group profiles. This also supports effective lesson planning and study programmes. * English and maths are effectively integrated into classroom vocational delivery * Technology and practical demonstrations are used well in the most effective lessons to illustrate topics and include the imaginative use of the College’s virtual learning environment. * Support for students, particularly those with additional learning needs, is effective in helping them to achieve their goals. * The College provides effective and timely information, advice and guidance which supports students throughout their learner journey. * The College provides an inclusive, welcoming and harmonious atmosphere in which equality and diversity are fully integrated and where students feel secure and have a good rapport with staff. * The College provides an outstanding environment for learning, with excellent resources. * The majority of teachers set effective student targets to support improvement and progression. * Following observation inspection weeks, Lead Reviewers present all findings to the Vice Principal, Assistant Principals, Director of Quality, Student Studies & Services and the Curriculum Assistant Directors; in addition a presentation is made to the Department Curriculum Teams. This is followed by a Curriculum Summary Report which highlights the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and a department’s key strengths and areas for improvement. Key areas for improvement are addressed through quality improvement plans (QIP). * The College also provides a **mentoring programme** to support teachers and assessors who are judged as ‘requires improvement’ (3) or ‘inadequate’ (4) to help improve their teaching, learning and assessment skills to a grade of ‘good’ (2) or ‘outstanding’ (1). Furthermore, where staff obtain a grade of ‘requires improvement’ (3) or ‘inadequate’ (4) the Quality Performance Management (capability) process is triggered. * In addition to the mentoring support scheme, cross College training and updates are delivered throughout the academic year. These are identified through summary department reports, learning walks and quality audits. * ***Moderation process****:* Moderation to the process is carried out both internally and externally. The College appointed FE Associates (April 2015) to validate the current Observation Process. FE Associates commented that ‘*arrangements for observation, reviewing and mentoring were very well organised with a rigorous observation scheme, made up of a small observation team working as a tightly-knit consistent unit’*. All Joint Lesson Observations (JLOs) carried out with FE Associates were judged accurate. * ***Teaching and learning resources***are outstanding and provide students with an exceptional experience to the highest industry standards in the main Central Campus and Central Sixth: * Health and Social Care benefit from a simulated ward which enables students to experience what it is like to work in a hospital ward. * The Motor Vehicle curriculum provides both vehicle body and car maintenance provision in a suite of workshops that exceed industry standards. * There is a range of Hairdressing and Beauty Salons including a graduate salon for our higher level students. The graduate salon is run as a business and provides students with realistic employment experience. * The College has a well-equipped indoor Sports hall capable of hosting a range of activities including basketball and badminton. These excellent facilities are also suitable for use by external bodies. * Travel and Tourism have their own Air Craft Cabin which is a replica of a real cabin. This enables the College to deliver additional qualifications relating to the Tourism industry. * Photography students benefit from exceptional studio space, dark room and Apple room for editing. * Performing Arts is a developing area in the College and the Senior Leadership Team has invested heavily in dance studios and a theatre equipped to industry standards. * At both Central Campus and Central Sixth, there are brand new Science labs enabling the delivery of academic and vocational science-based subjects. The Central Sixth campus also benefits from a FAB LAB which supports prototyping of new innovative products designed by both our students and the public. |  | |  | |
| **Retention, achievement and success rates** |  | * **There is an improving trend in success rates** (including maths and English, with the substantial increase in delivery in 2014/15) increasing from 85% in 2013/14 to **86.1% in 2014/15, above the national rate of 84% and in the high quartile for general further education colleges**. When English and maths are excluded the   College’s overall success rates improved from 86.3% in 2013-14 to 88.8% in 2014/15.  **The table below shows the college success rates for 2014/15. The college success rates for 16yr to 18yrs including English and maths is 85%, 7% above the national average of 78.4%.**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Age** | **College Success Rates**  **All Aims** | **National Average including English & maths** | **College success rates Without English and maths** | | 16-18 | 85.0% | 78.4% | 88% | | 19+ | 87.8% | 86.4% | 89% | | All ages | 86.1% |  | 88% |      * **A level success:** has been maintained at 97%, with a significant increase in success at AS level by 7% to 80% in 2014/15, both 3-4% above the National Average for GFE. Vocational success has increased by 2.2% since 2013/14 and is now at 88.1%   **Headline Success Rates by SSA**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | * **HEADLINE SUCCESS RATES by SSA (All ages with and without E&M)** | |  |  | | **SSA** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | | 01 - Health, Public Services and Care | 84.9% | 91.4% | 88.9% | | *02 - Science and Mathematics (incl E&M)* | *66.8%* | *74.9%* | *82.3%* | | *02 - Science and Mathematics (Excl E&M)* | *60.7%* | *71.3%* | *83.4%* | | 04 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 85.9% | 83.0% | 88.5% | | 05 - Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 83.6% | 81.4% | 85.3% | | 06 - Information and Communication Technology | 74.8% | 84.5% | 88.4% | | 07 - Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 93.6% | 91.4% | 88.5% | | 08 - Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 86.4% | 90.6% | 91.0% | | 09 - Arts, Media and Publishing | 81.2% | 82.6% | 85.2% | | 10 - History, Philosophy and Theology | 37.1% | 80.6% | 89.4% | | 11 - Social Sciences | 57.1% | 84.9% | 80.5% | | *12 - Languages, Literature and Culture (Incl E&M)* | *87.2%* | *86.4%* | *85.3%* | | *12 - Languages, Literature and Culture (Excl E&M)* | *86.7%* | *82.9%* | *90.3%* | | 13 - Education and Training | 82.8% | 81.9% | 90.6% | | *14 - Preparation for Life and Work (Incl E&M)* | *83.1%* | *82.9%* | *84.9%* | | *14 - Preparation for Life and Work (Excl E&M)* | *88.9%* | *86.5%* | *90.6%* | | 15 - Business, Administration and Law | 87.3% | 83.0% | 88.0% | | X - Not Applicable |  | 98.6% | 98.1% | | Grand Total (Incl E&M) | 83.5% | 85.0% | 86.1% | | Grand Total (Excl E&M) | 85.0% | 86.3% | 88.8% |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | * **Headline Success Rates by Age and SSA - inclusive of E&M** | | | | | | **Sector\_Subject\_Area\_Tier\_1** | **2012/13** | **2013/14** | **2014/15** | | 01 - Health, Public Services and Care | 84.8% | 87.3% | 90.6% | | 02 - Science and Mathematics | 61.5% | 71.2% | 82.2% | | 04 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 83.0% | 87.0% | 90.5% | | 05 - Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 85.7% | 82.2% | 87.2% | | 06 - Information and Communication Technology | 77.7% | 85.4% | 86.7% | | 07 - Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 88.0% | 87.5% | 89.5% | | 08 - Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 85.0% | 92.6% | 90.1% | | 09 - Arts, Media and Publishing | 81.6% | 85.7% | 86.9% | | 10 - History, Philosophy and Theology | 37.1% | 80.6% | 89.4% | | 11 - Social Sciences | 62.3% | 85.3% | 80.4% | | 12 - Languages, Literature and Culture | 92.7% | 91.8% | 85.3% | | 13 - Education and Training | 100.0% | 55.6% | 100.0% | | 14 - Preparation for Life and Work | 82.7% | 84.9% | 81.1% | | 15 - Business, Administration and Law | 88.4% | 82.3% | 83.4% | | X - Not Applicable |  | 97.1% | 100.0% | |  | **82.2%** | **84.9%** | **85.0%** |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Age grp** | **Sector\_Subject\_Area\_Tier\_1** | **2012/13** | **2013/14** | **2014/15** | | **19+** | 01 - Health, Public Services and Care | 85.3% | 94.2% | 85.7% | |  | 02 - Science and Mathematics | 83.8% | 89.7% | 82.9% | |  | 04 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies | 89.6% | 75.1% | 78.8% | |  | 05 - Construction, Planning and the Built Environment | 80.1% | 79.1% | 76.0% | |  | 06 - Information and Communication Technology | 70.9% | 83.4% | 89.8% | |  | 07 - Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 95.6% | 92.6% | 87.8% | |  | 08 - Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 97.1% | 74.3% | 98.1% | |  | 09 - Arts, Media and Publishing | 79.6% | 64.9% | 67.6% | |  | 11 - Social Sciences | 0.0% | 50.0% | 100.0% | |  | 12 - Languages, Literature and Culture | 84.9% | 77.7% | 85.3% | |  | 13 - Education and Training | 82.5% | 84.4% | 90.3% | |  | 14 - Preparation for Life and Work | 83.6% | 81.8% | 88.4% | |  | 15 - Business, Administration and Law | 85.0% | 85.6% | 93.8% | |  | X - Not Applicable |  | 100.0% | 92.9% | | **19+ Total** |  | **85.3%** | **85.2%** | **87.8%** | | **Grand Total** |  | **83.5%** | **85.0%** | **86.1%** |  * **Apprenticeship success rates:** success rates overall were 77.2% in 2014/15 – well above the National Average of 70% * **Maths and English**: the College is above national averages in both age groups, which is 64.3% (16-18) and 71.2% (19+) in Functional Skills and 84% (16-18) and 79.9% (19+) in GCSE maths and English. * The proportion of high grades A\*-C at GCSE are at the national rates.  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **16-18** | | | |  | **2012/13** | **2013/14** | **2014/15** | | Functional Skills SFL | 69.9% | 82.6% | 76.0% | | GCSEs Maths and English | 89.0% | 90.3% | 81.8% |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **19+** | | | |  | **2012/13** | **2013/14** | **2014/15** | | Functional Skills SFL | 75.5% | 74.1% | 77.0% | | GCSEs Maths and English | 84.2% | 86.7% | 85.0% | |  | |  | |
| **HR** |  |  |  |  | |
| **Staff Contracts** |  | * The College's contract for teaching staff is based on the framework recommended by the AoC. The working week is based on a notional 37 hours, with 850 hours allocated to teaching duties; this comprises 800 direct contact teaching hours plus 50 hours which are allocated to cover tutorial work, provision of advice and guidance to learners and other associated tasks. The contracts allow the College to maintain some flexibility in its delivery as annual leave arrangements for teaching staff contain a provision for some working during college holiday periods along with a requirement for weekend working where required. * Assessor staff are on a teaching support contract which ensures flexibility and responsiveness of staff who are delivering on work based or commercial provision. There are no set holidays which facilitates roll on roll off delivery to meet employer demand. Assessor caseloads are set at an average of 40 learners. Where Assessors are also undertaking a substantial amount of subject delivery the caseload requirement decreases to 30 learners to take account of this. * Business Support staff contracts are based on a 37 hour per week contract with flexibility around annual leave and working pattern. * For the academic year 2014/15 the average staff utilisation stood at 92%; for 2015/16 YTD, utilisation stands at 94%. Utilisation continues to be monitored for the remainder of the year. |  |  | |
| **Actual and forecast staff numbers (FTE and Headcount) by curriculum and non-curriculum area 15/16 16/17 17/18** |  | * The College operates with an efficient staffing structure; over 75% of the staffing resource is deployed in areas which are teaching or direct teaching support. Support staff constitute 23% of all staffing; this comprises all support areas, including catering, security, MIS, HR, marketing and estates staff. * There are small increases forecast over the next two years in areas where the College anticipates further growth in its learner numbers |  |  | |
| Employed hours per teaching hour |  | * 362 *FTE staff* there are 13,394 employed hours per week available * 200 *FTE teaching* staff there are 4,600 teaching hours per week * This gives a ratio of 2.91, i.e for every 1 direct teaching hour there are 2.91 employed hours per week |  |  | |
| Staff/Student ratio 12/13 13/14 14/15 |  | * 12/13 190.5 FTE / 3,797 total FTE students = 0.050 * 13/14 194.7 FTE / 4,006 total FTE students = 0.049 * 14/15 196.2 FTE / 4,442 total FTE students = 0.044 |  |  | |
| **The College’s overall financial position** |  | * **The College’s overall strategy is focussed on Growth, Improvement and Solvency.** * **It has been successful in executing a deliberate growth strategy focusing on the needs of customers and increasing the service and support they require to engage with and better understand the college and its facilities, including:** * **Reengineering the customer journey** * **Dedicated schools’ liaison supported by new taster days with schools.** * **Tracking of students through deployment and analysis of improved student management information** * **Systematic interview and application chase-up processes** * **Rolling recruitment** * **Increased number of open days** * **Within the College the strategy has been to deliver a trend of increasing group sizes within very tight staffing controls. The increase in student numbers has not resulted in the need for a noticeable increase in staff.**      * **The tables below represent a systematic and dramatic change in the College finances. There is a clear trend and continued evidence for growing numbers housed within new buildings that require very limited further upkeep and capital expenditure.** * **The risk of the College being unable to meeting future plans is incredibly low. The College remains very mindful of changes within the sector and its strategy of increasing cash is to guard in the main against future fluctuations** * **To date the 15/16 figures are no longer a forecast but a reflection of known income and expenditure for the year.** * The College data is compared to the FE Commissioner target range below:      * The 2015/16 includes £1.2 million in year funding by the EFA in part payment of the c600 additional 16-18 students recruited in 2015/16. The position in 2016/17 will improve further as the college receives full funding for these students. * The College income in 2015/16 is above the median college in 2015/16      * The operating surplus already at the target range improves to 6% in 2015/16 as the College is partially funded for the delivery of c600 16-18 Students * Borrowing as a percentage of income falls from 35% in 2014/15 to 29% in 2015/16 as income increases and borrowings are repaid * Cash days in hand below the target range in 2014/15 increases to 36 cash days in hand in 2015/16. The College has invested significantly in estate in recent years and its capital investment need going forward is minimal. Cash generation will therefore be high * The Current ratio increases to 1.3 in 2015/16 * Staff costs as a percentage of income are already within the range and fall from 63% in 2014/15 to 61% in 2015/16 * The full effect of the EFA lagged funding in 2016/17 improves the financial position further and ensures the College’s financial sustainability |  |  | |
| Operating surplus/deficit 12/13 13/14 14/15 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **12/13** | **13/14** | **14/15** | | Operating Surplus £000 Finance Record | 551 | (666) | 533 | | Depreciation/ capital grant release | 1,006 | 981 | 979 | | FRS17 | 171 | 87 | (105) | | Performance Operating Surplus £(000) | 1,728 | 402 | 1,407 |  * The College has been delivering its strategy of growth from 2012-13. The lagged funding methodology has not assisted during this period particularly in 2013-14 when there was significant over delivery of 16-18 targets as well as meeting the Government agenda on adult provision. During this period the College’s financial health rating has improved to ‘good’ |  |  | |
| Forecast operating surplus/deficit 15/16 16/17 17/18 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **15/16** | **16/17** | **17/18** | | Operating Surplus £000 Finance Forecast | 1,452 | 2,052 | 2,558 | | Depreciation/ capital grant release | 1,024 | 1,033 | 1,033 | | Performance Operating Surplus £(000) | 2,476 | 3,085 | 3,591 |  * Operating profit margin for 2015-16 is 6.2% and reflects the forecast outturn as presented in the February 2016 management accounts. This figure will be achieved particularly as the College has been partially funded for an additional circa 600 16-18 learner numbers. As these students are already being taught the majority of this drops to the bottom line giving a surplus of £1.45m. * 2016-17 funding body allocations have been received and included in the revised financial plan. As this now reflects the full funding of the growth achieved this increases the surplus. The College continues to grow and this coupled with tight control of operating cost means that margins can be improved in future years |  |  | |
| Staff costs as a percentage of turnover 12/13 13/14 14/15 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **12/13** | **13/14** | **14/15** | | Staff costs as a % of turnover £(000) | 65 | 71 | 63 |  * The College undertook major restructuring of senior management in 2014/15 to reduce costs based upon a survey and benchmarking of the best operating models in the sector. The College also had to provide some additional staff for an increase in Students in 2013/14 which were not funded until 2014/15 but in the main additional volumes have been dealt with through increased staff efficiency and increased group sizes |  |  | |
| Forecast staff costs as a percentage of turnover 15/16 16/17 17/18 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **15/16** | **16/17** | **17/18** | | Staff costs as a % of turnover £(000) | 61 | 60 | 59 |  * The College has built in increases in NI/Superannuation and incremental drift into the projections. The pay as a percentage of income is maintained at below 60% by the increases in funding in 2016/17 due to the additional 16-18 year old funding |  |  | |
| Non Staff costs as a percentage of turnover 12/13 13/14 14/15 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **12/13** | **13/14** | **14/15** | | Non Staff costs as a % of turnover £(000) | 23.7 | 24.4 | 27.4 |  * The increase in non-pay in 2013/14 relates to the College taking over the Public building as a sixth form centre |  |  | |
| Forecast non staff costs as a percentage of turnover 15/16 16/17 17/18 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **15/16** | **16/17** | **17/18** | | Non Staff costs as a % of turnover £(000) | 29.1 | 28.4 | 27.8 |  * Non pay costs are largely stable during this period; however, income is increasing which reduces non staff costs as a percentage of income |  |  | |
| Borrowing as a percentage of turnover 12/13 13/14 14/15 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **12/13** | **13/14** | **14/15** | | Borrowing % of turnover £(000) | 41.4 | 41.7 | 34.9 | |  |  | |
| Forecast borrowing as a percentage of turnover 15/16 16/17 17/18 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **15/16** | **16/17** | **17/18** | | Borrowing % of turnover £(000) | 28.7 | 23.1 | 20.2 |  * Borrowings as a percentage of income continues to fall as the College repays debt and income rises. |  |  | |
| Analysis of sources of income 12/13 13/14 14/15 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | £(000) | **12/13** | **13/14** | **14/15** | | EFA | 11,534 | 10,744 | 12,563 | | SFA | 6,267 | 5,668 | 6,016 | | HE | 271 | 174 | 391 | | Other | 744 | 1,476 | 1,600 | | Income | 18,816 | 18,062 | 20,570 | | Deferred Capital Grant | 1,684 | 1,739 | 1,698 | | Total Income | 20,500 | 19,791 | 22,268 |  * Growth in 16 to 18 learner numbers reflected in improved EFA income. An increase in adult income allocation reflected in an improved 2014-15 position. Introduction of loans in 2013-14 improved the other income in addition to Local Authority contributions towards partnership outputs at the Central Sixth building. * The College has been adversely affected by changes that have impacted on areas of disadvantage. It had £500k of ESOL provision removed with no consultation by the SFA despite the need and the delivery of the programmes. It has also experienced cuts to disadvantage funding despite being the second most deprived area in the country. |  |  | |
| Analysis of sources of forecast income 15/16 16/17 17/18 |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | £(000) | **15/16** | **16/17** | **17/18** | | EFA | 15,219 | 16,512 | 17,916 | | SFA | 6,049 | 7,754 | 7,808 | | HE | 438 | 610 | 833 | | Other | 1,845 | 2,498 | 2,647 | | Income | 23,551 | 27,374 | 29,204 | | Deferred Capital Grant | 1,693 | 1,691 | 1,691 | | Total Income | 25,244 | 29,065 | 30,895 |  * Continued growth continues in 16-18 learners * SFA numbers increase due to taking over Local Authority adult provision, apprentice numbers increase and single adult budget reporting * Increase in the HE offer resulting in higher fee income * Other income increase mainly due to increase in high needs provision paid by Local Authority |  |  | |
| Opportunities for cost reductions |  | * The College has formed a Multi Academy Trust and will achieve economies of scale through the group structure through shared corporate/back office functions financed by the academy trust and not directly by the College as is the case now. * For example, the Principal will also be CEO of the Trust which will require 2 days’ charged support to fulfil that function. The post of Director of Schools will be a shared function with the Vice Principal of the College. * This shared services will offset college expenditure from shared leadership of c150k. * The College is in discussion regarding a merger/acquisition of a private training provider which will also achieve similar economies of scale. The turnover of the partner is c£15m as the Trust and will reduce assessor/delivery costs by utilising the lower-cost contractual terms and conditions held within the private training provider sector * The College has established a business efficiency group set up to review possibilities of cost reduction, initially this has focused upon: * Non-teaching staff conducting tutorials * Online learning * Better use of VLE * The group is committed to continuing the reengineering of staff to best meet business needs and has a target to deliver a further 1% reduction in staff costs. |  |  | |
| Cash flow |  | * An improving cashflow and debt picture, with no medium to long-term issues  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Year end | |  | £000 | | 2015/16 | 2,303 | | 2016/17 | 4,452 | | 2017/18 | 7,065 |  * The College starts to generate cash at a significant level due to the income growth for being funded for extra 16 to 19-year old learners whilst controlling staffing costs and increasing group sizes.  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **2012/13** | **2013/14** | **2014/15** | | Cash from Operating activities | 1269 | 377 | 2074 | | Net Capex | 240 | (788) | (717) | | Asset sale |  | 963 |  | | Grant receipt new build | 708 | (10) |  | | New Loans | 2900 |  |  | | Investments | 708 |  |  | | Repayment of Loans | (5120) | (245) | (362) | | Debt Servicing | (368) | (379) | (400) | |  |  |  |  | | **Increase/(decrease) in cash** | 337 | (82) | 595 | |  |  | |
| The College’s relationship with its bank(s) |  | * The College enjoys a good relationship with Lloyds Bank. * Lloyds were very supportive through the construction of the new Central Campus which opened in 2012. This support involved a £38m revolving credit facility with a term out loan of £5m. An additional facility with a current capital balance of £2.2m is the only other bank debt. * Regular meetings between the area relationship manager and the College take place to review current performance, covenants and any future requirements. |  |  | |
| Financial Management and Control |  | * The College received clear audit opinion from its external auditors for its 2014/15 annual accounts. * The Internal auditors concluded that reliance could be placed on the College’s internal controls and systems for 2014/15 |  |  | |
| **The College Estate** |  | * The College operated from campuses in Oldbury, Smethwick and West Bromwich; approval and capital funding for a new college located in West Bromwich was received in August 2009, building started in October 2009 and completed in January 2012. * The new capital build (‘Central Campus’) opened to the public in March 2012 at a total cost of £77.3m. At this point all provision ceased at the former 3 campuses. * The former ‘Public’ arts building in West Bromwich has been converted to become Central Sixth - the sixth form campus for Sandwell College with space for future College expansion. * The ‘Public’ was run as a community arts centre and business space from 2008 to November 2013 by Sandwell Arts Trust. In December 2013, Sandwell Council agreed a formal 25 year partnership with Sandwell College to provide a long-term, financially viable future for the building. The terms of usage are favourable to the College, and the cost of conversion was incurred by the local authority. This campus sits as an anchor in a part of West Bromwich undergoing significant local authority lead regeneration. * ‘Central Sixth’ also contains the College’s Higher Education Centre. The space will allow for an extension in the offer of higher level qualifications including: Higher National Certificates, Higher National Diplomas and Foundation Degrees. This development will also link with the College’s Young Professionals Academy by offering professional level courses. Higher Education Partners are being considered for co-location in support of HE expansion. * In September 2015 the College merged the Local Authority’s ‘Future Skills’ apprentice provision into the College. A short term lease was taken out on the existing building where Future skills activities took place. This lease expired at the end of February 2016 with all provision brought into Central Campus with resulting savings. |  |  | |
| **IT systems** |  | * The college possesses a resilient and robust network and server infrastructure. Key drivers in the development of all services are security and availability, always balanced with value for money. * The network is built on Enterprise class components, to ensure longevity and functionality. The network has been designed to minimise downtime in the event that a network component should fail. This has been extended to the college's Internet connections. Wireless connectivity is available for staff, students and visitors; the college has also implemented EDUROAM access. * The college's server and storage infrastructure consists of enterprise components and the extensive use of virtualisation technology, which has resilience at its core. * The college has a long history of using cloud based technologies and is constantly assessing the platforms it uses to ensure maximum flexibility and control are maintained in the most cost effective way. * A multi-layered approach to security has been adopted to ensure data security and to safeguard users. This includes the use of firewalls, email & web filtering, network access control and endpoint protection. * The adoption of open source technologies has enabled the college to maximise spending. The college's telephony system is one example where adopting an open source solution has enabled considerable savings to be gained. * The College has used its MIS system EBS, for over 10 years through which the College is able to create complex reports and dashboards which are available to managers. Students can apply online for courses, increasing the conversion rate. Other administrative efficiencies have been achieved, such as automation of alerts for students at risk of withdrawal, automation of the communication with students during the application process, pre-populated learning agreements that save time during enrolment and several other efficiencies. * For curriculum planning, the College uses 4Cast in conjunction with internal analysis of outputs. The tool uses the latest version of LARS and the EFA’s Section 96 list of approved qualifications to ensure only valid qualifications can be planned for. Systems can accommodate and calculate funding for all types of provision from EFA study programmes to Advanced Learning Loans, as well as full cost, HE and international provision, supporting the diverse curriculum of the College. Curriculum teams can also add in costs for staff, exams, trips and any other significant cost. The system can calculate the overall contribution of a programme and for an entire cost centre. It can also provide estimated teaching hour costs from the curriculum that have been planned, which can be used to inform budget setting. * The IT infrastructure of the College consists of six physical servers which host eighty virtualised servers and several more standalone physical servers. Almost all servers in the College are run as virtual servers. Campuses are connected with fibre optic connections. Sites have full Wi-Fi coverage. * The College has a rolling capital plan to replace IT equipment, as part of the considerations to increasing IT usage for teaching and learning. The College also has approximately 1100 workstations around the campuses. In the summer of 2015 the College trialled the use of Thin Client technology to reduce the requirement to continually purchase large numbers of workstations each year. |  |  | |
| **Employer Engagement** |  | **Business Development Employer Engagement**  In the national surveys employers expressed a high level of satisfaction, with our average rating being 8.7 out of 10.   * Significant growth is planned for apprenticeship and commercial provision over the next 12 months and a clear focus to ensure that Sandwell College is the provider of choice for local employers for their apprenticeship delivery. To this end we have increased the number of employer engagement advisers within the department and have established excellent working relationships with Sandwell Council’s employer engagement teams to ensure a co-ordinated approach and appropriate referrals. * Through the merger with Future Skills this has given us a great opportunity for cross organisational working, and to ensure that the teams are working together effectively (workshops with all employer facing staff with service level agreements and “kit bag” of services discussed). We now ensure that any employer engagement activity and requirement for support can be facilitated and delivered by either the College or the Council, giving a much more “joined up” approach for local employers. * Closer working with Sandwell Council will allow us to develop the public sector offer with significant and relevant intelligence. * Working with senior managers within Sandwell Council has also given us the opportunity to build relationships and joint working to support their projects, for example the use of Business Information Modelling (BIM) and how local employers can access the technology. We are also supporting the council in identifying the skills requirements for local people involved in building the new hospital in Sandwell. * Subcontracting partners brought across through the merger with Future Skills have given us an opportunity for closer working with Sandwell NHS Trust and, given the increased level of apprenticeships required within the public sector, we are continuing to grow the apprenticeship provision both through subcontracting arrangements and through direct delivery from the College in occupational sectors which enhance the Sandwell NHS offer. * We currently work with over 480 local companies with significant numbers of learners within dental, pharmacy and business administration/customer service. * With larger organisations we create bespoke programmes to meet their individual needs. For example, we use specific training material and have embedded induction for all apprentices working within the AA, and currently we have 80 learners on programme with a financial value of £330,000. Within the AA we have several former apprentices who have now become trainers within their business and we have supported this additional development. * We also work closely with West Bromwich Building Society, and they continue to recruit apprentices, taking them through a Level 2 and then Level 3 apprenticeship programme. * To ensure we continually improve our offer to employers we have sponsored staff to complete their Level 4 Certificate in Dental Radiography as part of the new Bhandal’s Scholarship programme (which we have introduced). Bhandal’s Dental practices are spread across the Black Country; we currently have 70 learners on programme with a financial value of £466,000. A further two new candidates as part of this Scholarship scheme have been accepted onto the level 4 Certificate in Oral Health. * In Health and Social Care we are working in close partnership with the charity Sense and have recently had an article published in their in house magazine highlighting the great partnership between their organisation and the College. We will continue to support the organisation and build relationships with other charitable organisations. * Our Hairdressing Apprentices employed with Dudley Port Hair and Beauty and Enigma took part in the National Hairdressing Awards in March in Blackpool and achieved 1st and 4th places in their categories. * Also, one of our repeat Hair Apprenticeship Employers Keith Broughton (Also Trainer to the British Hairdressing Team) the owner of Marchella International, Great Barr, attended College in term 1 to deliver a bespoke training session of how to create hairstyles for entry into competitions. * We hold an annual ‘cap and gown' event in September for all level 4 Graduates coming through the Business Development Unit. * We also work with organisations that we can offer a range of occupational sectors; for example we have worked with accident repair companies and have placed business administration apprentices to work in the office and body repair apprentices in the workshops. * As part of the HS2 programme, Sandwell College is represented through the “Ignite” steering group. The remit of this group is to identify the educational skill sets of local people that will required through local “feeder” colleges for the HS2 College. * Networking events have been well attended by local companies, and the College will continue to develop and deliver networking opportunities to ensure that organisations are fully aware of changes to apprenticeship frameworks and the move towards assessments. In April we are holding an event to deliver key messages around the levy and what this will mean to employers over the coming 2 years. * The College also organise sector specific steering groups to ensure that we understand the key skills gaps within the locality and develop our provision to meet this demand. * Each year we hold a “celebration event” and this year it will be organised in partnership with Sandwell Council. This event is aimed at local employers and is focused on celebrating the contribution they make to the region through their engagement with apprentices. * Throughout the year Apprenticeship Careers events are organised and during Apprenticeship week in March we invited 20 local employers to talk about their vacancies. * During this week we also held a “Star Apprentice” awards brunch, with over 30 local employers attending. This event gave us the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our Apprentices. * Senior management within Sandwell College work with local companies to understand their requirements and identify support; for example, the College have been working with Futura Group that develops high end automotive clay modelling. * Construction is a key growth area for the College and the College are currently in discussion with Carillion to understand the key skill gaps for the industry and to seek their endorsement of our training programmes. * We also work with local housing agencies to support the development of their staff and carry out skills analysis and relevant training bespoke to the needs of their business. Currently we are working with Midland Heart delivering plumbing, brickwork, carpentry, ground work and plastering skills. We are looking to extend this model to other housing associations. * We continue to deliver the commercial offer and plan to introduce apprenticeship occupational sectors which will meet the needs of public sector organisations across the borough, as the Government has now set a target of 2.4% of the public sector organisation to be made up of apprentices. The department are looking at developing further the construction department and introducing teaching assistant and court and tribunal apprenticeships. Sandwell Hospital NHS Trust, over the next 12 months, are planning to double the amount of Apprenticeships and will bring with them Apprenticeships required from within the Black Country Academy, all to be funded by Sandwell College Apprenticeship allocation. Sandwell College will also deliver occupational sectors that cannot be resourced through the Academy, delivering estate maintenance, medical engineering and decontamination skills. * We also offer commercial training for dental practices at reduced rates, if they have employed apprentices. Currently we deliver radiography at a commercial rate for new and existing employers and have plans to extend the commercial offer to include dental impression making and will be utilising the College’s “Fab Lab” to support the teaching sessions. * The college is developing a programme of commercial income courses in the following areas: construction (including CSCS Card), first aid, health and safety, business skills, teaching, assessment advice and guidance, dental and related services as well as ATA courses which relate to the new regulations around MOT testing. Target income for commercial income going forward is £270,000 in 2016/17.   **The College has wide ranging relationships with employers in terms of Apprenticeships, Placements, Work Experience in the following sectors:**  *All 16 to 18 year old students participate in work experience. During the academic year 2015/16, 1,800 students have participated in 30 hours external work placements which relates to their programme of study. The college has an excellent working relationship with Sandwell Council which supports a large number of work experience placements within Construction and Business Studies*.   * ***Creative Industries:*** Creative Alliance; West Bromwich Albion Academy; Wolverhampton Arts and Heritage Service; Birmingham Rep; Birmingham Royal Ballet; Birmingham Hippodrome; Sandwell Music and Arts Service; Sandwell Council Arts Service; ICA London; Warner Brothers; Harman Technology; Frame Organisation; Buzz Barbers; Steiner Ships. These companies have offered opportunities from work experience to commissioning work from students, delivering lecture series and offering employment opportunities to College students who have successfully completed their studies within Creative Industries. An employer board for digital and creative was set up in March 2016, with a number of regional employers now directly informing the curriculum offer in digital marketing and graduate skills. * ***Construction****:* Dulux; Carillion; Sandwell Homes; Bal; Wickham and Blackwell; Interserve, offering sponsorship, work experience and competition opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills in a regional and national context for our Construction students. * ***Engineering and Automotive****:* Trac Tooling (Chromalloy Group) offer work experience, live briefs and have sponsored 25 seats of industry standard CAD software. Futura Designs have recently donated a significant amount of prototyping materials and are consulting on the College’s Engineering provision. * ***Sport, Travel and Public Services****:* West Bromwich Albion Trust, with whom we offer a co-delivered football academy; Sandwell Leisure Trust; Aston Villa FC; Walsall FC Community; J1 Fitness; Thomas Cook; Ramada Hotels; Co-op Travel; Black Country Museum; Premier Inn, offering a variety of work experience and employment opportunities. * ***Business and Computing****:* City Computers, Eagle Security, Cartridge World, Excellent Computer Lab, Darwa Games; Chamber of Commerce; Immigration Service; Citizens Advice; Sandwell Council; Brook; these companies have offered live briefs for students and work experience for several years. The College has recently set up an Employer board for Young Professionals (April 2016) to ensure the curriculum offer is fit for purpose and serving the needs of the local industry. * ***Health and Childcare***: Leighswood Children's Centre; Bridge Court; Little Stars Day Nursery; Queen Elizabeth Hospital; Hilltop Lodge Nursing Home; Pathfinder Healthcare; Phoenix Collegiate Academy; Action For Children; Caribbean Resource Group; BUDS * The College has invested heavily in resources including a simulated hospital ward, dental laboratory and suite of science laboratories to support curriculum innovation and meet employer needs. * The College has wide ranging partnerships which support delivery, led by an Advisory Board from different health care settings, including representatives from the NHS, BUPA Care homes, specialist dementia care settings and Health Commissioning Services. In addition, a joint post between Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital provides strategic direction for curriculum development in meeting the needs of the sector. * Well-established networks of employers for placements include: * ***Dudley NHS group and Sandwell & West Birmingham NHS*** – students to experience everything within a Maternity department over a week. * ***Birmingham Women’s Hospital*** - Radiography and Maternity wards * ***Domiciliary care organisations*** - students work in peoples’ homes gaining confidence and knowledge of supporting those with, for example, physical disabilities, mental illnesses to befriending people and providing someone to talk to. Many offer paid employment to students who impress them with their caring nature and desire to help/care for people. * ***BUPA***care homes specialising in Dementia nursing, caring for people with Parkinson’s, offering respite, convalescence, Huntington’s and palliative care; students to work alongside professionals such as Care Assistants, Nurses, Mangers, Social workers and Activity Co-ordinators. * ***Camino*** healthcare - local provider for those with severe enduring mental illnesses and mild learning disabilities. Working alongside staff nurses, support staff, occupational therapists, assistant psychologists and activities organisers, students gain an understanding of individuals needs e.g psychological, physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs. * ***Various care homes and day care centres*** allow students to experience supporting individuals in sensory rooms, music, LED lights, memory books, touch and feel equipment, all designed to use with people with impairments to help them learn, relax and develop. Other care homes e.g The Shrubbery (specialised care home for Dementia and Challenging Behaviour). A number of students secure employment with the Winchester Care Group and at Edgeview Court. * ***Links with organisations which provide drop in sessions*** supporting individuals with addictions, homelessness and various issues. Students experience primary nursing clinics, mental health triage surgery, vision care eye clinic, dental services and podiatry (foot and ankle specialist) providing support for anyone made homeless or about to be made homeless, welfare and benefits support and advice, and social support. * ***Russells Hall hospital and Sandwell Hospital*** - volunteering opportunities such as: ward volunteers, admin and clerical support, wayfinders/outpatients, emergency department, patient experience surveys, Chaplaincy, Red Cross and hospital radio. * ***Pathfinder healthcare*** - students work on their Healthy Communities Collaborative Programme & Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Cancer Awareness Programme. Students work with fellow professionals in various GP surgeries and health centres in the area completing NHS surveys with patients within the waiting rooms * ***BUDS*** (Better Understanding of Dementia in Sandwell) – volunteering opportunities within day care clubs and also befriending service to support people with Dementia. BUDS also offer students who are committed the opportunity to gain additional qualifications, such as advanced awareness of dementia and safeguarding, free of charge. * ***Sense,*** **a** national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind or have sensory impairments, offer our students the opportunity to attend placement in their local care home to support the residents and staff in the day to day running of the service. Students in this environment have the opportunity to gain a full understanding of supporting people who are deafblind and the materials, resources available to support them. * ***Sure Start*** centres and action for children centres - students work with family support workers, social workers, nursery nurses and health visitors assisting babies, young children and parents in play, healthy eating, weight and height of children and family support. * Schools and academies within the area allow students to work within classrooms, behaviour units and SEN pupils assisting deaf students with their studies such as Maths and English. |  |  | |
| **Present/future partnership arrangements** |  | * Sandwell College supports joint working among other Black Country (and Birmingham) colleges. Sandwell College remains open to the need for structured arrangements which add value and recognise the benefits that being part of larger collaborative structures may bring to the delivery in particular of the investment needed locally for higher-level skills. * Sandwell College has a longstanding and productive relationship with other colleges in the Black Country and Birmingham. We are an active member of Black Country Colleges (formerly the Black Country Partnership for Learning), a partnership company wholly owned by Black Country colleges.  The company exists to facilitate partnership working between the colleges on a number of strategic initiatives, including: * Identifying savings and implementing new operational arrangements from shared procurement and shared back office service. * Joint continuing professional development activities between the colleges. * Joint marketing to drive activity in engaging businesses and develop marketing strategies and materials for promoting the value of further education colleges and apprenticeships. * Delivery of group projects such as ESF funded collaborative ventures. * Curriculum planning and alignment activities. * The College understands that the area review of the Black Country might usefully accelerate the partnership working activities described above. * Partnership working is already underway. A number of specific initiatives are detailed below. * Adults skills: a partnership approach in meeting the priorities of the new combined authority * Black Country Colleges recently externally commissioned a high level review of adult skills provision delivered by colleges across the Black Country area in the context of national policy.  This included a review of LEP priorities and emerging imperatives for employment and skills as described in the West Midlands Combined Authority outline plan, discussion and proposals for outcome indicators and suggestions for approaches to collaboration and specialisation. Colleges are working on the proposals arising from the review. * Skill Up: a partnership ESF project * Black Country Colleges successfully delivered a £5 million ESF funded project ‘Skill Up’ between 2013 and 2015.  We look forward to partnership working on a new ESF project from April 2016 once funds have been released in the Black Country. * Sandwell College recognises the need for an institution of its size, prominence and resources to play a much wider strategic and operational role within the area in support of improving the prospects of young people and adults from Sandwell and West Birmingham and to ensure the College remains in a viable and sustainable position in which to effect such local improvements * In support of wider education reform: Sandwell College is in the process of forming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) to provide a local solution for Sandwell. Educational attainment in Sandwell is recognised by the local authority as being relatively poor. Many schools have now converted to academy status but do not benefit from efficiencies or collaborative working as part of a MAT. The college is committed to strengthening its pre-19 position and is working with the Regional Schools Commissioner to have the MAT in place during 2016. It should be noted that the MAT does not replace the existing work with local secondary schools to support their vocational offers and collaborative arrangements, for which regular meetings are also in place. * **In support of higher-level skills routes**, Sandwell College is reviewing existing HE ways of working with university partners to ensure greater collaborative and commercial basis in the future, including the benefit of bringing a University Centre to Sandwell for the first time. The College sees its work with the University of Wolverhampton across a number of programmes as being increasingly important. * **In support of the Local Authority**, Sandwell College merged with Sandwell Council’s Apprenticeship delivery arm - “Future Skills” as of August 2015. In addition, the College collaborates extensively with the LA on safeguarding, the Prevent agenda, providing work experience for students and in support of Connexions through the sharing of facilities/resources. It also works in partnership with other training providers in the Midlands/Black Country - LearnPlay Foundation Ltd, Lead Edge Ltd, E-Response Recruitment to offer a broad range of educational opportunities and employment prospects. * The College actively plans to secure stronger commercial arrangements with the private sector. * **In support of employers and specialisms**, Sandwell College is developing its partnership with Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust. Its Health specialism is a LEP priority and the Trust is one of a handful of large-scale employers in the local area and they will be relocating NHS services in a new-build soon, through which the College will provide significant training and support. The college has a seconded post from the NHS to help with curriculum development and support over workforce development. |  |  | |
| **Area Wide plans for costs reductions/**  **rationalisation proposals** |  | * An obvious saving is to place all colleges/ school sixth forms on an even footing by removing transitional protection which subsidises inefficiency of study programmes. This is being removed too slowly and could generate savings across all areas of the country. It is also clearly inequitable and wasteful of funds for those colleges delivering programmes at an appropriate level. * Secondary education is poor across Sandwell and a strong improving local college is beneficial to the area. Links and collaborative arrangements with the local authority and local primary, as well as secondary schools, are being developed. The College sees this as an area of continued development and one that will deliver cost reduction. Working with local schools and academies more closely does not preclude working collaboratively with other institutions. * The College sees the volume of students coming from West Birmingham, which now makes up over one-third of the College cohort of young people. The outcome of the Birmingham & Solihull Area Review does highlight the number and viability of delivery sites across the City. Sandwell College has broached South and City College, in the spirit of partnership, the potential for some collaborative working within West Birmingham. * The College has and is playing a key partner role in the educational, social and economic regeneration of the borough. This will be built upon to transform the College into an educational organisation ranging from schools provision, 16 to 18 qualifications and skills and workforce development. Going forwards these will form distinct strands within ‘Sandwell Educational Group’. The College will seek to develop this concept with the local authority and other stakeholders. * A Multi Academy Trust which will provide a through pathway for students up to potentially completing Higher Education courses – plans are in an advanced stage, as is involvement with key stakeholders, including the Regional Schools Commissioner. * The College also recognises that many of its young people progressing from Level 3 may need to study locally due to cultural and religious reasons; we are expanding our Higher Education offer to meet this need. * Whilst (as recognised above) the College is open to beneficial collaboration, its core view is that it has focus on a learning community in Sandwell and West Birmingham which is shared by key stakeholders. Therefore any such collaboration must be demonstrated to add to this, not simply at a theoretical level or change simply to demonstrate change with no diminution of governance and leadership. The risks must also be clearly considered, quantified and robustly assessed along with any perceived benefits. * The Chair and the Local Authority have expressed the view that the college serves Sandwell well. We are now financially strong after significant work well ahead of any announcement of area review and have margins to cope. This remains the case, particularly, with the move to a group structure. * It is also expected that the views of colleges as independent organisations are fully respected. * The College is, however, open to collaboration and to address the needs of our local communities in identifying local solutions the College has been instrumental in heading the thinking and discussions for the formation of *‘Black Country Colleges’* (BCC). * BCC will act as the vehicle to deliver not just the area review recommendations, but the regional growth & reform strategy of the LEPs and subsequently the WMCA. The group will seek local place based solutions recognising each institution’s strengths, the need to collaborate and the need to retain maximum flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. * BCC will also: * Collaborate in the development of on-line learning content and share expertise in its application in order to reduce delivery costs. * Identify sectoral specialisms which will be delivered in a few centres in order to achieve excellence and cost-effective operations. * Pursue plans for an area-wide approach to apprenticeships. A project should be established which will provide common advice and guidance on apprenticeship routes to FE students at all ages (and ensuring schools/academies comply with their new duty), including those at higher levels, and will present a coherent point of engagement to employers. * Work in collaboration to improve quality by sharing best practice and creating a self-improving system. * Carry out research and development to assist us in predicting new work opportunities and to develop our capacity to extend provision * BCC will deliver a range of approaches which may result in a variety of partnerships according to the local context. |  |  | |
| **Institutes of Technology** |  | * Sandwell College has the capability and capacity to operate as an independent Institute of Technology in the Black Country or as a partner to another institution in the Black Country specialising in level 3, 4 and 5 qualifications in a distinct area. * The College has the facilities, high value kit and expertise at delivering at levels 3, 4 and 5 in Health, Digital and Creative, STEM and Business & Professional Services. * The College is very keen to work with partners to ensure a growing future for vocational and technical education in Sandwell. The College is aware of Dudley College’s proposal for an IoT and the potential there, but has not been party to its inception or planning and it is unclear how this will benefit Sandwell residents. * There is a potential to unify under an umbrella structure (BCCG) with key representatives from each college determining the best solutions and locations to serve the local economy and communities. Membership could possibly consist of key personnel from the existing institutions where impartial strategic decisions are made recognising the strengths of the individual constituents. One option would be for any ‘surplus’ estate identified during the review to become an Institute of Technology for Level 4 and above to cater for the Black Country, with provision especially concerning STEM subjects being focussed there with LEP support. |  |  | |