



Board of Management Learning & Teaching Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 28 April 2020
Paper No.	LTC3-G
Agenda Item	4.6
Subject of Paper	Education Scotland, College Progress Visit Report
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Dr Claire Carney, VP Student Experience
Date of production	April 2020
Action	For Discussion

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to discuss the report.

College Progress Visit Report

City of Glasgow College

February 2020

College Principal	Paul Little
Progress Visit Date	10 February 2020
College Nominee	Dr Claire Carney
Managing Inspector	Andrew Brawley
College HMI	Karen Corbett
SFC Outcome Agreement Manager	Seamus Spencer
Outcome of Progress Visit	Satisfactory progress

Background and context

The college and its context

City of Glasgow College operates from two campuses in central Glasgow: Riverside campus, sited on the banks of the river Clyde, opened in August 2015, and City campus on Cathedral Street, opened in September 2016.

City of Glasgow College provides education and training across a diverse range of 40 vocational disciplines and over 2000 programmes ranging from access level through to SCQF Level 10 with the majority of programmes being at SCQF 7 and above. Approximately 40,000 learners enrol at the college annually, of whom around 10,000 study on full-time further and higher education programmes. Over 97% of the college's graduates progress onto positive destinations, with 25% going directly into employment and 72% going onto further or advanced study.

As the largest of the three assigned Glasgow colleges, City of Glasgow College works with the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board (GCRB) to deliver educational provision across the Glasgow region.

Purpose of the progress visit

In 2018, all colleges produced an Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (EREP) and these were endorsed by Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). During Progress Visits (PV) colleges demonstrate how well they are delivering on the targets and milestones identified in their Enhancement Plans (EP). They allow colleges opportunities to outline any changes to their circumstances resulting in revisions to their original objectives. PVs provide reassurance to key stakeholders on the effectiveness of improvement actions undertaken by individual colleges. Whilst undertaking PVs, HM Inspectors of Education take account of the context and individual nature of each college.

Overall judgement regarding progress

At the end of the PV, HM Inspectors of Education and Associate Assessors review the evidence gathered during their discussions with college managers, staff, learners and stakeholders. They assess the progress that colleges have made against their EPs, taking account of any changes to local circumstances. Based on this evidence, the team will form a view as to whether the college has made satisfactory progress against its EP or has not made satisfactory progress against its EP. This outcome is contained within this report with accompanying commentary to support the findings.

The endorsed EREP for City of Glasgow College can be found at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=5283>

This PV report is structured around the improvement actions identified within the college's 2017-18 EP. These actions relate to the quality indicators contained within the quality improvement framework How Good is Our College? The college's EP actions relate to:

- Gender action plan progress
- Full-time further education (FT FE) retention decline affecting attainment
- Regional approach to the senior phase
- Collaborative working with Glasgow colleges
- College management adjustments
- Digital transformation model
- Work-based learning as part of curriculum planning
- Learner feedback approaches
- Mental health action progress

Findings from the progress visit

Progress made on gender action plan and care experienced learners

Areas of positive progress

- The college has identified those programmes where the gender balance is most in need of improvement. They have made good progress in around half of these areas against their own targets. Staff recognise that some provision continues to have significant gender imbalance, including programmes in oil & gas, electrical engineering and engineering technology and further work is required to address this.
- To help local employers' address workforce imbalance issues, the college has introduced a workplace inclusivity online assessment tool. This has been used with over 100 employers and is supporting them to recognise the value of having a diverse workforce. This approach also promotes employers' legal responsibilities and suggests low cost interventions to support more diverse employment outcomes.
- The college has experienced a significant rise in the number of applicants disclosing care experienced backgrounds on application to college. This year, there are currently 596 care experienced enrolments. This has increased from 470 in 2018/19 and there has been a 700% increase in care experienced enrolments in the last four years. Around 100 learners are currently receiving a care experienced bursary payment which supports them to attend college.
- The college is proactive in supporting care-experienced learners to gather appropriate evidence to enable them to access bursary funding smoothly. For example, staff support learners to apply for and receive copies of their birth certificate to enable them to meet the bursary funding criteria.

Areas of further progress and actions required

- The college should continue to address gender imbalances on programmes where they occur.

Full-time further education retention decline affecting attainment

- Teaching departments are aware of the areas of the curriculum which require improvement and are working proactively to refresh and enhance curriculum and delivery arrangements where appropriate. This includes applying flexible timetabling approaches and revising programme content.
- Curriculum teams are supported well to enhance aspects of programmes which require improvement, removal or replacement. Managers make adjustments to provision where improvement is required and are taking steps to modernise programme content as appropriate.
- The college dashboard provides staff with a valuable and real-time facility for monitoring and measuring learner performance. The dashboard supports a culture of transparency, openness, and shared ownership amongst staff, who are enabled to evaluate how well their programmes are performing, over an extended time period, and in comparison to other college provision.
- Leadership development activities have supported and encouraged the empowerment of staff teams to take responsibility for making decisions which seek to improve or enhance the quality

of provision. The style and design of the programme of these activities works very well.

Areas of further progress and actions required

- The college should continue to implement arrangements to improve outcomes for learners on full-time further education programmes.

Regional approach to the senior phase

- The college contributes to a well-developed and diverse senior phase, school-college and Foundation Apprenticeship programme, in partnership with the other two Glasgow colleges.
- The college offers nine out of the twelve Foundation Apprenticeship programmes and is proactive in influencing improvement to Skills Development Scotland's (SDS) framework content.
- The college, along with the other two Glasgow colleges, contributes productively to develop effective collaborative approaches to sharing data, tracking and monitoring learner applications, and progression outcomes.
- There is a comprehensive Glasgow-wide prospectus to support senior phase pupil choice options. This provision is accessed, in total, by 24 local authorities, a number of whom authorities access college provision through distance learning programmes.
- There is now a regional career-long professional learning (CLPL) approach for all three Glasgow colleges. This ensures there is a consistent approach to engagement with and delivery of school-college programmes.

Areas of further progress and actions required

- The college should continue to work with local authorities and schools to identify and resolve issues which impact negatively on retention and attainment outcomes.

Collaborative working with Glasgow colleges

Areas of positive progress

- The college is working collaboratively with its partner colleges across Glasgow to support learner attainment and is engaging productively in regional arrangements to support effective transition to college.
- As a result of performance indicator (PI) concerns, the college has introduced Performance Action Groups to bring about improvement. Teaching staff host discussion meetings and draw up improvement plans, authored by their team, and these are shared with colleagues. Through these arrangements staff are provided with up-to-date dashboard information, which informs learner-related discussions on attendance and programme progression. Increasingly, within curriculum areas and across the three Glasgow colleges, discussions are held and good practice approaches adopted.
- To improve equity and progression opportunities for learners, all three Glasgow colleges have agreed harmonised learner progression arrangements and timelines for college applications.

- For care-experienced learners, the GCRB has funded a programme of support provision to enhance attainment outcomes. This initiative also applies to those learners with mental health concerns and individuals in poverty.

Areas of further progress and actions required

- None identified

College management adjustments

- To support leadership for a sustainable college, a dispersed leadership model has been established. This encourages new talent, and recognises the importance of devolving responsibility to individuals, whilst retaining cross college remits and collaborative working for responsibilities where appropriate.
- The Leadership Programme was designed to support the reorganisation and has equipped staff well to undertake new roles. There is a strong focus on collegiality and leadership distribution. Staff contributed to the design and content of the programme. A number of 'action projects' have been identified which have led to improved communication and increased collaboration.
- The schedule of activities with the Leadership Programme provides staff with a shared vision and understanding of the college's ambitions. This has created a culture of openness and cross-college collaboration towards achieving strategic priorities and cultural aspirations.
- Revised cross-college forums, and departmental meetings, are used productively to support and equip staff to carry out new roles. The Academic Board has been reshaped to enable staff to contribute more fully to cross-college initiatives and ideas. This has increased cross-faculty collaboration which is further energising the curriculum.

Areas of further progress and actions required

- None identified

Digital transformation model

- The introduction of the Centre of Professional and Technical Education (CoPTE) supports staff development in digital and online delivery. This underpins the colleges ambition that digital transformation is at the heart of learning and teaching.
- College leaders have ensured that the learning and teaching strategy, City Learning 4.0, has a strong digital skills element. It is influenced by industry requirements and staff and learners were actively engaged in its development.
- The college has identified key principles in relation to the use of their virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle across all programmes. The technology team works productively with curriculum teams to develop interactive learning and teaching resources.
- Recent investment in ICT infrastructure helps to support the college's ambition as a leading provider of digitally delivered programmes. Staff are reviewing processes to enhance learning and teaching practices more widely. The college is using a collaborative approach to engage

staff in making use of digital technologies. However, they recognise this can be challenging to deliver consistently across all curriculum areas.

Area of further progress and actions required

- None identified

Work-based learning as part of curriculum planning

- The college has invested significantly in continuously enhancing links with industry to provide learners with real and enriching work-based learning opportunities.
- Staff are given time and support to establish and develop links with industry and professional associations, which benefit outcomes for learners. Curriculum departments carry out skill gap analyses and draw on these to build a curriculum which addresses employers' current and future workforce needs.
- Curriculum staff draw continuously on their extensive links with employers and industry, to devise and coordinate events and activities, which enhance learners' knowledge of current and anticipated needs of industry. This is a very strong feature of the work of the college and is providing a dynamic environment for learners and staff. Examples include: the Culinary Arts Summit; professional mentoring for learners across various occupational strands; a media training event involving STV and BBC with 5050, to encourage women into media; and STEM work with the Glasgow Science Centre.

Area of further progress and actions required

- None identified

Learner feedback approaches

- College staff examine closely qualitative feedback received from learners in relation to their programme experiences. Student satisfaction surveys are distributed for completion twice a year. Where responses received indicate issues of concern, improvement actions are identified, and progress is monitored. Curriculum teams take responsibility for the implementation of early intervention actions.
- Through the Stop, Check, Support meetings, held three times each year, college staff and guidance tutors reflect on learner survey outcomes. During these meetings, which also include class representative discussions, programme related issues are shared and discussed and improvement actions are drawn up.
- The Students' Association and the Student Engagement Team support class representatives well to contribute to Stop, Check, Support meetings and ensure a positive platform for learners' views.
- The college uses a range of effective approaches to gather the views of learners and these include My Voice, a digital democracy platform, that asks for feedback on a range of pre-determined topics. Through the My Voice platform, adjustments were made to the college's timetabling arrangements to support staggered lunch breaks for learners.

Area of further progress and actions required

- None identified

Mental health action plan progress

- The college has developed a comprehensive strategic approach to supporting student mental health and wellbeing. It operates a referral system which captures, and takes account of, the range of needs learners are presenting with and the nature of their intersectionality. An initial telephone assessment process contributes to efficient resourcing and helps to minimise waiting lists.
- Staff engage with a range of partners to support the promotion of positive mental health. The college recently hosted a UK-wide conference on mental health with a range of institutions participating. One particularly effective approach is the Sailor's Society 'Not on my Watch' campaign, hosted at the college's Riverside campus.
- The range of college services made available to learners is well promoted through a variety of methods, including use made of social media. Learners are able to access these services through use of My City to engage in workshops which support positive mental wellbeing.
- The Students' Association plays an active role in promoting the range of wellbeing activities on offer to learners through the Students' Association Briefing. The student adviser team benefits from regular group supervision, led by an external supervisor. This is a supportive measure and is regarded as best practice. The college has engaged with the Health Body, Healthy Mind award and are the only college in Scotland to have achieved a 5 star award for their work.

Area of further progress and actions required

- None identified

What happens next?

The progress visit report will be shared with SFC, the college Board (and in multi-college regions, the Regional Strategic Body). The outcomes of the PV will inform a refreshed Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan (2020-23) due to be submitted by all colleges in October 2020.

Andrew Brawley
HM Inspector