



# Strategic Plan

2017-2020





# CONTEXT

Sixth Form Colleges consistently outperform schools and FE Colleges and this high level of performance has been sustained in the face of a number of funding-related challenges. The sector has responded admirably to the climate of austerity by restructuring, cutting costs and asking our excellent staff to do more for less.

Woking College specialises in Level 3 Academic and vocational courses for 16-19 year olds. The College has experienced significant success and growth in recent years and now accommodates 1280 full-time students and employs 140 staff. The College also offers a small provision of Level 2 courses which aim to enable students to progress to Level 3. We have a number of ESOL classes which serve the local community and currently have nearly 400 students enrolled on a part-time basis.

Over the period of the previous strategic plan (2011-2016) the College has maintained above sector average results and grown from 943 to 1280 students. In May 2016, the College was graded as 'Good' by Ofsted.

The growth of the College and the success of its students is set within a context of being situated in an area where competition for students is amongst the fiercest in the country. In Woking, three secondary schools provide around 50% of our enrolments but within ten miles there are five 11-18 schools and two large GFE Colleges who are aiming to expand their 16-18 enrolments. In addition, two large Sixth Form Colleges aim to recruit significant numbers from Woking and two further Colleges recruit heavily from areas to the North and West. Sixth Form student populations in independent schools in Surrey is higher than elsewhere in the country.

We are committed to expanding numbers in an area of population growth; data suggests that there will be c.15% growth in local schools Year 11 populations over the next three years. The Senior Leadership Team and College Governors are confident that the current campus has a capacity of c.1400 students. A challenging financial climate means that finances for capital investment available from central government or other sources we will need to be sure that the potential constraints of our facilities and resources do not

impact negatively on student results or experience. The College will continue to mitigate these risks by being open minded in respect to opportunities to work with partners for growth and innovation.

Per-student funding is currently fixed until 2020 and this strategic plan is written with limited optimism in terms of improved funding beyond 2020; nevertheless, it is felt by Governors that a three-year plan which could be adapted in 2020 makes strategic sense - given the uncertain political and economic climate.

Governors remain acutely aware of the need to maintain a longer view and our 3 to 10 year strategic outlook will be considered by Governors as an integral part of the annual cycle of meetings.

The College works collaboratively with local Sixth Form Colleges and enjoys very positive relationships with local 11-16 schools, this includes in-school IAG sessions, taster days, assemblies and school-specific interview days; at the time of writing the College is at an advanced stage in the planning for conversion to a stand-alone 16-19 Academy Trust. Academisation will also give the College a financial boost as, from the point of academisation, we will be able to recover our VAT costs currently at c. £137,000 per year. This will allow us to become even better at what we do. As an academy, we will work even more closely with local schools, therefore benefitting not only our current students but many local students in the future. We are hopeful that this conversion will be complete by September 2017.

# OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

# STRATEGIC THEMES



Student success results in increased life-choices. Success is our priority.

**Our mission is to improve the life chances of our students**, allowing them to take the opportunities that are available to them. We aim to enhance our students' future choices through the provision of a learning environment in which they will maximise their examination success. These successes should happen within a culture in which the learning of wider knowledge, skills and values is cherished and supported and attention is paid to individual wellbeing - to the benefit of individual students and the societies in which they will live.

Our mission will be achieved if, following effective advice and guidance, all students are enrolled onto the right courses for them as individuals and they then benefit of high quality teaching and assessment. At Woking College stretch, struggle and challenge in learning will be embraced, students will be encouraged to be independent learners with a sense of ownership in their work and progress; this will be supported with a steadfast belief in the ongoing personal development for all members of the College community.

Woking College will remain an inclusive, diverse, open-access Sixth Form College with a positive sense of community and strong links to the local area. We want to further enhance the vibrancy of the College and continue to engender an excitement for learning. We will help students to become critical thinkers able to deal with the challenges of an uncertain world in order to nurture next generation of leaders, carers, active citizens.

Woking College sees the quality of learning, teaching and assessment as essential to its mission; becoming recognised in the wider community as a leader in Sixth Form pedagogy is central to the College's mission.

The six Strategic Themes are divided into Key Elements. We aim at Woking College to both educate and edify; by definition educational aims are more tangible and therefore more easily measurable than those elements which relate to the building of cultural, social and moral awareness and enlightenment. Not all elements can therefore be aligned to specific outcomes.

Accordingly, noted here below each Strategic Theme are the related areas of measurable performance which will be monitored through the College's quality assurance processes.

## STRATEGIC THEME 1

# STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESSION

Woking College aims to enhance student life choices and chances through maximising examination and coursework success whilst paying due attention to student's progression plans.

### KEY ELEMENTS

- Learning, teaching and assessment will be at the heart of everything we do. In terms of results:
  - i. Whole College student pass and retention rates will be above Sixth Form College averages for all subjects and above average for each type and level of qualification.
  - ii. Value-added will be demonstrated for all courses at all Levels.
  - iii. There will be no meaningful statistical results gaps observable for students in terms of gender, BAME or other group which may indicate unintended discriminatory processes or behaviours.
- Staff and students should be both motivated and motivating.
- Students must be supported in their academic progress outside timetabled lessons.
- Pastoral teams and the monitoring of students by tutors should serve to guide learners and their teachers in achieving desired results.
- A growth mind-set will be integral to our approach; working hard, self-belief and aiming high should be encouraged by all staff and for all students.
- Excellent progression guidance should serve to motivate achievement and this element of student support should be regarded positively by students in survey responses.
- Teaching and support staff appraisal and departmental self-assessment reports will both emphasise the centrality of student success and processes which lead to those successes.
- All staff appraisal and SAR processes should, through timing and/or dialogue and questioning, place student success as central to each appraisal.
- All students whose results, abilities and aspirations demonstrate they are capable of entry into the most competitive HE institutions and courses should have a clear programme of guidance, activities and events which supports their aspirations.
- A meaningful and ongoing relationship with employers and/or HE providers will continue to be built.

### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Raw and value-added results.
- The maintenance of excellent attendance.
- Student and staff surveys will continue to demonstrate very positive levels of student contentment and motivation in respect to their subjects and time at College.
- Student should report that support outside of lessons, including that offered by tutorial and Learning Support meets their needs.
- The concept of growth mind-set should be considered when reviewing and evaluating all College processes and systems.
- All College departments will have at least two annual events involving an external Higher Education or employer body.

## STRATEGIC THEME 2

# EXCELLENT LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Woking College aims to ensure that the quality of learning, teaching and assessment is excellent and evolves dynamically, continuing to be placed at the centre of everything we do.

### KEY ELEMENTS

- Learning, teaching and assessment will be at the heart of everything we do.
- A clear two-year cycle of learning and associated processes will continue to be developed for all Level Three programmes.
- All subject's schemes of learning should include meaningful elements which relate to post-College progression so as to inspire and give meaning to working towards the highest levels of achievement.
- High quality examination and assessment preparation will be central to all schemes of learning.
- An innovation fund, which departments can bid for annually, will be put in place to encourage experiment and excellence in learning, teaching and assessment.
- An effective homework strategy will ensure maximum student participation in their own learning and success outside of the classroom. Student ownership of their own progress will be the core element in the marking of student assessments; all student key assessments will include an element of students being guided in setting targets for themselves.
- CPD and the sharing of best practice will have a clear focus on the improvement of learning, teaching and assessment.

### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- The maintenance of excellent levels of student retention and performance.
- Each subject's schemes of learning and assessment pattern will be clear for all users and rigorously adhered to.
- Lesson observation records.
- A more comprehensive and inclusive Excellence Programme will be developed.
- An enhanced homework strategy will be in place for all subjects.
- Progression elements will be part of all schemes of learning.
- Innovations in learning, teaching and assessment will be reported annually.

### STRATEGIC THEME 3

## THE OVERALL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Woking College will aim to enhance the lives of our students by ensuring that the student experience is not just about examination success, so that enjoyment and edification sit alongside more measurable educational outcomes for our students.

#### KEY ELEMENTS

- We will always aim to have a welcoming, listening community, an atmosphere of mutual respect should be integral and expected in all interactions.
- The breadth of the curriculum offer will be maintained and enhanced in order to meet the needs of local students and associated employment opportunities.
- Classrooms, the Learning Resource Centre and public spaces should inspire learning.
- Belief in student's ability to progress and the celebration of success will be a key element of College culture.
- Student work experience and the experience of elements work will play a part in all student's time at College.
- Every student should have their learning enriched – all should do more than just go to lessons and a broad enrichment programme will remain in place to support this aim.
- Educational and edifying trips and visits should be part of every subject's scheme of learning, the College will promote local and national programmes e.g. the National Citizenship Service and University Summer Schools, as part of this.
- The College will encourage student independence through the learning of, for example, critical thinking, social and financial skills, personal responsibility, consideration of others and leadership. These and other edifying elements will be part of curricular, pastoral and other extra-curricular activities.
- Available resources will be used to remove barriers to learning or to students taking part in College activities.

#### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Student and staff surveys will demonstrate that there is a positive sense of community and safety in College.
- The curriculum offer will be at least commensurate with the offer of local 16-19 institutions.
- The Excellence Programme will be established to the benefit of the widest appropriate range of students.
- All classrooms and other areas are seen to encourage learning and a growth mind-set.
- Students will feel happy and safe in College and student surveys will indicate that is the case.
- A broad enrichment and trips programme will remain in place.
- As far as resources reasonably allow, no student should be excluded from College or community activities or educational trips for financial reasons.

### STRATEGIC THEME 4

## FINANCE AND RESOURCES

Woking College aims to maximise its income and the efficient allocation of resources enabling successful learning, teaching and student success.

#### KEY ELEMENTS

- The College will aim to grow to 1400 students by October 2019 and then aim to maintain at least that population.
- Marketing and profile-raising alongside excellent student results and the quality of overall provision will continue to be central to student recruitment and therefore assist in the maintenance of the College's financial health.
- All members of the College community are considered to be part of our marketing strategy; whether through and as a result of their excellent practice, or more directly through staff and student interaction with potential students or local stakeholder groups.
- Positive staff recruitment and retention are recognised as being amongst the most important elements in the success of students and the College.
- Additional funds generated by Academy Conversion will be used to enhance the College's provision and support the strategic direction proposed in this document.
- Class sizes and methods of delivering student support will continue to be at a level which allows appropriate levels individual attention.
- Up-to-date and appropriate resources including ILT equipment will continue to meet students need and help them to learn and prepare for employment.
- The College Estate will be maintained and enhanced following the build-up of cash reserves and the College will take a positive and robust approach when making bids to central government or other capital grant funds; the College will explore and be open to any other funding streams which will enhance the mission and aims of the College.

- The College will maintain robust financial controls and accordingly receive positive audit reports.
- Health and safety will continue to be excellent and effectively monitored by both the SLT and Governors.

#### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- The College will produce at least a balanced budget each year with the aim of producing a surplus if possible in order to build cash reserves.
- The Financial Health Grade of the College will be maintained at Outstanding or Good.
- All subject departments will make at least one visit to a local school each year to promote their departmental offer.
- Staff recruitment and retention data will be tracked and reported.
- The number of classes with more than 20 at the start of each academic year will be kept to a minimum.
- Reasonable departmental requests for resources will be met and student responses to evaluation on resourcing will be expected to remain positive.
- Health and safety reports will continue to demonstrate a pro-active approach to those issues.

## STRATEGIC THEME 5

# COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY

Woking College aims ensure effective internal communications and also to further develop links with the local community; to the benefit primarily of our students but also to local stakeholders.

### KEY ELEMENTS

- Quality assurance and improvement will involve the regular consultation of students and staff.
- The College will maintain the most positive relations possible with local schools, as emphasised in our Academisation application, and remain an active member of S7 and its staff forums.
- The College will aim to build relationships with potential local sponsors and employers.
- Charity and other fund-raising will continue to be an important element of the pastoral programme.
- The College will celebrate student successes and the processes which lead to them annually and in-year; having a growth mind-set means events and commendations will not only celebrate outcomes but also both academic endeavour and progression.
- CPD will focus of staff needs and therefore support training which will result in tangible benefits to the quality of student learning.
- The College will foster relationships with national bodies including the SFCA in order to that ensure we engage fully with initiatives that are available to support Sixth Form education.
- The website will continue to be enhanced and ICT and social media will be used to their best effect for internal and external communications.
- Approaches to staying in touch with College's alumni will be enhanced to encourage aspiration amongst the student body.

### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Consultation groups will be held half-termly between members of SLT and both staff and student groups.
- Biannual assemblies will continue to be held in as many local schools as possible.
- College will remain welcoming and flexible in terms of visits from prospective students.
- All departments will have at least two ongoing and meaningful links with HE providers and/or employers.
- The College's excellent Community & ESOL provision will be maintained as a key part of the College's community provision.
- Charitable efforts by the student body will play a central part in the College calendar.
- Clear links between both quality planning documents and lesson observation outcomes will be maintained when determining the College's INSET priorities.
- Social media will continue to be developed as part of the College's communications strategy.
- There will be an ongoing and productive relationship between the College and the SFCA.
- All departments will have a strategy in respect to maintaining a positive relationship with their alumni.

## STRATEGIC THEME 6

# THE LONGER-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF WOKING COLLEGE

This is a three-year Strategic Plan but Governors are aware of the need to continue to look further forwards as part of their strategic thinking. Political, economic, social and technological developments may have an impact on current and future College provision and therefore we must stay aware of how developments should influence thinking and planning within this three-year cycle.

### KEY ELEMENTS

- The College will aim to achieve its strategic aims by developing the expertise of staff and governors and the quality assurance process which allow for effective monitoring and planning.
- Meeting the demands of Strategic Aim 4 (Finance and Resources) will provide a secure as possible a financial footing for future College developments.
- Governors and SLT will meet to consider possible development and risks for the Sixth Form College sector.

### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Staff and governor training will ensure all can have the skills needed to meet the College's strategic aims and mission.
- Governors will meet biannually to discuss possible future developments beyond 2020.
- The College Risk Register will continue to reflect current and potential future risks to the strategic direction and mission of the College.



# YOUR SUCCESS OUR PRIORITY

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