

York Learning Self Assessment Report High Level Summary

Introduction

This summary report is taken from a number of contributory reports which are developed at a curriculum level. It represents summary judgements for the service and some high level judgements about the services leadership and management. At this point the judgements are provisional as they are subject and challenge process with a number of neighbouring local authorities before final judgements are presented.

Changes and context for the Self Assessment report.

The service continues to operate in a dynamic and changing funding climate. Resources in some areas are shrinking whilst in others they are growing. A couple of areas are highlighted where growth has been significant in 16-18 foundation programmes, in High Needs Support learners and in Advance Learner Loans funding. The growth of funding in these areas has been particularly pleasing as the service set out a very clear strategy to maximise funding and develop provision. In 16-18 and High Needs Support this development in partnership with colleagues internally has seen significant benefits for young people and significant cost savings to the local authority.

A reorganisation, leading to savings close to £250k has ensured the service is in a good position financially and to enable it to take advantage of future funding streams. However staffing across the service is significantly stretched and staff illness, cover for holidays and other events have caused some problems with ensuring the service remains high quality and responsive. The increasing use of digital technology, such as distance learning support, online course bookings and the use of mobile devices has mitigated this to some extent, but the challenge of balancing workload with the demands of maximising contracts and supporting learners will need careful management.

The diversification of funding streams, in order that the service remains resilient is a double edged sword. Whilst a small number of large funding streams is easier to manage, the loss of a large contract can cause significant problems, whilst dealing with a multitude of funding streams also comes with significant demands not least of which is the management and maximisation of those contracts. For the academic year 2016/17 there service has income coming from some 18 different sources.

The service continues to develop its informal learning offer, with programmes attracting over 4000 students each year. 2015/16 was marked by a number of successful community arts programmes; Santa's Socks, a project to make a distribute Christmas stocking filled with sweets to disadvantaged families; Moths and Memories a joint project with York Museums Trust where over 1600 butterflies and moths were exhibited in the community arts space in the Art Gallery and finally the annual "Inspiration Exhibition" at York Explore. In addition to this the service continues to support and organise the Annual Adult Learner Award where over 120 friends and families came together to support and recognise the achievement of over 40 adult learners.

Effectiveness of Leadership & Management

Grade: 2

Strengths:

- Good development and diversification of funding streams including full cost and Advance Learner Loans means service provision is more resilient
- Good management of staffing and provision ensures some outstanding success rates in GCSE maths, ICT and Business Admin apprenticeships
- Effective partnerships with a number of providers ensures very productive learning for students with high support needs
- Good management and development of programmes for 16-18 and 19+ HNS ensures provision is robust and costs effective
- Good curriculum leadership across the service ensures that learners are well supported and make significant progress from their starting point
- Good development of counselling programme ensuring clear progression routes for learners to "full practice" qualifications

Areas for Improvement:

- The performance development process is not used effectively for continuous improvement particularly with sessional staff
- There is a lack of clarity in the quality assurance arrangements for full cost programmes

- In some areas of service provision managers are engaged in too many routine admin tasks
- There are still too many complaints and comments about the promptness of telephone answering
- Partnerships with and referrals routes for learners with mental health issues

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Grade: 2

Strengths:

- Good support arrangements, including detailed adjustments and support for individual learners ensure that teaching and learning is effective
- Thorough and robust initial assessment procedures for English, maths and ICT ensure learners are well supported on appropriate learning aims
- Good IAG, taster sessions and assessment in counselling ensures learners are supported onto appropriate provision
- Adaptable and flexible teaching and assessment methods ensure vulnerable learners are well supported to achieve their learning aim

Areas for Improvement:

- There are still some missed opportunities to share good practice across the service
- Despite some considerable improvements in the use of digital technology to support learning the approach is inconsistent across the service
- New digital resources are not yet deployed effectively to support teaching and learning consistently
- The use of digital resources to support learning are not yet used effectively across the service nor is good practice shared
- Whilst there is effective use of on-line support and electronic portfolios in Business Administration, practice is not widely shared across the service

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare of Learners

Grade: 2

Strengths:

- Good range of enrichment activities and celebration events that promotes self worth and self esteem
- Good and effective safeguarding arrangements and partnerships for 16-18 and 18-24 year olds high needs support learners means they feel safe in programmes
- Good support and detailed understanding of learners circumstances ensures that wider issues that might affect learning are understood and mitigated
- Learners report that their health and well being is improved by attending programmes and they report significant improvements in self confidence and self esteem

Areas for Improvement:

- Whilst safeguarding arrangements are good and training for the prevent duty is embedded there is still some work to do in ensuring that "Prevent" is understood within the context of teaching and learning.
- Support for learners with mental health issues needs strengthening
- There continues to be a significant challenge in finding suitable premises for the delivery of family learning programmes within school and children's centres premises close to learners homes and childcare

Outcomes for Learners

Grade: 2

Strengths:

- Good success rates in GCSE maths increasing from 62% to 79% and L2 English at 86% (with significant numbers of learners whose first language is not English).
- Learners regularly demonstrate significant progress and achievement in informal learning programmes and use those skills in wider community context
- Success rates in ICT have remained outstanding at above 89%
- Outstanding success rates (91%) for learners in High Needs Support provision at Blueberry Academy
- Success rates in classroom based Health and Social Care are outstanding (counselling, health and social care and children's workforce qualifications) increasing from 75% in 13/14 to 85% in 15/16.

Areas for Improvement:

- Overall success rates for the service are declining from 80% to 76% – a second year fall in success rates mostly as a result of withdrawal of short course qualification in functional English and maths (304 of 532 students)
- In GCSE English a significant drop in success rates from 80% to 66% although this only affects a relatively small number of learners (30 of 568)
- There has been a significant drop in the number of learners and qualifications. This is mainly as a result in a reduction in funding and the changes associated with qualifications.

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2 Strengths

- Good planning and development of the programme to meet the needs of learners, employers and the local community
- Good support for learners ensures that despite significant non learning related barriers achievement is good
- Good management of the service ensures development and resilience of provision across all areas
- Good development of programmes to support priorities for full time foundation 16-19 and 16-25 high needs support learners
- Good development of new programmes and diversification of funding streams ensures the service continues to development and grow
- Embedded governance arrangements ensure that the service is accountable for the quality of provision and outcomes for learners

Areas for Improvement:

- Whilst success rates and timely success are improving in apprenticeships further improvement is needed (Timely success has improved from 36% to 50% and success rates from 65% - 68%
- In some areas of the service capacity and staffing are under significant pressure with potential for support to some of the most vulnerable students suffering
- The overall decline in success rates needs to be reversed, despite a good understanding of the reasons behind this