

Curriculum Intent for Lewisham College

We are a community-based college serving our local communities whilst meeting local, regional and national needs. One of our key USPs is to truly serve our local communities and to support this agenda, we have established more than thirty formal partnerships with various community groups to serve local needs. In addition, we have strong relationships with our local authority, politicians and other local stakeholders. Our learners also support this agenda through taking part in a range of fund raising and other social action events to support local communities and help our learners develop their social skills and pride in their community.

This above is in line with the NCG's mission with a particular focus on social mobility and economic prosperity. We do not just prepare our learners for qualifications, but instead we develop them as individuals to ensure that they can maximise the opportunities that present themselves or which they strive toward in the capital city of modern Britain. We aim to support our learners to become good citizens; who are able to contribute to their local communities through their relative economic prosperity and ensure that their social mobility is evidenced at every stage from independent living skills, through to career and personal development. This is established through ensuring that learners develop relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours. This is supported by careful curriculum design at subject level. Lewisham College is characterised by serving a local community with extremely high levels of local deprivation (the Borough ranked 35th of 317 local authorities in the 2019 IMD) and a diverse range of disadvantaged groups, including those seeking to settle in the UK having sought asylum. At the time of enrolling nearly 65% of our learners have low GCSE grades (below 4/D) or no qualifications in comparison to the average rate of 26% for GFE colleges [MiDES], placing the combined Lewisham College 230 out of 230 in the year 2020/21 for English and maths. The College was ranked 230 out of 230 colleges for learners possessing 9-4 GCSE in English at the start of 2020/21. This increased to 132 out of 229 at the end of the academic year. The College was ranked 228 out of 230 colleges for learners possessing 9-4 GCSE in maths at the start of 2020/21. This increased to 128 out of 230 at the end of the academic year.

In our 2021/211 academic year, 87% of study programme learners are resitting one or both English and mathematics GCSEs or exempt (resit = 60% and exempt = 25%). A significant majority of adult learners are studying both English and mathematics. This drives the provision of a curriculum of which almost 80% provides for the needs of those adult learners within our local communities who aspire to develop their skills to improve their social, and employment opportunities and support the local need for inclusion and increased employment.

Our study programme learners are frequently those for whom compulsory education has been a challenge and performance to this date has been beneath the potential that they exhibit. Consequently, the breadth of provision provides entry into vocational study alongside the study of GCSE or Functional skills

qualifications in line with their needs. The College offer is informed by the key priorities of inclusion, progression and the opportunity to develop independence and employment-ready knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Our adult learners (amongst whom the eldest rank as the 18th most deprived nationally) come to the College for a wide variety of reasons beyond the achievement of qualifications with many taking the skills and knowledge that they gain back into family and community life where they play an increasingly important role. Consequently, the College offer comprises a mix of qualification and non-qualification outcomes underpinned by a rigorous focus upon enabling learners to recognise and celebrate the progress they make. Throughout our work is a focus upon the individual – their needs, entry points, progress, success and aspirations for the future run throughout delivery, improvement and development activities.

We deliver highly effective pre-GCSE courses which create a true progression route for our learners. We are working on the curriculum for the English and mathematics GCSEs to better match the content and sequencing with the starting points of the learners. We understand the value of these GCSEs for further education and jobs but we also want to improve English and mathematics for the benefits that they bring for learners in their mainstream subjects. Our review has resulted in the withdrawal of the Mathematics level 1 award because it did not meet the needs of our learners.

Overall achievement rates are high for adults and require improvement for young learners. Lewisham College secured good sustained destinations for the year 2019/20. The rates were especially high for young learners who secured 94.8% positive destinations compared to 91.8% for other large urban colleges. This is a +5.5% increase from 2018/19. For 19+ learners, positive destinations are broadly in line with other similar providers. In considering the demographic characteristics of the College males (83.1%) and females (85.4%) are similar in their levels of positive destinations. Learners who are categorised as high needs, have an educational health care plan, or care experienced or a care leaver out-perform those who do not in securing positive destinations. In particular, 96.3% of learners with an EHCP and 94.12% of care leavers progress to continued education or employment.

A curriculum strategy has been finalised with a particular focus on developing career-led pathways as well as supporting the needs for those with low level skills or no qualifications. The College has strengthened its partnerships with local communities and is involved in a range of initiatives as outlines below to raise aspirations and assist with progressions and employment opportunities.

Our future aspiration is to become the leading provider in further developing career aspirations for our learners whilst continuing to serve our local communities. We have started our journey through developing a curriculum strategy informed by a

plethora of evidence. This strategy sets the vision for the next five to ten years and beyond. We are continually reviewing our offer: as an example, we reintroduced creative arts in September 2020 supported by an innovative partnership with Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance. As planned, we have reintroduced the media provision as of September 2021. The engineering provision is planned to start from January 2022 in line with national and local needs. We have developed an exciting collaboration with Millwall Football Club and Goldsmiths University to provide opportunities for learners to study media, journalism, marketing and public relations within the world of sports, working alongside global broadcasting companies.

Curriculum changes are continuously being made in the light of the feedback from our communities and key stakeholders, as well as responding to our local and national labour market needs. The College is expanding the breadth of apprenticeship programmes within construction, health care, teaching and education. We have further developed JCP-linked programmes responding to post-COVID concerns around unemployment and progression (e.g. traineeships, Construction Boot Camps). Also, we have expanded the delivery of Sector Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) in association with employers such as Caremark, CIS, the Civil Service, Greggs and UPS. We continue to develop new SWAPs in line with local needs. Working with the DWP and Lewisham Borough, we are developing a Youth Hub in Catford to tackle unemployment rates for young people. The College has also designed and implemented a curriculum for a significant cohort of 14-16 students who are home-educated, or are not able to attend mainstream education and we are at the initial stages of reintroducing a vocational 14-16 school links programme.

The College is embarking on its journey for the new build. This is an exciting time for Lewisham College to start its new chapter. This new build will be informed by the curriculum strategy to ensure that our new premises are fit for purpose to respond to technological advances, automation and the needs of the economy and provide an outstanding learning environment for our learners.