

Committee	Dated:
Education Board	24/09/2020
Subject:	Public
Review of Sixth Form Provision	
Report of:	For Discussion
Director of Community and Children's Services	
Report author:	
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Summary

This report updates Members on the outcomes of an external review undertaken to explore the potential future strategic recommendations for post-16 education across the City of London's Family of Schools. The study also examined potential ways to further develop more systematic partnerships and to harness its educational assets and expertise to improve outcomes for learners. A copy of the report produced by Dr Jane Overbury OBE, "Exceptional learning delivered by the City of London's Family of School sixth forms: Shared ideas about what might make a difference" is included in **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the recommendations of the report
- Discuss the strategic implications of the recommendations for sixth form provision across the Family of Schools.

Main Report

Background

1. Evidence would suggest that there is much to do in improving the outcomes at age post-16 for London's young people. A report by the Social Market Foundation (The Next London Challenge, Nov 2019) indicates that although disadvantaged young people do exceptionally well in London's education system up until age 16, their performance drops off significantly after strong achievement at GCSEs, with A Level results in Inner London being considerably lower than would be expected.
2. The City of London's family of eight independent and state-funded secondary schools and colleges collectively educate almost 2000 sixth form students.
3. Two secondary schools, Shoreditch Park and Highgate Hill will also be starting their sixth form provision in the next few years.

Strategic Aims

4. The City of London (COL) Education Strategy sets the strategic direction for education and delivery is focussed on impact. It commits to actively encouraging social mobility and supporting young people who experience educational disadvantage. Part of the COL strategic aim is that the Family of Schools are recognised locally, nationally and internationally as outstanding and with their unique mix of academies and independent schools who can draw on all the City of London has to offer, they are well placed to develop cutting edge, innovative and creative approaches that can begin to address the London post-16 challenges.

Process of Inquiry

5. All the schools which currently offer a sixth form provision were visited by Dr Jane Overbury as part of the review.
6. In order to provide some further context to the review, the following COL associated institutions were also visited:
 - The ADA College for Digital Skills (co-ed, specialist FE, working closely with the COL)
 - The London Screen Academy (co-ed, specialist school, working closely with the COL)
 - Emanuel School (co-ed, independent day school, part of the Westminster Grey Coat Foundation, historic links to the COL)
7. East visit lasted for 1-2 hours and the aim was to learn about the individual contexts for each institution and specifically their sixth form provision in order to develop a bottom-up understanding of their strengths and challenges from the perspective of Head Teachers, Heads of Sixth Form and other colleagues.
8. The meetings were not used to make judgements regarding the quality of sixth form provision in any school and the summary published performance table data was used only to set a high-level context for the report.
9. The schools and CoLAT were given the opportunity to review the findings and comment.
10. The study commenced in October 2019 and was completed in March 2020. The reporting was delayed due to disruptions caused by coronavirus.

Key findings

11. The recommendations in this report arise from the following findings:
 - a) There is a deep commitment from all COL schools and academies to delivering an outstanding sixth form education.
 - b) There is a variability of outcomes between and within academies.
 - c) Sixth form funding and economic viability poses a significant challenge for academies.
 - d) Financial sustainability is compounded by an almost uniform overlap of the Key Stage 5 curriculum offer, with very small group numbers in some academies placing the viability of their provision at risk
 - e) Student recruitment is resource intensive and the competitive nature of the Key Stage 5 application process brings many uncertainties in terms of student number planning.
 - f) For a range of different reasons academies have difficulties finding, recruiting, training and retaining outstanding Key Stage 5 teachers with appropriate levels of subject knowledge and experience.
12. Taken collectively, these challenges impact on delivery of the curriculum, wider learning and on pupil outcomes.
13. There are several successful partnerships between the COL independent schools and the COL academies, many of which have developed around individual staff or specific projects. However, logistical barriers to sustaining collaborations can be significant and hinder their long-term effectiveness.
14. Specialist associate colleges have much to share with the Family of Schools.

Recommendations

15. The recommendations are to:
 - a) Develop a clear evidenced-based strategic vision for sixth form provision

- b) Establish a central sixth form specific Key Stage 5 teaching and learning collaborative.
- c) Establish a central post-16 careers brokerage service.
- d) Develop systematic, joined-up approaches to students' wider skill development.
- e) Establish or identify a framework where emerging or existing operational sixth form challenges can be explored at a strategic level in a timely way.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1** – A copy of the report “Exceptional learning delivered by the City of London’s Family of School sixth forms: Shared ideas about what might make a difference” by Dr Jane Overbury OBE

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