



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD

QUALITY OF SEND PROVISION DEEP DIVE - QUALITY AND STANDARDS/HE COMMITTEES

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2025 at 9am – 11.30am

Committee Room, Reaseheath College

- Present:**
- Mike Gorton (independent), chair
 - Jane Artess (independent, co-opted)
 - Claire Blanchard (independent)
 - Marcus Clinton (principal)
 - Jane Cowell (independent)
 - Jared Erskine (independent)
 - Phil Gibbon (staff)
 - Peter Green (independent)
 - Paul Johnson (university of Chester, co-opted)
 - Summer Lakin (student union)
- In attendance:**
- Paul Spearritt (vice principal)
 - James Eagney (assistant principal)
 - John Kendal (assistant principal)
 - Jane Nickisson (assistant principal, dean of HE)
 - Sharon Yates (assistant principal)
 - Elizabeth Coles (specialist learning manager)
 - Jo Kavanagh (head of inclusive learning)
 - Jackie Schillinger (head of governance)

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Strategic Plan: Excite, Engage, Enrich, Enable – Support for Learners with High Needs at Reaseheath
1.1	John Kendal gave a presentation on the SEND profile across Further Education, Apprenticeships and Higher Education, an overview of the learning support provision and several case studies to bring to life the type and impact of support provided, including case studies on progression from FE at Reaseheath to UCR, progression to work and progression on apprenticeship programmes.
1.2	<p>A question/discussion session followed, based on the background paper and case studies:</p> <p>How does/will devolution impact the work, as the college works with various local authorities?</p> <p>Explained how the college works with different authorities, the banding for funding and how this works. Those authorities already devolved, it works well with some and not so well with others. It is about the quality of the relationships, and we work hard to build and maintain these. The direction for local authorities is to cut specialist provision as they cannot afford it and so they want to understand us more and how we can support with taking on more students. It is therefore an area that continues to grow, but funding for transport is one of the key issues in devolution.</p> <p>How many learners with SEND are residential?</p>

Currently about 12 learners are residential learners. These learners are under our care standards responsibilities and our residential learners achieve well.

How do you ensure you know what the needs of learners with SEND are?

We get a good level of disclosure before and on enrolment and we work with learners and their families in the run up to starting with us. We do get some disclosure on programme, so we cater for this, with mechanisms to support disclosure once on programme. Apprenticeships disclosure often occurs later. We need to triangulate this back into the programme.

Do you have sufficient resource to support learners with SEND effectively?

Explained the size of staffing provision for send support across the college. There is sufficient resource, the college is currently looking to realign resource. The FE central team supports apprenticeships with a dedicated support role within the apprenticeships team as well. The HE team have a dedicated HE resource. On programme support is very strong, and the re-framing aims to improve the transition support at either end of the on-programme support to make this more effective and seamless.

The case studies show how learners have been supported to achieve and progress – does this always work and what happens when it doesn't?

The vast majority of learners are retained and progress well. If not, this usually comes to light quickly and we work with the learner and their families to look at options for them. Sometimes learners need more time to develop the wrap around skills needed to progress such as organisational skills etc. If the learner has an EHCP there is funding available to support this, which can be retained for a time once the learner reaches 18, so for example the Princes' Trust has opportunities that can cover this to then return to mainstream. We can show case studies where we have worked through issues such as this. We are looking at how we can reduce barriers for retention, such as working with apprenticeship employers so reducing early leavers and putting a new level 1 construction offer in place.

What happens from a student perspective on transition from FE to HE and what is the support like?

Internal progression generally is an area that we are working on to improve, as we are below the sector norm of usually about 10-15%. In terms of learners with SEND, we are working on strengthening working between FE and HE staff, to promote the internal application with for learners with additional needs, an earlier induction plan and putting in those induction to HE activities. The college's new curriculum development team is working with the learning support teams to ensure that inclusive curriculum is built in. The aim is to develop an inclusive curriculum across our provision, and so all students are supported as they need, and there is less need for us to make specific reasonable adjustments.

What about apprenticeships?

On average, there are about 200 learners with an identified support need. One issue is that some apprentices are reluctant to let their employer know, so have to work more discretely. However, we try to work proactively with employers to support workplace too. We have closed the achievement gap for apprenticeships with a support need.

How does the support change in HE?

There is a change in style of support, under the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) funding. With HE there is no longer in class support, so the student will have access to assistive technology as their in-class support. Therefore, we train them and support them to use the assistive technology, and it does work well. It can be different, but we work on lots of transition activities, and the intention is to become more independent learners. We have now introduced group support and teach the skills to get them on the right pathway to succeed.

	<p>Do you use mentor/buddy ship in FE or HE?</p> <p>Not currently but this is an area we are looking to introduce as part of our inclusive curriculum across FE and HE. We have a new draft student engagement strategy coming to HE committee.</p>
2.	Strategic Plan: Engage - Evaluation of Current Performance/Achievement Gaps
2.1	James Eagney and Jane Nickisson gave a presentation on Performance Data: What data do we collect and what our data tells us about how well learners with SEND achieve and progress at Reaseheath and UCR. The presentation included an explanation of the KPI data tracked for learners with additional needs, the learner survey data collected and the work on developing the quality assurance activity on the quality of learning support/teaching in the classroom and practical sessions.
2.2	<p>A question and discussion session followed:</p> <p>How effective is your provision for learners with SEND and are there any achievement gaps?</p> <p>Performance data in FE on retention and attendance is broadly in line with the college average, with high needs learners. However, we have identified some gaps in curriculum areas and with such a high proportion of learners with LLDD (learner with learning disability or difficulty – includes EHCP, High Needs and all SEND) – 45% compared to 27% nationally - it is essential we develop our inclusive curriculum. Nationally there is about a 3% gap in achievement LLDD focused on the pass rates more so than retention rates. At Reaseheath this is less, as 2.3%, but we also need to note the much higher % of overall cohort.</p> <p>Attainment gaps exist in HE on continuation and attainment, which has been identified in our Access and Participation Plan, and this gap is narrowing, but it currently still not where it needs to be. This is a key focus in the HE quality Improvement Plan. LLDD from a HE perspective is 45% compared to 19% in HE generally. We have used the OfS dashboard, so we are now looking to improve our tracking data. Focus on if need to re-sit not as resilient and then more likely to withdraw. In year retrieval model and so they can resit immediately and so we have implemented this year, and it is looking like this has had a positive impact. Supporting continuation data.</p> <p>There is a small achievement gap currently in Apprenticeships that we are working to reduce. Numbers are approximately on radar 229, regular support to 10, 164 EAA, 10 EHCP.</p> <p>Learner surveys score well if not better than survey response for those learners without LLDD. In FE, learning walks that focus on the quality of the learning support in classroom and practical sessions have now started and this intelligence will be used to inform the CPD. As this data develops, this can be shared with the quality and standards committee going forwards.</p> <p>It is important to note that SEND learners with no funding are included in the increased Ofsted focus on inclusion in the proposed new framework. This includes any disadvantaged postcodes. This essentially means an institutional shift for the sector to a holistic approach to inclusive curriculum and assessment design for all. As Reaseheath has almost half its students with LLDD this is already a key focus for us.</p>
Coffee/Tea break 10.20am – 10.30am	
3.	Strategic Plan: Engage – Quality Improvement Plan and Impact
3.1	<p>James Eagney and Jane Nickisson gave a presentation on Areas for Improvement, Quality Improvement Plan Progress and Impact, with quality improvement plan summary of progress shared with committee members.</p> <p>In FE and Apprenticeships, the Ofsted Inspection Areas for Improvement (AFIs) were covered with a specific focus on SEND. Two areas are to improve the quality and consistency of learning support for</p>

	<p>students with SEND and high needs, and to ensure students benefit from suitably ambitious curriculums.</p> <p>In Higher Education, to address the achievement gaps identified in continuation and attainment, in the Access and Participation Plan, intervention strategies include further developing data and dashboards, continuation of the successful “Early Access” programme, more academic and personal support, peer mentoring and CPD for academic staff.</p>
3.2	<p>A question and discussion session followed:</p> <p>What impact have you seen so far in relation to the Ofsted AFI on the quality of learning support in lessons?</p> <p>We have been working with FE SEND expert Sarah Le-Good helping us to direct a CPD targeted plan for learning support practitioners. We have seen impact in the working relationship between teachers and ILPs has now been embedded in induction. The quality cycle of learning walks has now started. However, this is a key area to increase pace so that we can see impact of the CPD plan in improved practice in the classroom. This will be an area that we will report through to the quality and standards committee to monitor impact into 2025-26 academic year.</p> <p>What impact have you seen so far in relation to the Ofsted AFI on a suitably ambitious curriculum?</p> <p>We have seen the impact of the immediate focus on ensuring learners are on the right course for them, by clarifying guidance and increasing oversight on IAG and decision-making process for learners with SEND accessing mainstream curriculum. The remaining focus now is that we do not have enough learners with SEND progressing through our curriculum. The impact of our work with Sarah Le-Good identified that our foundation level curriculum is too distinct and has been developed over time too much in isolation from the mainstream curriculum. So, we have started work on creating a progressive curriculum. The first part of this is the foundation curriculum review which is presented in the next agenda item.</p> <p>What impact does the UCR Future Focus have on learners with SEND?</p> <p>The development of the existing “Future Focus” initiative, aims to better support UCR graduates into highly skilled, professional, managerial employment, further study or other positive outcomes. This will focus on the specific needs of disabled students and includes work to identify pedagogical approaches that support employability in disabled students, a review of the careers advice and guidance on offer and further support with key employability skills such as CV writing, interviews and social media, We also aim to strengthen our alumni activity, so that current students can learn and gain support and inspiration from past graduates.</p> <p>How does your HE assessment policy consider learners with additional needs, in the context of the recent Equality Commission against a university?</p> <p>We do not have a specific formal assessment policy for additional needs, but we are flexible, and we have not had any issues accommodating needs. We are currently looking at this as we build it into our adaptations of assessments. Chester has new guidance about students disclosing at the last minutes about anxiety etc which allows reasonable adjustments to be made without having to go through all the formal process, which will be shared with Reaseheath so that they can incorporate it if useful. Note the Advance HE inclusive institution framework this summer.</p> <p>HE learning walks will be offered to committee members as well as other governors in the same way as FE learning walks to triangulate data and see impact.</p>
4.	Strategic Plan: Engage – Curriculum Development
4.1	<p>John Kendal presented the initial findings from the Foundation Curriculum Review, which proposed three progression pathways, covering skills for life, starting a land-based curriculum (level 1) and</p>

	supported internships as the initial progression routes from entry, with a proposed progression map through the curriculum.
4.2	<p>Questions and discussion followed:</p> <p>What progress have you made on addressing the suitably ambitious curriculum point with this curriculum development work?</p> <p>We consider we have made good progress in addressing this. Currently we have mapped needs analysis of who we have got where, and we are training staff to support the needs; we have made the initial assessment period more robust and set out the initial progression curriculum which will be the basis of the curriculum design next year.</p> <p>Are staff on board with this approach?</p> <p>Yes, foundation staff are on board and keen to progress this approach, we will need to ensure we communicate and promote the benefits to all staff across the organisation to make sure everyone understands and fully supports the progression curriculum.</p>
The deep dive session closed at 11.45am	

Approved as a correct record 12 June 2025