College Progress Visit Report

Glasgow Clyde College

21 December 2021

College Principal	**Jon Vincent**
Progress Visit (PV) Date	**8 November 2021**
College Nominee	**Eric Brownlie**
Lead Inspector	**Peter B Connelly**
College HMI	**Ian Beach**
Outcome of Progress Visit	**Satisfactory progress**

Background and context

The college and its context

Glasgow Clyde College is an assigned college within the Glasgow Region and one of Scotland's largest further education institutions. It is a multi-site college with campuses in Anniesland, Cardonald and Langside, offering a curriculum to meet the social and economic needs of the Glasgow region. Each year, approximately 16,000 learners enrol at the college on a wide variety of programmes from Access level courses through to Higher National Diploma (HND) and degree level. The college also offers Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships along with professional workforce development qualifications.

Glasgow Clyde College delivers around 130,000 credits of activity each year as part of its Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The college is in partnership with the Glasgow Clyde Education Foundation, which funds projects that focus on improving the learner experience and achieving more positive learner outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic created huge challenges for learners and staff throughout the college. Face-to-face teaching continued until March 2020, and then in response to the pandemic, teaching moved online. Managers, staff and learners have adapted to new ways of planning, delivering and engaging in online learning activities. The college's ICT infrastructures and systems supported both the move to remote learning and to a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Canvas, which has provided a platform for staff and learners to engage in online teaching and learning.

Purpose of the progress visit

PVs are planned collaboratively between the college, Education Scotland and SFC. The team carrying out the PV engages with staff, learners and other stakeholders and produce a summary report for each college, which will be shared with the principal, college Regional Board and/or college Board of Management.

Overall judgement regarding progress

At the end of the PV, HM Inspectors of Education, Associate Assessors and Student Team Members review the evidence gathered during their discussions with college managers, staff, learners and stakeholders. They assess the progress that colleges have made against their Action Plans, taking account of any changes to local circumstances. Based on this evidence, the team will form a view as to whether the college has made satisfactory progress against its Action Plans or has not made satisfactory progress. This outcome is contained within this report with accompanying commentary to support the findings.

The PV to Glasgow Clyde College explored five overarching themes linked to the college's enhancement plan and priorities around COVID-19 recovery. These themes are:

- Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment;
- Services to support learning;
- Learner engagement;
- Evaluation to facilitate improvement; and
- Learner progress and outcomes.

Findings from the progress visit

Curriculum, learning and teaching and assessment

Areas of positive progress

- College senior managers provide strong leadership support for staff on how learning, teaching and assessment should be delivered and evaluated. The focus on learning provides a strong framework for staff at all levels to consider and use to create new forms of blended learning activities using online platforms and tools.

- The college has adopted a hybrid model of delivery for 2021-22, incorporating a blend of online learning and in-campus attendance. The work of the Delivery of Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA), the Research and Development Team and the E-Learning Team is having a positive impact on supporting staff to develop creative approaches to the delivery of learning and the introduction of the blended learning model.

- Learners appreciate the variety and range of teaching methods used by their lecturers during lessons and describe how these help them to stay engaged with their learning. During remote lessons, all staff made learners feel welcome and took account of their needs and abilities. This encouraged a positive and engaging learning experience.

- The staff are confident in using the online approaches to learning and teaching and are able to maintain interest and motivation, and build the knowledge and understanding of learners.

- Lessons are well-structured, with learning intentions stated effectively and good reference made to earlier learning, knowledge and understanding. Staff make strong links with the needs of industry and regularly reference examples in lessons from the workplace.

- Staff have developed new programmes and updated existing curricula to reflect the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, learners on the NQ Medical Administration programme learners receive added value learning on how both surgeries and hospitals were adapting their systems and procedures around COVID-19; the School of Business and Finance partnered with the School of Health and Life Sciences to deliver COVID-19 compliant first aid training; and, the School of Access to Education have introduced digital literacy training and the SQA Wellbeing Award to all of our courses in response to the pandemic.

- Curriculum managers engage well with colleagues to consider areas for improvement, attend training events and liaise with colleagues from support services to support curriculum delivery.

- Staff have devised well-considered assessment techniques, sharing their experience of assessments widely with other staff, implementing a portfolio and project-based approach where appropriate.

- All learners indicated they were developing the relevant skills and knowledge needed to progress further with their studies or to go into the workplace.

- Assessment feedback takes place through a range of methods including face to face meetings where possible, on Canvas, on a one to one basis or as a group, via email and via teams

meetings. All learners felt the range of feedback methods was beneficial to them, and they understood the progress they were making.

- Staff plan assessment schedules collaboratively with learners to accommodate their lifestyles and provide flexibility to ensure learners are able to complete their assessments in a timeous manner.

- The E-Learning team has devised and delivered significant professional learning for staff to support remote learning. These include team approaches and individual sessions. Almost all teaching staff engage well with professional learning opportunities and these activities support them well in delivering effective learning sessions.

- Because many staff felt socially isolated through the periods of college campus closure, staff collaborated and supported each other well. They offer support and advice to learners and fellow staff through sessions such as Two Minute Tuesday's.

- The use of the new college VLE as a vehicle to support the delivery of online learning has been planned and implemented well. Teaching staff have been supported to engage with the new technology. As a result, the VLE has become a major feature in the delivery of online learning.

- The college has prioritised and delivered on-campus learning activities for practical subject areas and for those learners who experienced difficulty accessing or using remote learning. This has supported learners well, particularly those on work-based learning programmes, to attain and achieve their learning goals.

- To ensure that learners gain appropriate levels of digital skill, staff are reviewing curricula to introduce activities to support digital skills development, delivered in short sessions. These cover areas such as screen confidence and bridging courses or short induction courses.

Areas for further progress and actions required

- Some staff have not yet engaged sufficiently in professional learning to support development of their approaches to learning and teaching. Managers highlight that a few staff do not yet have the necessary digital skills to ensure consistency in the quality of learning and teaching.

- Some learners remain reluctant to use their cameras during remote lessons. This diminishes opportunities for learners to engage fully with each other, and support with the college's ambition that learners feel a sense of belonging both academically and socially.

- Whilst progress has been made in implementing a blended model of learning and teaching, further work is required to ensure that it is embedded consistently. The use of evidence-based research is supporting discussion about next steps.

Services to support learning

Areas of positive progress

- To address digital poverty and support all learners to engage in remote learning, the college provided almost 3500 digital devices and 750 broadband dongles, particularly to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Access to support services for learners has been reviewed and streamlined to allow learners to access support across all campuses, both in person and remotely. All learners describe being confident that they could access support when needed, particularly in relation to their mental health.

- Staff have reviewed arrangements to ensure learners with additional support needs are able to access support more easily. Enrolment arrangements have been tailored to the needs of specific learner groups, reducing the amount of information required, particularly for learners whose first language is not English.

- The support services team have streamlined Supported Learning learner's documentation to ensure access to additional support is available more quickly for learners. For example, library staff provide advice and guidance to support users of college devices and a laptop loan service, creating a simple process for allocation of devices and support. Staff created a helpful QR code for learners which was useful in monitoring the loan of devices.

Area for further progress and actions required

- None identified

Learner engagement

Areas of positive progress

- To support learner engagement and involvement in learning and college life, staff have developed approaches to developing the sense of belonging policy for learners in the college. This policy is manifested in different ways, including spaces for learners and staff to meet and discuss their issues and concerns together.

- The E-Learning team use data on the learner usage of the mobile App and broadband platforms well, to inform improvements to the provision of online services for learners.

- Learners report high levels of satisfaction with their college experience, with over 90% of learners reporting that they felt a sense of belonging, and 95% stating that they were highly satisfied with enrolment processes.

- The Student Association (SA) has a strong presence in the college. This year it has developed peer mentoring arrangements to support learners with basic computing problems with support from learners on computing programmes, who in turn are gaining valuable customer care skills.

Areas for further progress and actions required

- Staff acknowledge that some FE learners require more support to access and engage in their learning, particularly ESOL learners and school leavers. Many of these learners do not have the required confidence on entering college programmes and often lack the required levels of digital skill for their programme.

Evaluation to facilitate improvement

Areas of positive progress

- The college uses it quality arrangements well to make good progress on each of the four overarching improvement actions in the current academic year. These are enhancing the professional skills of staff, ensuring learning and teaching approaches are developed upon evidence-based research, delivering high quality learning and teaching which lead to improved outcomes and widening digital participation by learners and staff.

- The college is using a range of approaches to gather and evaluate feedback from staff and learners to inform its understanding and ensure actions and resources are in place to deliver effective learning, teaching and assessment experiences. This includes a detailed survey of lecturers' experiences of online teaching.

- Staff are using a variety of means to evaluate the learning experience and at the end of lessons they are requesting suggestions for improvement from learners. The college Development Week is also helping staff to reflect on their provision and to make improvements. Staff welcome this opportunity to focus on improvement.

- Many staff engage well in peer review procedures. The informal discussions and sharing of ideas help staff to evaluate their practice and also use evidence-based research to ensure there are learning plans available for all activities.

- Staff are proactive in engaging with external partners to improve the digital skills agenda and reflect on how other colleges in the UK have introduced measures to improve their performance and subsequent performance indicators.

- Learners provide feedback to the college using various methods including surveys, class discussions, the SA and Class Representative system. College managers meet regularly with the SA to gain its views and use these well in planning improvements to services and learning.

Areas for further progress and actions required

- None Identified.

Learner progress and outcomes

Areas of positive progress

- Prior to the pandemic, learner success rates across all levels and modes of attendance had increased over the previous three years.
- College managers use learner performance data well and carefully consider action plans for improving learner outcomes.

- Overall, the college has performed well in relation to the rest of the sector.

- Success rates for a few programmers such as HE social subjects, HE media and FE special programmes improved during the pandemic.

Areas for further progress and actions required

- Rates of learner withdrawal from college programmes have increased during the pandemic and are anticipated to increase further in the current year.

- Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, attainment rates in most programme areas have fallen.

What happens next?

The progress visit report will be shared with SFC, the college Board (and in multi-college regions, the Regional Strategic Body).

Peter B Connelly
HM Inspector