

Priestley College



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Assessment Information

Assessment Type	Accreditation Review
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Steve Murphy
Visit Date	02/02/2021 to 05/02/2021
Client ID	C13165
Assessment Reference	PN200463
Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by	10/12/2021
Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by	10/12/2022
Accreditation Review onsite visit to be conducted by	10/12/2023

Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

Priestley Sixth Form and Community College (the college) is part of The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) and is located in the town of Warrington in Cheshire. It was established as a college in 1979 following local reorganisation of post-16 education and is named after famous scientist, Joseph Priestley, who had taught in the area. The college has one main campus, although pre-pandemic, some adult provision was delivered from community locations.

The college delivers a range of learning for young people and adults, with around 2,000 students on roll at any one time. Although the majority come from Warrington itself, a sizeable number come from as far afield as Runcorn, Widnes, Altrincham, Northwich, Irlam, Newton-le-Willows and Frodsham, making use of buses run by the college or public transport. The town of Warrington is almost equidistant between Liverpool and Manchester and is now the largest town in the county of Cheshire. The Warrington local authority has been ranked as the 101st most deprived LA in the country (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019), which is an improvement from its position of 88th in 2015. Much of the town's growth has been due to its location between three main motorways (M6, M56 and M62) and the proximity to both Liverpool and Manchester Airports, meaning that distribution and logistics has become a prime growth sector with organisations such as The Hut Group and Amazon locating there. The population is mainly categorised as White British (almost 93% at the last census in 2011).

The college offers a wide variety of over 70 vocational and academic courses, mainly aimed at young people leaving Year 11, including some GCSEs and pre-GCSEs (mainly English and Maths), A Levels and vocational programmes at Levels 2 and 3. The college was one of the early adopters of T Level provision and currently offers programmes in Digital Production, Design & Development, Education & Childcare, Health and Science. Adult courses include GCSEs in English, Maths and Biology, Functional Skills provision, a number of different entry level foreign language and digital programmes and a creative writing programme. The college is proud of its inclusive approach to student recruitment.

The college is one of ten Warrington-based institutions that make up TCAT. Formed in 2017, TCAT includes primary and secondary schools plus the college with a Mission '*To serve, challenge and empower the educational community.*' The Trust has Members and a Board that oversee its work in supporting its institutions. The college has its own Board of Governors and alongside the Principal, student, staff and parental representation are representatives from industry, commerce and education, selected for the skills, knowledge and experience they bring. Since the latest Ofsted inspection, moves have been made to develop the governing body's understanding of post-16 learning to better enable it to fulfil its scrutiny role (for example on understanding Advanced Level Performance System data), and there are now allocated governors for specialist areas, including safeguarding and careers. Day to day management is overseen by the Principal, with the support of a Senior Leadership Team that contains a Vice Principal, two Assistant Principals, a Director of Finance and a Business & Operations Manager. There are four Faculties: Professional & Social Studies; Creative Arts & Sport; Humanities, Languages, Culture & Media; and STEM. Each has its own operational manager and subject Tutors. Student Support Services is overseen by an Assistant Principal and includes three teams, each with its own manager. The Marketing and IAG team has staff covering each of those functions; the Study Support /LRC team has Study Support Assistants and Student Support Assistants and five Senior Tutors manage a team of Progress Tutors (PTs) and Personal Tutors (who combine teaching with a similar role, mainly in vocational subjects) who are the first line of support for personal, pastoral and progression issues to students and their parents/carers. In this report, 'PT' refers to the role of Personal or Progress Tutors. This team also

includes the Wellbeing Coordinator, the Industry Placement coordinator, the Administrator (who deals with bursary, free school meals and travel issues) and the Student Counsellor.

Since the last accreditation the college has undertaken a structural review and has also appointed a new Principal who has been in post for around 12 months. There has been a continuation of the move towards the introduction of Progress Tutors and the college has also appointed the Wellbeing Coordinator to provide additional pastoral support for students. The expansion of T Levels has also resulted in the appointment of an Industry Placement Coordinator to help facilitate work placements for students on those and other courses. All of these developments have occurred with the backdrop of the Covid pandemic, which has impacted all elements of teaching, learning and IAG.

This college's Vision is:

'To be the region's leading provider of high-quality educational opportunities, responding to the needs of the community we serve.'

This is supported by its Mission:

'To support, challenge and inspire students to fulfil their potential.'

Underpinning both is a set of Values.

'We value:

Learning and enjoyment of learning

Each individual and their needs and aspirations

Achievements and success which are both personal and academic

Effort and endeavour to maximise a person's full potential

Partnership based on respect and equality.'

The college makes every effort to play a role in the strategic development of the area. Through TCAT, it has links with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as part of a number of sub-groups such as the Employers' Skills and Education Board, *The Pledge Partnership*, the Accelerate Governing Board and the Digital Skills Partnership. There are also links with various Principal networks such as the Sixth Form College Association, and with the local Careers Network.

The college's most recent Ofsted visit was for a Full Inspection in May 2019, at which it was graded as *'Good.'* In relation to the IAG provided, the inspection included a range of positive comments about progression to higher education, progression to apprenticeships, preparation for the world of work and pastoral support systems.

In 2015, the college became the first in the country to be granted STEM Assured status in recognition of its ability to design and delivery science, technology, engineering and maths programmes that keep pace with emerging technology and the needs of employers. The college is also recognised as being *Disability Confident*.

The college has targets and expected outcomes set by TCAT and those set internally. A number of these are supported by the IAG that is provided, including TCAT targets for NEET levels at 18+ to be lower than national levels and college targets in relation to recruitment, retention, achievement and progression, benchmarked against national outcomes. The college provides support to TCAT schools to reduce the likelihood of their leavers becoming NEET and the rebranding of Level 2 programmes to 'Foundation' courses is partly aimed at contributing to a more attractive and inclusive post-16 offer for those in danger of not progressing to a positive destination. The latest data (2020) shows that Achievement rates across all programmes reached 91.1% for 16–18-year-olds, compared to the national average of 81.9%. A Level Achievement rates reached 98.9%, an increase from the 2019 rate of 96.5%. Level 3 Diploma Achievement in 2020 was 94.5% compared to the national average of 81.5% and Level 3 Certificate Achievement was 91.0% compared to the national

average of 80.1%. Achievement of maths and English for all students including Adults was higher than national averages. Progression to higher education has steadily increased, with 59.9% moving on to university in 2020. Analysis of data is also undertaken to identify outcomes for vulnerable groups, demonstrating a difference of around 5% between students receiving bursaries compared to those not receiving them. This has been addressed by a number of developing strategies including the appointment of the Wellbeing Coordinator and closer analysis of wellbeing and progression data to identify and quickly provide support for more vulnerable students.

The impact and effectiveness of the college's IAG provision is measured by destination information, progression data and the outcomes of various surveys undertaken with students and parents/carers. The college places much emphasis on gathering, analysing and collating feedback on its services. Regular surveys are conducted with students and parents/carers in relation to areas such as induction programmes, careers provision, welfare provision and the tutorial system, and prior to the lockdown focus groups of students gathered views on a range of topics. Analysis is undertaken and actioned by the *Your Futures* Team that includes all staff involved in progression issues. For example, feedback suggested more of a focus on apprenticeship opportunities and in response a new employer has been recruited to be involved in delivering sessions for students. Responses are shared with students using a 'you said, we did' format. There is a detailed annual *Student Achievement & Destinations Report* produced that is shared with governors and parents/carers. The most recent data showed that general trends were being maintained, with the exception of a year-on-year increase in the percentage seeking employment from 2.0% in 2019 to 6.2% in 2020 – an understandable increase in light of the pandemic. There is a growing recognition within the college that IAG linked to student wellbeing is an increasingly important element of its role. Wellbeing support is available to all students which includes the new Wellbeing Coordinator to provide support for those with low-level mental health issues and the student Counsellor whose services are well-used and who has recently recruited Trainee Counsellors (who are undertaking counselling training) to add to the resource available. Students are fully aware of the support that is provided and recognise the importance it can have on their overall development. One student commented: *"The support I have had really has made me more confident. I need lots of reassurance and they provided that for me."* Students have access to a wide range of enrichment activities which have moved to virtual platforms as a result of the pandemic, and in addition to topics such as sports challenges, astronomy and a debating society, there are opportunities to become involved in activities that are specifically aimed at mindfulness and wellbeing, including mindfulness techniques, origami, music to help sleep and music playlists to help engender a positive mood. The development of the *UniFrog* tool to enable students to record both their personal and curriculum progress provides a valuable holistic development resource for students, helping them with UCAS personal statements and applications for apprenticeships or employment.

Students learn about the different IAG available to them in a variety of ways. For potential students leaving Year 11, a virtual schools liaison team made up of specially-selected curriculum Tutors, works with schools by attending careers fairs, delivering assemblies, covering all elements of the college offer. There are eight 'partner schools' in Warrington, but the team also works with other Warrington schools, plus others in Halton, Knowsley, Wigan and St Helens. There are plans to extend activities lower down schools, including 'Year 10 Days' and includes the *Making Choices* booklet for Years 8 and 9 students so as to develop a stronger foundation for links with potential students. There are various open events and information sessions held during each year (currently held virtually) and these are attended by the college's Careers Advisers to ensure that potential learners make well-informed decisions about joining the college and/or which courses to undertake. For potential adult learners, there is a separate *Course Guide*. The college's web site is detailed

and clear. There is a specialist 'Progression' tab that includes details of the support available in relation to career planning and development, plus coverage of the wellbeing support on the E-Enrichment page. More recently, there has been a focus on providing IAG in relation to T Levels for potential students and their parents/carers.

IAG for students is part of the role of many staff. All informal and formal support involves relevant curriculum and/or pastoral staff and the IAG provided covers the full range of support needs including personal, financial, emotional, health, careers, learning, additional needs, family and wellbeing issues. The college has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum and pastoral arms work effectively together, and support is provided within the structure of a Cause for Concern process. Prior to the formal stages of this process, there is an informal stage which is very much based on being supportive, identifying an issue, exploring it with the student and their family (where appropriate) and seeking solutions. It is only if this does not achieve the required outcome that the formal stages are initiated at which there are inputs from Deputy Heads of Faculty (Stage 1) and Heads of Faculty (Stage 2). Throughout the process, the aim is to help a student overcome barriers and be able to continue their learning.

Pastoral support is managed by four Senior Tutors who have responsibility for safeguarding, progression, widening participation, work-related learning, enrichment and attendance. They provide resources for tutorials that are delivered by the PTs. Each Senior Tutor has specialist areas to which they contribute, such as Equality & Diversity or Progression, and all tutorials have themes, sometimes related to particular times of year, for example UCAS applications, Black History Month, Digital Safety or Mental Health Week, or dealing with life skills or employability skills, such as resilience and teamworking. Resources are provided in advance and are ready for PTs to deliver. Tutorials include supporting students to use the *UniFrog* platform to record all of their career-based learning and progress and help them with their career choices. Despite its name the platform also incorporates apprenticeship as well as higher education options. Each student is allocated a PT who also provides least one individual tutorial each term, looking at relevant issues that could include their progress, attendance/behaviour issues and career planning, setting improvement targets with them. During lockdown individual checks have been much more frequent, with a focus on wellbeing issues. PTs know their students well and students recognise the support and facilitative role that they play in helping them navigate the various support channels that they can access.

The college takes a holistic perspective to careers and progression, making good use of the government's Gatsby Benchmarks to structure and manage such provision. This is overseen by the Assistant Principal – Student Support Services who is the designated Careers Leader and has completed the Certificate in Career Leadership. The most recent self-assessment using the Compass tool in December 2020 showed that the college was fully meeting three of the eight Benchmarks, with many others scoring above 80% and the lowest score being 50% for Benchmark 6 (Experience of Workplaces) which has obviously been impacted by the pandemic. Outcomes from each Compass assessment result in the review of the Careers Plan which records Compass outcomes and identifies development point against all Benchmarks – even those for which the college has scored 100%. The college has two Careers Advisers CAs, both very experienced and qualified at Level 6, who are based in the 'Careers Area' of the Learning Resource Centre, with space for confidential individual interventions and for groups of up to 15 students. They provide IAG for all students, including adults. Normally, appointments can be booked electronically or in person, however during the pandemic, the service has moved online, with individual IAG delivered through Google Meet and phone as well as through email enquiries. IAG covers all elements of careers planning, including support in application processes, interview preparation, finance issues and job search techniques. For academically more able students, the college offers its *Excel* suite of

programmes that includes the Duke of Edinburgh programme, STEM support programmes and *The Graduate* programme that supports progress towards applications for ‘Russell Group’ universities and ‘Sutton Trust 30’ institutions – those deemed to be the most highly selective. Students have responded positively to being involved in these programmes and value the additional edge that they feel they provide in their applications for university. The college is the North West hub for Oxnet, which works alongside Oxford University to help widen participation in higher education. There are also specialist support programmes for those considering careers in Law, Medicine or Childcare & Education that offer additional coaching, guest speakers and visits to universities. Other specialist courses that contribute to IAG include the Solvey Partnership supporting careers in science, Maths and Science Olympiads and schemes supporting Engineering and Music careers and international study. For students completing their programmes, ongoing support is available from the college or referral to specialist careers support agencies such as *Warrington Life* for young people or the National Careers Service for adults. Resources and information is also available for students through the Careers Moodle and Google Classroom pages. There is an increasing array of on-line resources and links that students can access to inform, motivate and inspire them. For example, they are provided with links to *Learn Lounge* platform that has a range of guest speakers and personalities from industry, education and the wider world, sharing their experiences and advice. Throughout the year there are numerous workshops and sessions held in college and visits arranged to employers and universities. Information on what is being delivered and when, is posted on the college web site. While Student Support Services staff deal specifically with careers advice, work experience and enrichment activities, responsibility for careers and progression is not the sole preserve of these staff and all Tutors have a responsibility to embed careers and progression into their teaching and learning – a role that they enjoy and which they believe energises students as it gives them an aim for their course. Tutors also stress how some of the skills developed on their programmes, while not being specifically career-specific, do have positive employability benefits, such as teamwork, creativity, independent thinking and problem solving. Some subjects have been able to integrate ‘Live Briefs’ into their curriculum, taking real industry-led challenges that bring subjects to life. Others have been able to make good use of enrichment activities such as the college radio or mock trials to showcase the range of careers involved in different sectors and which introduce a careers element to learning. Tutors also recognise the breadth of the IAG they provide, including support with initial course decisions at open events or enrolment sessions.

Work Experience is an important part of the progression offer for students. All students have the opportunity to undertake some sort of work experience opportunity which could be a placement as part of a vocational or T Level programme, voluntary work or a structured placement that is either sourced by themselves or by the college. Sourcing placements is enhanced by links with *The Pledge Partnership* – a local collaborative project delivered by the Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub supporting and facilitating young people to gain experience of the workplace, and with the Warrington Business exchange. Staff and students all have access to a range of labour market and progression information to help them make informed decisions, facilitated by the college’s place on the Data and Labour Intelligence Market Steering Group of the Cheshire & Warrington LEP to keep abreast of regional developments.

Through various staff in the Learning Resource Centre, students can access support in relation to their health, travel, finance, bursaries and counselling needs. In ‘normal’ times, students can make appointments or drop in for the help that they need, although during the pandemic support has been available remotely as well as face to face for those at college. The team includes staff who specialise in financial, bursary and travel information, a Wellbeing Practitioner who can provide advice and

support in relation to lower-level cause for mental health concerns, and a counsellor who is available for formal counselling sessions.

For students with additional learning needs, the Study Support team, managed by an Inclusion Manager, is able to assess need and provide any additional help that is needed. This can include aids and adaptations to teaching or personalised support in relation to self-organisation, additional time for examinations, study skills and examination or revision techniques. Information from assessments is recorded on Portal, with a flag system if this changes during the year, so that curriculum Tutors are always fully aware of any adaptations they need to make. There are strong links between the team and curriculum Tutors and PTs, ensuring that all are involved in student support as necessary. Staff attend formal Reviews for students that have Education, Health & Care Plans, collating progress information from all internal staff who are involved with that student.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented series of challenges for the college. Many activities including recruitment events, parent/carer events, teaching and IAG have moved to on-line delivery and the college has worked hard to ensure that students, especially those who are disadvantaged, have full access to all provision. Responses have included: ensuring the premises are Covid-secure; ensuring students have access to IT equipment and data; and providing training for staff in the delivery of blended learning. Actions to respond to the pandemic are included in the college's Quality Improvement Plan (QulP) to ensure that they are monitored. While the numbers attending virtual events are, unsurprisingly, reduced compared to attendance at actual events in previous years, actual applications for 2021 have increased. A student survey completed in November 2020 indicated that 90% felt that *'the model is working for me.'* Students would all prefer to be in college but feel that things have been as good as they could be, with PTs keeping in regular contact with them to check their wellbeing, including getting students to complete Wellbeing Journals that they find useful and demonstrate that the college is genuinely interested in them. Virtually all staff believe that the college has handled things as well as possible and that students adapted well to the alternate week attendance model and the amended virtual learning model that has had to be adopted from January 2021. Staff have been given training on how to use Google Meet effectively to deliver teaching and IAG interventions and provided with hardware and software to help them work from home where they needed it and given the option of postponing interview evenings (which have to be held at college for safeguarding reasons) if they do not feel comfortable attending. A very small minority of staff interviewed believe that social distancing measures for students could have been more stringently implemented and some office space made more Covid-secure. Managers in the college are very conscious of the challenges that staff are facing, having to deliver work and provide support remotely, while many are also balancing home-schooling and supporting the welfare needs of their students. Particular 'pinch-points' exacerbate situations for different staff and managers work hard to maintain contact with staff without adding to their already heavy workload.

Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- Staff speak highly of the leadership that has been provided by the new Principal and the Senior Leadership Team. There is general recognition that the pandemic has provided the worst possible environment for this new team to be taking on their role, but staff have been very impressed with the communication, the willingness to listen and learn about the college and its faculties, the collaborative approach to decision-making, the engagement with students and, above all, the positivity displayed throughout. Staff are impressed by the emphasis given to their wellbeing during the pandemic, which for many has gone above and beyond what they were anticipating. One commented, *“He (the Principal) has made me feel calm and reassured.”* Staff have confidence in the direction that the college is heading and that support for students remains an important feature for senior leaders (1.2).
- The college has developed an impressive array of strategic and operational partnerships that underpin its Careers Education and broader IAG provision. Strategically, involvement with the Cheshire & Warrington LEP ensures that the college’s offer is linked to the realities of the labour market and the needs of employers. The LEP’s *Skills and Education Plan* is used as a reference point in the college’s (draft) Strategic Action Plan. Operationally, partnerships with employers, universities, the LEP, the National Careers Service, Warrington Life careers service (part of Warrington Council), the Careers & Enterprise Company and *The Pledge Partnership* and a range of specialist support agencies linked to issues such as health and substance misuse which ensure that information, support and signposting opportunities are all readily available and that IAG provision is up to date and accessible for students (1.8, 3.8, 4.4).
- The information provided to students is thorough, detailed, relevant and up to date. The college ensures that staff are well informed about issues such as careers, finances and local support agencies that can provide specialist help. For example, the ‘tube map’—style Careers Pathways posters show all of the career options available via each faculty in a novel and engaging format. In addition, there are many different resources utilised to contribute to the overall CEIAG programme, such as that provided by the Careers & Enterprise Company and platforms such as Working Options and Higher Horizons. Information also supports the active involvement of parents/carers who are *“Keener than ever to know’ where courses will lead”*. The Handbook they receive when their son/daughter starts college is readable, informative and incorporates clear details of the IAG that is available, and this is further supplemented by regular ‘e-shot’ electronic newsletters. Information provided to schools about the college is of a high standard and has developed during lockdown as virtual information resources become even more important. The prospectus includes the *Careers Pathway* tool which has up to date careers information linked to every subject page. *The Priestley Hub* collates information for potential students in one place and this is now sent out to schools and includes the *Priestley Mindfulness Hub* – resources developed and provided to help student wellbeing (2.2).
- It is encouraging to see that the careers IAG provided across the college maintains objectivity and impartiality. Information to prospective students and their families encourages them to explore other options before making a final decision, with a recognition that it is much better to only attract students for who the college is the most appropriate choice. Students report that, despite the often-received wisdom that higher education is a preferable career route to alternatives such as apprenticeships, no such bias is evident within the college. While many students do progress to higher education, no students felt that this was given priority in the guidance that they received, and one student commented: *“We were clearly told that uni isn’t*

for everyone and they gave us an honest insight into our options.” Staff and students welcome their access to Careers Advisers who cement this approach and who “wear our badge of impartiality with pride.” (3.3).

- The college lives up to its reputation for inclusivity. Recruiting from over 50 different schools results in an eclectic mix of students with varying abilities. Staff strike an excellent balance between being aspirational and celebrating what some might consider minor success. There is a clear recognition that their focus on ‘Stretch and Challenge’ has to be differentiated for the needs of individual students. Students recognise that the college wants each of them to succeed. One student pointed out: *“There is no pressure from the college for you to get good grades just to make them look good. Literally everyone is equal – they just want everyone to do their best.”* Another commented: *“There was a student on my course last year who got two Merits which was a great achievement for him, and the college were delighted for him.”* (3.4).
- The college’s response to the government’s Careers Strategy has been very effective. The Gatsby Benchmarks have been used in a professionally critical way, addressing criteria at a granular level and awarding Compass tool outcomes that are in the spirit of developing provision rather than working out ways of how the scores can be high. The use of a Careers Plan means that there is a structured way of monitoring progress and the sharing of this with staff helps embed the message that everyone has some responsibility for contributing to this agenda (4.5).
- The college has made major strides in its support for the wellbeing of students. The development of the PT role has been welcomed by all staff – curriculum Tutors enjoy their ability to focus on their subject and have embraced the challenge of embedding careers and progression into their learning. The appointment of a Wellbeing Practitioner shows a recognition at senior management level of the need for support for students experiencing low level mental health issues and the continuing deployment of a fully-qualified Counsellor provides support for those needing that in-depth level of support. The collaborative approach taken between curriculum Tutors, PTs and other support staff (underpinned by centralised recording of interventions on the Portal system or the CPOMS system for safeguarding issues) means that no issues slip through the support net and all staff have ready access to information that supports students. Importantly, students recognise that they have many avenues through which to access support. This ‘no wrong door’ approach means that however a student initiates access to support, they receive help from the most appropriate source (3.5).

Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality, development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is, or to give insight into practices seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in any way lacking. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- This assessment has been very well constructed by the college, but It would be useful for one of the Senior Leadership Team (perhaps the Assistant Principal – Student Support Services) to lead the review of the **matrix** Standard to cement the holistic perspective that the college has on IAG and avoid the misconception amongst some staff that IAG is just about careers issues when what the college offers is so much more (1.2).
- A very minor suggestion would be for the college to replace the ‘*Positive About Disabled People*’ logo with the newer ‘*Disability Confident*’ logo on its web site (1.3).
- The future of adult provision is currently uncertain, with the pandemic massively impacting on the delivery of learning and support in outreach locations with this provision not currently being delivered, despite efforts to deliver it online. It would be useful for the planned review of this provision to be completed as soon as possible to allow for adequate time for marketing and recruitment of learners for the next academic year if this is to go ahead (1.6, 3.1).
- While it contains plenty of valuable information, the Student Handbook is very text-heavy and may not appeal to learners who have a more visual learning style. It may benefit from being converted into a similar format to the Parent/Carer Handbook that is more visually appealing and hence more likely to be read (2.2, 3.1).
- The college has introduced a Learning Review process into its curriculum areas that replaces traditional Observations of Teaching and Learning with a more holistic assessment, taking evidence from a wide range of sources and adopting a more developmental approach that is proving effective and has been welcomed by staff. This is being replicated within Student Support Services through the ‘Pastoral Deep Dive’ process. While this has been successfully implemented for PTs it has yet to be rolled out across all of the Operational and Pastoral Team and it would be beneficial for the Wellbeing Coordinator, Careers Advisers and Study Support Assistants to also be involved (4.5).
- The college has already identified the need to introduce its own intranet system to replace the current S-Drive which is not fully accessible remotely. This will further centralise information and resources and enhance the ability of all staff to access relevant information and it will be useful to review progress against this at the first annual Continuous Improvement Check (CIC) (4.7).

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals. These may include the Areas for Development above. ([https://matrixstandard.com/assessment-journey/continuous-improvement-checks/.](https://matrixstandard.com/assessment-journey/continuous-improvement-checks/)) Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation’s accreditation, please see the section Assessment Information for dates.

Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

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- Assessment planning with one of the Careers Advisers
- Individual virtual interviews with four senior leaders, 11 members of staff, five students and three partner agencies
- Paired/group virtual interviews with 42 members of staff and 10 students
- Telephone interviews with one member of staff and one student
- Analysis of key documentation, including: the Organisational Chart, the Staff Handbook, the Parent/Carer Handbook, the Student Handbook, the Self-Assessment Report, the Cross-College Quality Improvement Plan (draft version), the Challenge Trust Strategic Action Plan, the Senior Leadership Team Strategic Action Plan (draft version), the Ofsted Report 2019, the Student Achievements and Destinations Report 2020, the LEP Board Structure, the Cross-College Careers Plan, Career Pathways 'Tube Map', student survey analysis information and Pastoral Deep Dive documentation.
- Review of the organisation's website
- Review of The Challenge Academy Trust website.

A final remote feedback session was conducted with the Assistant Principal – Student Support Services, the Marketing & IAG Manager and the Careers Advisers.

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
2. Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy The Growth Company that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
3. Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
4. Inform The Growth Company or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
5. Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
6. Inform The Growth Company of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrixStandard@growthco.uk.
7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
8. Inform The Growth Company of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
9. Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause The Growth Company and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
10. Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
11. Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by The Growth Company and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to be a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
12. Be aware that The Growth Company reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.