



Strategic Plan 2021-2026

APPROVED BY FULL BOARD

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College Profile and Context

Itchen is a sixth form college on the east of Southampton, known for its inclusive character, serving a student population of approximately 1400 full time 16-18 students and some international students. There is growing provision for adults studying part time on vocational and academic courses, a small apprenticeship offer and specific courses for those seeking work. The College works closely with the Department of Work and Pensions, the University Hospital and local providers on Sector Work-Based Programmes specialising in health and care.

The College caters for students with a wide range of ability levels, including those aiming for Oxbridge entry and those with moderate learning difficulties and physical disabilities such as visual impairment, all of whom achieve equally well. In 2021 the College's 16-18 provision was divided between Level 3 (68%), Level 2 (29%) and Entry/Level 1 (3%), with learners at Level 3 split equally across A level and general vocational provision.

Student numbers at Itchen in the 16-18 age range have grown significantly over the past 10 years and the College draws from a wide area particularly to the north and east of Southampton. Demographic growth to 2026 will see a further 20% increase in the 16-18 population.

The strong reputation Itchen has for inclusion and support means the College attracts a significant number of vulnerable students, considered potentially 'at risk' to whom a key support worker is offered. There were 241 such students on roll in 2019/20, 17% of the College's student population.

Southampton has higher than average levels of child poverty. According to End Child Poverty (2018), 30% of children in the Southampton Itchen constituency live in poverty compared to a UK average of 16%. In July 2020 6.9% of Southampton's working age resident population were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit, up from 3.3% in March. 42% of the Itchen student body are in receipt of free college meals and/or bursary support, broadly reflecting pupil eligibility for Free School Meals in the locality.

Southampton is ranked 55th out of all 326 Local Authorities in England with regards to deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019). 21% of the city's population lives in the most deprived areas, with 3 of the 5 most deprived areas in the city in the immediate catchment of the College. Southampton now has a greater number of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the 10% most deprived in England, compared with IMD 2010 (an increase from 10 to 19); the seventh largest percentage point increase in England over that period. The city is in the lowest decile for social mobility according to the index generated by the Responsive College Unit (RCU/Vector).

The east of Southampton is an area marked by low levels of participation in HE. The immediate catchment post code areas are all in the lowest decile according to HEFCE Polar 4 data, with Bitterne specifically 27 out of 7697 post code areas. This can be seen as an indicator of low expectations and aspirations, but high employment, albeit in lower paid jobs. The College is in receipt of funding from the Southern Universities Network as a result and is a key partner in improving social mobility in the city and wider travel to learn area.

The 2011 census saw 21.5% of the Southampton population record their ethnicity as not 'White-British', an increase of 11% compared to 2001. However, the east side of the city where Itchen is located sees a much lower proportion (9.9% across all eastern wards). In 2020/21 Itchen saw 22.8% of 16-18 students identifying themselves as not 'White-British'; for all students including adults this rises to 24.9%. Historically students from a not 'White-British' background achieve as least as well as the majority.

Mission Statement

To be an inclusive and dynamic College offering excellence in learning, where all students flourish.

Strategic Priorities – Our Aspirations

We expect our learners to develop **confidence** and **resilience**, be **successful** in their programme and **aspire** to move on to a destination that builds on their abilities. We do this by prioritising:

- **Excellence in Learning** – Itchen College will have an outstanding reputation based upon the quality and breadth of provision. We will develop learning through creativity and innovation, making the most of the resources available to develop opportunities for our learners.
- **Outstanding Outcomes** - The College will retain its reputation as an “inclusive” college and be noted for its pastoral care as well as excellence in teaching and results. It will deliver pathways to success for all who choose to study with us, regardless of their prior achievement or entry point.
- **Growth** – We will continue to grow our people through enriching the lives of our students and developing our staff. Close links will be maintained or forged with local business, higher education and feeder schools. We will continue our international activity and grow other activity to reduce dependence on agency funding. We will continue to develop provision that will deliver opportunities for our community.
- **Sustainability** - The College will develop an annual surplus with a goal of achieving a consistent operating surplus of 5% of income by 2026. This will be invested in staff and resources to ensure the best possible learning environment. The estate and its resources will be improved and extended in readiness for the demands of both the changing curriculum and demographic increase. This will be done sensitively and with due regard to our environment and our community.

Strategy Map

A Strategic Plan that anticipates, meets and takes advantage of change and opportunities, promoting a culture of inclusivity and growth that allows our learners and staff to excel, that allows us to achieve our mission and strategic priorities and enables us to meet the challenges ahead.



Achievement of Key Priorities – Operational Plan

This operational plan takes the key priorities of the College and develops strategies to ensure those priorities are achieved. In each case a contextual statement outlines the current state of provision, activity and practice, before stating the strategy for development and implementation. The final section looks at how we will measure performance across the life of this plan.

There will be commonality and overlap across performance measures because the priorities support each other and are interlinked. From these measures a set of key performance indicators are aggregated and attached to different governing committees for oversight. New targets against these KPIs will be agreed every year in the Autumn Term, based upon previous year performance.

Key Priority 1: Excellence in Learning

Objective: Outstanding Delivery
<p>Context and current position</p> <p>Creative solutions in developing College infrastructure and ensuring a professional development programme that meets the needs of staff and the College are designed to improve outcomes for all learners. A culture of sharing good practice and high expectations has been fostered through development activity.</p> <p>There is a similar culture of high expectations for students developed through the College's 'growth mindset' / VESPA approach, prioritising the need for 'vision' and a clear progression plan as a means to motivate. Student attendance is strong, with retention well above national averages.</p> <p>New technologies have been prioritised to further develop/enhance approaches to teaching and learning, with Google Classroom successfully implemented and effectively utilised during the pandemic.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing review of approaches to monitoring and tracking of students to further strengthen attendance and achievement, ensuring all students achieve equally regardless of their background• Monitoring of effectiveness of provision through the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders• Review of teaching and learning approach to provide blended learning opportunities
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % curriculum areas designated Good or Outstanding – as a proxy measure of improving outcomes and life chances for learners• % improvement in attendance – as a measure of support, challenge and enjoyment on course• Improvement in positive response to learner and staff surveys – to ensure improvement in satisfaction, ensuring staff well-being and creating positive word of mouth to improve recruitment

Objective: Dynamic Curriculum
<p>Context</p> <p>The College offers strong provision across all levels of learning for 16-18 and adult students. Alongside traditional A level, GCSE and general vocational programmes there is consistent and varied provision for NEET young people, apprenticeships and programmes for the unemployed. The College ensures that the range of provision is based on a thorough understanding and analysis of economic and social context, including changing curriculum, business priorities and government initiatives.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a curriculum that anticipates and meets changing priorities and funding shifts and provides a differentiated unique selling point for specific areas of the College offer • All schemes of work updated and revised as appropriate to deliver best possible outcomes • Investigate and implement (where appropriate) new curriculum initiatives and explore related funding consequences and opportunities • Revise offer to schools to ensure natural progression opportunities
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % improvement in outcomes across all activity – to improve life chances for our learners and further enhance our reputation • Performance versus national average achievement rates – to take account of rates for sixth form and GFE as appropriate for our provision mix • Recruitment above learner enrolment target – as a measure of meeting need and of reputation in the community

Key Priority 2: Outstanding Outcomes

Objective: Excellent progress
<p>Context and current position</p> <p>The College is determined in its ambition to consistently improve outcomes for learners. In 2018/19 value added by national measure shows above average overall performance on vocational courses but average for A Level. By ALPs this translates to 3 (Excellent) for vocational courses and 4 (Good) for A level, and performance has improved across the last three years (in 2020 ALPs improved to 2 for A level). Positive progression to a meaningful destination is strong, but needs to be maintained and reported in a more timely fashion.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of revised middle management structure to enhance career opportunities and offer a coordinated approach to student performance and pastoral support, staff development and performance management, with clear roles, responsibilities and expectations • Re-organisation of provision to offer clear line of sight regarding performance, ensuring data is readily available to all staff to support improvement • Further development of whole College approach around Growth Mindset (VESPA), raising aspirations and developing resilience and employability skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised approach to collating destinations as a more timely means of proving the success of provision
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % level 3 courses above average performance (ALPS and Level 3 VA) – to ensure we are adding value to learner’s prior achievements and increasing their opportunities for positive progression % positive progression – to ensure our curriculum is fit for purpose and allows learners to progress into employment, apprenticeship, HE or further study
Objective: Strong achievement
<p>Context</p> <p>Based upon national rates published in 2019 the College sits above average for the majority of provision (although current achievement is artificially high due to the pandemic).</p> <p>Clear expectations of performance are set from first contact with the College, with every opportunity taken to promote high aspirations. The best classroom practice is typified by high expectations, strong engagement and participation, and a clear focus on development of skills for success, including good use of vocational experience.</p> <p>The College’s Tutorial programme is focused on progression, developing links with employers and HE, and prioritising work experience and volunteering. Achievement on GCSE Maths and English courses currently sit well above national averages, and high grades are well above in English.</p> <p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to prepare our learners with employability skills, and techniques and opportunities to develop higher level study skills for their next step: all schemes of work to integrate employability, global themes (including sustainability, where appropriate) and equality and diversity (including British values), and the opportunity to develop Maths and English skills Set clear expectations for Faculties with regard to engagement with local employers, work experience and HE providers to inspire our learners Ensure continued sharing of good practice, utilising the Faculties and departments with strongest achievement and value added to model behaviours across the College
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % improvement in retention – to ensure the right learner is on the right course and enjoying their programme, achieving as well as they can to improve their life chances % curriculum areas designated Good or Outstanding – as a proxy measure of delivering improved outcomes and improving life chances for learners % achievement (overall, high grade) on Level 2 Maths and English courses – to improve the life chances and employability of those learners that come to Itchen without those qualifications

Key Priority 3: Growth

Objective: Students and Staff
<p>Context</p> <p>The College is committed to enriching the lives of our students and developing our staff, allowing both to grow in terms of their life chances and professional careers. There is a strong belief maintaining enrichment activity such as sport, work experience and volunteering, educational visits and guest speakers to support study programmes, developing cultural capital and a range of skills to support progression.</p> <p>There is strong support for students with well-qualified and experienced staff providing access to a range of external agencies engaged to ensure issues around engagement, learning, mental health and anxiety are addressed. This is supported by regular activity in the Tutor Programme.</p> <p>The College ensures that the professional development of staff encourages, challenges and supports improvement in teaching and leads to highly effective learning.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhancement of current student enrichment programme, ensuring a clear identity and coherence• Clear focus on VESPA programme to raise aspirations• Development of a coherent career pathway for teaching and support staff• Implementation of a continuous professional development and review programme that ensures the highest possible standards
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % of students taking up enrichment opportunities• Responses in staff and student satisfaction surveys – to ensure morale of staff remains strong, while developing positive word of mouth through student experience
Objective: Beneficial Partnerships
<p>Context</p> <p>The College needs to meet and exceed funding targets to secure its long-term future, while establishing a reputation whereby it is seen as a local asset and attracting students from the widest travel to learn area.</p> <p>To assist with achieving financial stability, the College needs to position itself to meet and anticipate the needs of local and regional partners. This includes preparation for the anticipated growth in student numbers following the demographic upswing from 2021.</p> <p>Due to the current Ofsted designation and departure from the EU, recruitment of international students is restricted due to visa regulations, limiting additional income in this area of operation. There is a need to develop robust and sustainable plans to grow provision when the opportunity arises.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strongly position the College within the local and regional infrastructure through maintenance and development of strategic partnerships:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Our neighbours, offering regular updates regarding achievements and progress, and a community learning programme that meets their needs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools via Southampton Education Forum - Colleges through continued involvement in Wessex, Hampshire Principals, Sixth Form College Forum and Association of Colleges - Local Authority, government agencies, employers and Local Enterprise Partnerships through representation on appropriate groups - Universities – building upon existing agreements and developing partnerships • Plan for growth – development of a range of capital projects that are ready to progress should funding opportunities arise; appropriate and sustainable resource plans in place for growth areas, including for staff • Diversify ‘products’ available in the International School, focusing on short term study visits and taster courses; develop ‘re-start’ plan for when Tier 4 status regained
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment above 16-18 allocation – to ensure the ongoing financial stability of the College • % income from non-government sources – as a means of measuring the success of income generating initiatives to protect the College from the prevailing financial context • Capital funding attracted – to develop the estate to ensure readiness for growth
Objective: Responsive Engagement
<p>Context</p> <p>The College prioritises engagement with schools, the Local Authority, employers and other partners as a means to better prepare students for their future lives and employment.</p> <p>This is in keeping with current government policy to increase employer determination across curriculum development and funding opportunities.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of coordinated strategic approach to work with our stakeholders, wider community and regional funding bodies to respond to their needs and support economic growth covering employability and work experience, progression to HE and into employment. • Review of marketing and promotional message, to ensure clarity around selling point of the College across activities
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of curriculum with regional priority areas – to ensure we are delivering a responsive curriculum that meets the needs of the region and our students, to ensure they are able to access appropriate employment or further study that leads to employment • % positive progression – to ensure our curriculum is fit for purpose and allows learners to progress into employment, apprenticeship, HE or further study • % students undertaking work experience or volunteering (across level and type of provision) – to best prepare them for their next step

Key Priority 4: Sustainability

Objective: Financial Strength
<p>Context</p> <p>The College has mitigated the historic reduction in funding through efficiencies and reorganisation, to ensure financial sustainability and prioritising the need to generate surpluses from the College operations. This provides the necessary resources to sustain high quality provision and cash balances for future delivery and investment.</p> <p>There is increased competition due to restricted funding and new provision in the wider travel to learn area, highlighting the need for an efficient curriculum that balances demand and uptake, while allowing sufficient flexibility to maintain provision should other factors determine it is necessary to do so.</p>
<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of the College plan and budget, working towards a consistent 5% surplus position by 2026• Financial stability: achieve funding and income targets and control expenditure as detailed in the budget to ensure bank covenants are met• Financial management: to focus on improving the financial performance of commercial operations, further improving debt collection and the accuracy of forecasting, particularly for cash flow and payroll modelling• Development of curriculum costing model to ensure efficiency is maintained, achieving full staff utilisation and pay as a percentage of income target through effective curriculum planning
Performance Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £ Budget surplus / Total Comprehensive Income – to ensure the College is generating sufficient income to meet its covenants and invest in the estate• Cash Days in Hand – in excess of 30 in all months• Financial health rating – as a proxy measure of financial sustainability (key measure used by EFSA)• Covenants met – to ensure current favourable rates of lending are maintained, to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the College• % staff utilisation and pay/income – to monitor the key costs faced by the College, taking action as appropriate to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the College
Objective: Outstanding and Sustainable Resources
<p>Context</p> <p>Parts of the College estate and facilities are in need of update and development, especially in the context of incoming school and post 16 competitors. Development of the site will have due regard to environmental considerations, while every effort will be made to ensure energy efficiency measures are implemented.</p> <p>The College has a range of tools available to staff to track performance, communicate between colleagues and with key stakeholders, and deliver blended learning. The next phase of development is to streamline for ease of use, allowing easy prioritisation of key actions.</p>

Strategy

- Development of an Estates Strategy with 'shovel ready' plans in place to facilitate rapid response to available funding.
- Prioritisation of resources and capital investment to provide the highest quality and environmentally sustainable learning environment
- Ongoing review of existing systems to coherently integrate, streamlining processes and developing reporting to ensure efficient use of staff time
- Development of standard classroom resource expectation to facilitate outstanding learning

Performance Measures

- **% improvement in retention** – to ensure the right learner is on the right course and enjoying their programme, achieving as well as they can to improve their life chances
- **% improvement in learner satisfaction response** - creating positive word of mouth to improve recruitment
- **Reduction in energy use**

Key Performance Indicators

Key Priority 1: Excellence in Learning (to be monitored by Standards, Quality and Outcomes Committee)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance versus national average achievement rates
Key Priority 2: Outstanding Outcomes (to be monitored by Standards, Quality and Outcomes Committee)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level 3 courses above average performance (ALPS and Level 3 VA), GCSE English and Maths progress scores
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum areas designated Good or Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive progression
Key Priority 3: Growth (to be monitored by Growth and Reputation Committee/HRSE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment above 16-18 allocation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income from non-government sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff and learner satisfaction responses
Key Priority 4: Sustainability (to be monitored by Finance and Resources Committee)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achievement of budget –all associated financial measures (cash days, current ratio, pay costs etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintenance of covenants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in energy use

Summary Targets 2022 and 5 Year Ambition (adapted from previous plan)

Key Priority 1: Excellence in Learning (to be monitored by Standards, Quality and Outcomes Committee)			
Year 1 (end of 2022)	Stretch Target	Year 3 (2024)	Year 5 (2026)
All learning areas to be at least Grade 2; 44% achieving Grade 1	50% at Grade 1	30% at Grade 1	40% at grade 1
Overall attendance 89.5% (90% overall target)	90%	91%	92%
50% of level 3 courses above average performance on national value added measure	55% above	58% above	60% above
Key Priority 2: Outstanding Outcomes (to be monitored by Standards, Quality and Outcomes Committee)			
Year 1 (end of 2022)	Stretch Target	Year 3 (2024)	Year 5 (2026)
Achievement: 87% overall, 88% 16-18, 85% 19+	Maintain 2019/20 position	2% improvement	3% improvement
91% retention	Maintain 2019/20 (92.6%)	2.5% improvement	3% improvement
Maintain high grades at GCSE: English 50%, Maths 32%	1% increase	3% increase	5% increase
Key Priority 3: Growth (to be monitored by HRSE Growth and Reputation Committee)			
Year 1 (end of 2022)	Stretch Target	Year 3 (2024)	Year 5 (2026)
97% of leavers progressing into further study, employment or apprenticeship	96% of leavers	97% of leavers	98% of leavers
25 additional 16-18 learners against allocation	30 learners	40 learners	50 learners
1% above staff survey aggregate responses	2% above	4% above	5% above
1% improvement in student survey responses	1.5% improvement	2% improvement	3% improvement

Key Priority 4: Sustainability (monitored by Finance and Resources Committee of the Corporation)			
Year 1 (end of 2022)	Stretch Target	Year 3 (2024)	Year 5 (2026)
Budget surplus of £200k achieved (2% of income) EBITDA of 6% achieved	£225k achieved 7% EBITDA	1 % of income	1.5% of income
Bank covenants met in full	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
Maintain 97% staff utilisation; budget target of 70% pay/income achieved	98% SU & 68% P/I	98% SU & 64% P/I	99% SU & 63% P/I
Financial Health rating of 'good'; cash days in hand to meet target of 30	At least Good; at least 30 days	At least Good; at least 30 days	At least Good; at least 30 days
19.5% of income from sources other than 'core funding'	21% of income	23% of income	25% of income

Target confirmed when budget is agreed