

# Orchard Hill College

## IAG Services



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## Assessment Information

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Accreditation Review
<b>Assessor's Decision</b>	Standard Met
<b>Assessor's Name</b>	Stuart McRill
<b>Visit Date</b>	18/01/2022- 20/01/2022 (2.5 days)
<b>Client ID</b>	C10963
<b>Assessment Reference</b>	PN201071
<b>Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by</b>	07/10/2022
<b>Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by</b>	07/10/2023
<b>Accreditation Review onsite visit to be conducted by</b>	07/10/2024

## Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

Orchard Hill College (hereafter OHC or the organisation) is a non-residential independent specialist college and sponsor of the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust. The organisation delivers a portfolio of learning and training provision for students over the age of 16 with a range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), from its expanding network of centres in London and Surrey. The organisation exists *'to support, enable and champion the talents, skills and rights of the most complex and vulnerable people in our society in order that we can release their potential, promote their wellbeing and transform their lives'*.

OHC last met the **matrix** Standard in 2019 and this high quality assessment was swiftly followed by an Ofsted inspection where the organisation achieved an 'outstanding' outcome. Three years on and along with all other education and training providers, OHC has faced the covid-19 pandemic head on and transformed so much of its delivery that senior managers were united in pointing out *"today OHC is a different entity to that assessed three years ago"*. With an expanding geographical reach and more centres since the last assessment, OHC is currently supporting over 400 students.

The OHC curriculum and training offer comprises Foundation Skills for Life, Skills for Work and Living and WorkStart and, since the last assessment, expansion into direct delivery of functional skills English and maths and apprenticeships in customer service and teaching assistants. Irrespective of the learning provision bespoke Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) is at the heart of the OHC experience ensuring that the designed learner journey is customised for the individual learner, taking full account of their needs in order to minimise barriers and realise potential. Whilst celebrating that *"everything we do links to IAG"*, the leadership team and delivery staff showcased key features of the OHC learner journey where IAG is most explicit. For the purposes of the assessment scope these make up the term IAG Services. They include:

Pre entry IAG – here, seamless marketing and Student Services implementation reaches out to a network of local schools, local authorities, parents/carers and young people to explore whether OHC is a good fit for those young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Key to providing this pre entry support is the Assessments and Placements team who have digitised and strengthened their step by step framework for admissions and enrolment.

Student Services and Integrated Services on programme IAG – EHCP Officers play a key role in individual transition review meetings and provide forward looking IAG to all students, parents and carers. A key feature of embedded IAG approaches links to health and well-being. For instance, during the covid lockdowns, virtual wellbeing sessions ensured students stayed active and mobile. These sessions also increased the students' ability to use technology to communicate with peers and build friendships at OHC. Integrated therapy and nursing team approaches support learners and are complemented by wider developments in health and well-being including trauma informed practices and implementation of the Recovery curriculum framework.

Exit and after care IAG – here the emphasis is upon sustained progression, with IAG made available to alumni at three, six and nine months of leaving OHC.

WorkStart - Through a team approach of 'off the job' training and 'on the job' job coaching, the focus here is to deliver internships and traineeships to support adults to gain work related learning and work experience. The key driver is to support a caseload of interns and trainees to gain job readiness, with pathways into employment, further education and apprenticeship all desired outcomes.

Throughout the assessment, managers made a compelling case that these IAG Services, alongside IAG provided by learning support assistants, tutors and practitioners from integrated services and therapists, are fundamental to realisation of key performance indicators. Incredibly during the covid-

19 disrupted 2020/21 academic year, OHC's overall retention figure was 96%. Of the 110 students on high needs programmes, 99% achieved accreditation relevant to their individual EHCP and life goal. Outcomes for WorkStart were also impressive, with overall retention at 93%, and 65% of students progressing into work, training and/or further education.

With each curriculum and learner journey designed with the student, expected outcomes are clearly defined, monitored and evaluated and link to preparation for adulthood outcomes of employment, independent living, good health and friends and relationships in the community. These are monitored at key stages including EHCP reviews and captured and celebrated within the Personal Support Passport and in the case of the WorkStart programme within the individual learning plan.

Feedback from a range of students at the assessment highlighted how they naturally described how the OHC learner journey was transforming their skills, attitudes and behaviours with examples of gained soft outcomes including:

*"My internship is great. It has helped my confidence to come back after being at home for so long, during lockdown. I am now very good at presentation skills and I have a CV";*

*"This apprenticeship has helped me. From being unemployed and feeling low, I now am really enjoying customer service and I believe in myself";*

*"My tutor has helped me with strategies to manage my anxiety. I am much more relaxed and happier now at college and also at home".*

OHC is passionate about all aspects of its delivery being civically active, with collaboration and partnership practices fostered with a broad range of stakeholders. Community engagement too has evolved over the last three years with some very successful transition events not only promoting OHC but the SEND sector generally. Feedback from partners celebrated the impact of the leadership team and delivery staff, with one stakeholder explaining:

*"Orchard Hill College has such a strong presence in all of its collaboration and partnership activities. They bring insight, professionalism, best practice and a positive outlook. This was especially the case in their recently held transition events, which were such a success in our communities".*

Looked at as a whole, this accreditation review confirmed that OHC continues to deliver high quality outcome based IAG. The assessment was evidence rich with examples of learning, work, career and life outcomes. These are being realised through a skilled workforce that is especially adept at customising end to end IAG to raise aspirations and create opportunities for progression. IAG delivery throughout the pandemic has been creative and robust and, where additional income streams have been acquired (such as the Covid Catch-Up Fund), these have been maximised to support the safeguarding, mental health and well-being of students. The organisation is a trailblazer in championing its SEND IAG delivery regionally and views its recently gained awards and outstanding Ofsted achievement as a firm foundation.... upon which to build.

## 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.

- Pre entry IAG practices continue to be robust and effective with transitional support delivered with objectivity and with a firm focus of *'in the best interests of the learner'*. Staff consistently described the organisation's *'with me, not to me'* approach and this is achieved through transparent marketing and school engagement provision. Digital IAG approaches have taken the form of virtual tours and open days and these complement family home visits. Taster events and a well-designed IAG Transition Programme successfully facilitate year 11 progression into OHC. (1.6, 3.2, 3.3)
- Since the last assessment OHC has weathered the global pandemic challenge and embraced change as an opportunity to develop provision. Recognising the impact of covid on students and their families, OHC embraced the Recovery Curriculum model, which is content rich in IAG, to support students' re-engagement with learning after a significant break in face to face education. Elsewhere the development of exit and after care IAG recognises that transition out to OHC is, for many, just as traumatic as it is into the organisation. EHCP officers are successfully helping recent OHC graduates/alumni to achieve sustained progression outcomes. (1.7, 3.2, 3.4, 4.8)
- The whole organisation approach to defining, monitoring and then evaluating client soft outcomes is deeply embedded across the OHC learning portfolio. Processes have been significantly enhanced since the last assessment and in so doing there is even greater transparency in the expected outcomes and these successfully strike a balance between realism and aspiration, keeping future goals and dreams alive. Soft outcome based practices were well demonstrated across WorkStart and also in a review of key documents such as the Personal Support Passport. (1.5, 3.1, 4.2)
- OHC staff feel listened to, supported, and cared for, with many examples of how the leadership team has prioritised staff health and well-being throughout the pandemic. Always looking for new ways to support and reward their workforce, OHC senior managers described the importance of *"doing much more than doughnuts and yoga"* (they do this too!). One leader described how over the 2 years in particular, there has been a flight attendant's *"secure your own oxygen mask first"* approach. This has succeeded, with a resilient workforce remaining passionate and motivated in their delivery approach to learners. Staff continue to benefit from an array of continuous professional development, with internal career progression pathways strengthened to reduce staff turnover and reward high performance. (1.2, 2.1, 2.4)
- Innovation is the order of the day for this forward looking organisation, with the assessment showcasing many examples of how they are challenging perceptions and successfully implementing trailblazing approaches. Examples of this practice include the Stay Up Late campaign for students and launching the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme with a successfully managed outward bound activity programme. (3.2, 4.8)
- Maximising technology advancements to ensure inclusivity to SEND students and their families/carers is a key priority for OHC, and a current partnership with a higher education institute is successfully enabling accessibility of software such as Spotify to the cohort. This is just one example of a partnership that is improving outcomes for SEND students nationally. Similar Association of Colleges and Duke of Edinburgh partnerships have been successful and led to awards for staff and learners. (1.8, 4.4)

## 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.

- The reorganisation of WorkStart provision, from a stand-alone business strand into an integrated offer within the OHC centres, is bringing with it increased harmonisation of approaches and greater internal and progression linkages. As with any change management process there is a timeline before the full benefits of transition are realised, with the assessment highlighting a suggestion to add greater structure to job coaches, communication, support and development. Once the Head of Careers is in post it is expected that overarching steer and direction for the job coaches will be enhanced with their profile continually raised not just internally but externally to facilitate the growth of internships and placings into employment. (1.2, 1.7)
- The Duke Of Edinburgh Award developments have been highlighted earlier in the report for their innovation and championing role. Exploring the possibilities presented by National Citizen Service are also worth exploring to see whether their summer and autumn programme may add additional options for students. (1.8, 3.4)
- OHC's expansion into direct delivery of functional skills English and maths has been embedded seamlessly within the wider curriculum. Delivering these much needed skills for adults brings with it the potential for the organisation to consider providing this digitally delivered provision to its parents and carers. This would link to family learning and development across the OHC community. Such a development could feature within the role of the soon to be appointed Head of Careers. Here, the postholder whilst delivering IAG to parent/carers through the nine workshops of the IAG Transition Programme, could add a tenth workshop that support parents/carers with their own learning and progression. The workshop might also serve as a signposting service to the National Careers Service and wider adult training provision locally. (3.2, 4.8)

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/>

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

This accreditation review was conducted remotely with the following methods used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process. The assessment was especially well planned by the Head of Marketing and included:

Zoom interviews with the senior leadership team (4)

Zoom interviews with a range of managers and staff delivering the IAG service (13)

Telephone discussions with partners (3)

Zoom discussions with a sample of learners (11)

A review of planning, implementation and impact documentation including access to a suite of policies and procedures on SharePoint, marketing and promotional videos and prospectuses, self-assessment reports, quality improvement plans, job descriptions, data monitoring reports and a review of IAG related digital content.

## 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](mailto: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.