# skills accountability statement 2023-24

purpose

This document outlines how the Birkenhead Sixth Form College (the College) contributes to meeting the skills needs of the local, regional and national economy by helping our learners develop the skills they will need to succeed in higher education and work.

The College is an academic sixth form college situated in Birkenhead. The College currently has 1424 16–18-year students who are full-time. The majority of provision is A level, with 50% of students following a ‘pure’ A level programme and 46% following a mixed programme involving A-Levels and Alternative Academic Qualifications (BTECs and T-Level Science). The level 2 Year Zero Programme makes up the remaining 4%

The primary focus of the College is to produce university-ready students who have an excellent grounding in their subject and are skilled at navigating the independent learning strategies used at university. Alongside this, the College offers a ‘second-chance’ foundation programme, Year Zero, aimed at providing opportunities for 16-year-old learners who struggled to achieve high grades at GCSE, and wish to enhance their employability in later life. This enables students to study a GCSE programme, including re-sitting Maths and English and provides a progression pathway to Level 3 study.

The College has an inclusive entry policy and teaches more students averaging around a 4 at GCSE than it does those averaging 7+. Consequently, the College supports the national agenda of levelling-up by increasing access to an outstanding academic education and higher education progression in an area of multiple economic disadvantage.

The ethos of Birkenhead Sixth Form College is that students should be Positive, Ambitious, Resilient and Thoughtful and these are the principles that guide everything we do. The College is a diverse, inclusive, and innovative community where every person is valued and supported to achieve and excel.

At the College, 77% of 2022 leavers progressed directly to higher education. Almost all of the 23% who did not progress to university in 2022 secured progression into employment or apprenticeships. The Higher Education Statistics Agency reported that 72.8% of our students graduated with a degree classification of 2.1 or higher in 2021.

The College has long had a strategy of sustained managed growth with careful development of provision and capacity over time. In recent years we have opened two new classroom blocks part-funded by the Capacity Improvement Fund and Post 16 Capacity Fund, to support the increased applications year on year. The College is now at capacity on its current site.

The College is proud of the successful contribution we make in preparing learners to succeed in the future. We provide students with opportunities to raise their aspirations, broaden their awareness of careers and employability skills and build their confidence and resilience so that they have the skills to compete in increasingly competitive recruitment markets.

The College is currently reviewing its strategic plan which will, where appropriate, take account of and respond to national, regional, and local priorities following consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

context and place

Birkenhead Sixth Form College is a leading Sixth Form College where the majority of students come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, some ranking in the 1% most deprived in the country.

The College’s intake spans across Wirral, drawing from both our Partner High Schools (those schools without sixth form provision) as well as from all schools across the selective and non-selective spectrum who have their own sixth forms. We recruit increasingly from Cheshire, particularly Neston and Ellesmere Port and from Liverpool.

Our location provides easy access for students across the north-west, with proximity to Birkenhead Park station and to an extensive local bus network. The College also supports a private bus service; with students travelling in on subsidised services from Wallasey, Eastham, Ellesmere Port, Neston and Heswall.

The College’s GCSE entry scores of incoming students is amongst the lowest of sixth form colleges in England, yet our students achieve more from their starting points than any other Wirral sixth forms according to published government performance tables. Results are in the top 10 nationally for student progress and 77% go immediately on to university, the vast majority being the first generation in their families to do so.

In terms of alignment to local, regional and national need, the College gives all students, regardless of their background, equal chances to gain academic qualifications that will enable access to university and the professions as well as to higher level apprenticeships.

approach to developing the annual accountability statement

Much of the decision-making around curriculum offer is driven by national intelligence about curriculum routes for 16–18-year-olds derived from interaction with the Sixth Form Colleges’ Association, the Association of Colleges, the Wirral Association of Secondary Head Teachers and Wirral Metropolitan College. This underpinning knowledge is complemented by interaction with students about course choices, direct intervention with universities and discussions around quality assurance, focusing on providing a curriculum of high quality which achieves its intended outcomes.

The Future Skills Plan has been developed with a range of stakeholders including the LEP, Wirral Borough Council, LCR Careers Hub, Employers and Universities. The College uses a number of data sources to inform the demography of its skills need and understands its position in supporting those needs.

Our T-level implementation strategy has been fuelled by local labour market information. The Science and Health T-levels will support the recruitment needs of the local area in these two large sectors locally.

contribution to national regional and local priorities

BSFC students progress to universities across the UK and therefore, our focus is on equipping them with a broad range of skills that meet national, regional and local priorities.

Students understand the importance of labour market information and are directed to consider this when researching next steps.

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| **Aims for 2023/24 Academic Year** | **Impact and Contribution to Strategic Aims, Skills Priorities, and Priorities for Improvements** |
| 1. **To continue to provide an exceptional pathway to higher education with more students securing university places** | The College has partnered with the University of Cambridge to run HE+ focused on increasing participation from those groups which are historically under-represented in competitive university applications. |
| 1. **To continue to drive up participation in social mobility programmes that enable students to access support and build confidence for securing university places.** | The College has partnered with a wide range of stakeholders to support social mobility, including: The Sutton Trust (Pathways to Law/Banking and Finance/Engineering; Sutton Trust Summer Schools); Aspiring Professions Programme; Uni of Liverpool Scholars Programme; Arts Emergency. |
| 1. **To increase the number of students securing places to study Medicine at University and subjects allied to Medicine.** | The College runs a ‘Pathway to Medicine’ programme in conjunction with In2MedSchool and UCLAN aimed at maximising students’ chances of success in competitive university entrance. The College runs Healthcare Professional Careers events to support applications to nursing and midwifery courses. |
| 1. **To embed T Levels as a sustainable element of the College’s curriculum profile** | The College introduced the T level in Laboratory Science in 2022 and has a track record of success in offering vocational provision with strong employer links. The College will also consider further T Levels including Legal Services. |
| 1. **To migrate provision into the new C classroom block for improvements in specialist provision in capacity released by this expansion.** | The new C block is a 6-classroom general purpose teaching block funded through the Post 16 capacity Fund. The completion of the building in May 2023 has brought significant extra capacity. The movement of Law and History to the new block from September 2023 will release some accommodation to be re-purposed to improve accommodation for the pastoral team to support students with UCAS preparation. |
| 1. **To complete investment in pastoral provision for most vulnerable social care cohort** | The College will continue to develop its Academic Progress Mentor programme, working with the Early Intervention Foundation commissioned by ‘What works for Children’s Social Care’ to embed meaningful support and development of key employability skills for the social care cohort. |

Local governing body (LGB) statement

On behalf of the LGB, it is confirmed that the plan set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the LGB at their meeting on 13 June 2023.

The plan will be published on the College’s website within three months.

Chair of Governors: Peter Timmins

Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer: Mike Kilbride

supporting documentation

**Labour Market Intelligence**

<https://liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR-Local-Skills-Report-2022-23.pdf>

[UK labour market projections: 2014 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-labour-market-projections-2014-to-2024)

**Ofsted**

[OFSTED | Birkenhead Sixth Form College (bsfc.ac.uk)](https://www.bsfc.ac.uk/college-information/OFSTED)

[16 to 18 - Birkenhead Sixth Form College - Find school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK (find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk)](https://www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk/school/144829/birkenhead-sixth-form-college/16-to-18)