

Southampton City College City Horizons Case Study



Southampton City College

Southampton City College is a medium-sized general further education college based on a main site in central Southampton. It also offers courses from a range of other local venues. Southampton, a unitary authority, has a population of nearly 240,000. Unemployment, at around 3.2%, is above the regional rate but below the national rate. Southampton is judged the 91st most deprived local authority according to the economic deprivation index. Around half of the college's young students come from the city's Priority Neighbourhood Areas.

The LSIS Project:

This LSIS funded project required us to identify and share effective practice relating to the Green Paper "Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability." Our cluster was allocated the theme of:

Effective Leadership- strong effective leadership is a critical success factor in developing inclusive learning recognising the importance of having a diverse learner population.

The common denominator of all themes would be to consider 'challenging low expectations'

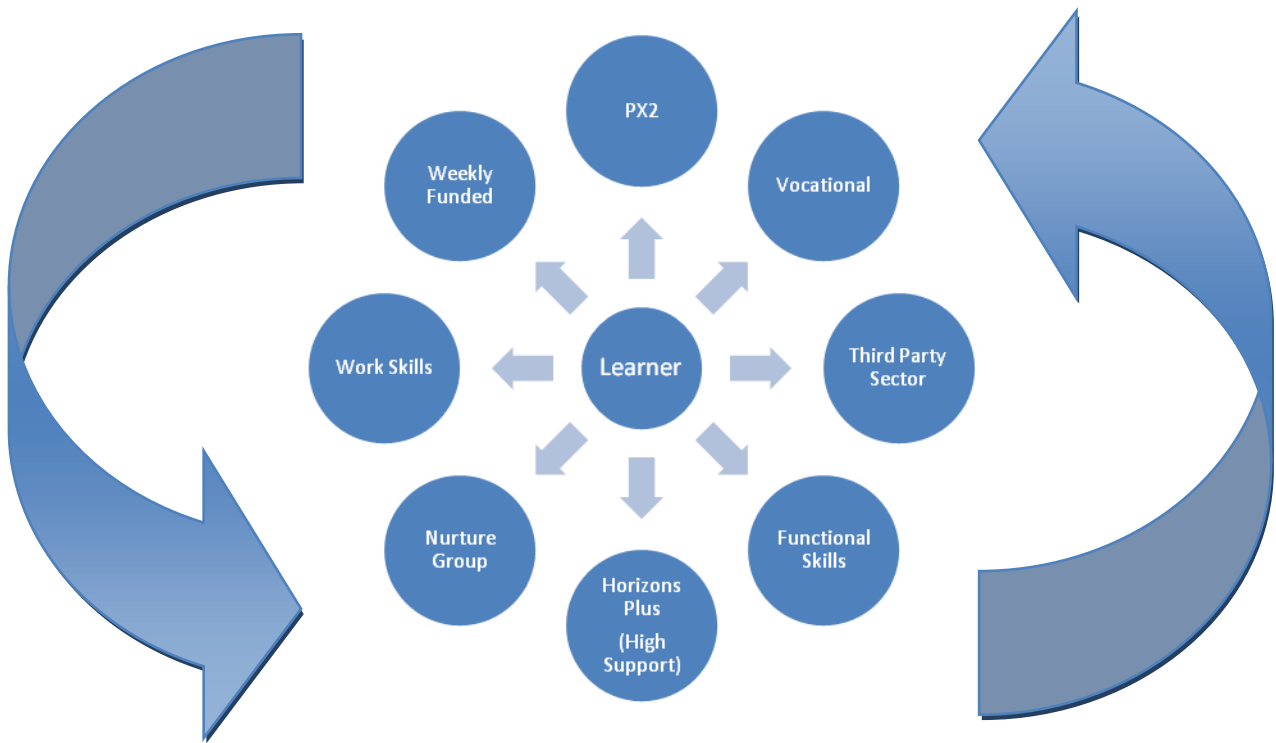
Our approach

City Horizons is the Foundation Learning tier of Southampton City College provision. It is a new department formed to improve the progression and achievement of 16-18 year old learners at pre-entry, entry and level one, including those with specific learning difficulties. In 2010/11 we had approximately 519 learners studying across a range of 13 vocational areas encompassing a wide range of practical and work related skills.

As a result of the changes made, the Foundation Learning offer is no longer attached to separate vocational areas but offered through the new City Horizons programme delivered by a team of selected and dedicated staff.

Learners are offered a bespoke learning programme and whilst the majority will come on programme in September others will join throughout the year. This programme is particularly successful with NEETs.

Students learning in City Horizons are no longer doing 'courses' as we previously understood them. Nor are programmes linear with fixed starting and finishing points. Instead, students are guided through a pathway of opportunities which meet their individual need and prepare them for progression into an appropriate next stage of their adult lives. It offers truly, personalised, destination led learning.



Pre City Horizons model:

Previously City College was delivering learning to approximately 800 16-18 year olds, studying at level 1 or below and although success rates were good (79% in 0809) the number of learners progressing from these programmes onto level 2, and succeeding, gave cause for concern. It was apparent that student's literacy and numeracy levels did not meet the entry requirements for level two. Nor did their behaviours indicate they were work ready. This was a particular concern because local employers were telling us that level two was their required entry criteria

The introduction of the new foundation learning curriculum has facilitated a different approach. Students are able to mix and match units of learning in four main themes; vocational, personal, functional and employability skills. This has presented the opportunity to re-model our offer for these students.

More information about the programme can be found on the [College web page](#) which includes a video clip of City Horizons director, Helen Mason, talking about the vision for students.



The leadership strategy to implement this new offer has raised low expectations by:

- Introducing this radically different concept in Foundation Learning
- Establishing a City Horizon's team with shared values and ensuring key training in place prior to implementation
- Raising awareness of offer and forging links with key local authority partners such as YOT, Connexions, Social Services, SENCO's
- Clearly branding the vision and approach
- Raising awareness of offer with other providers-Specialist schools, PRU's
- All learners working at foundation level to follow a bespoke programme regardless of learning disability or difficulty
- A learner can enter the programme at any stage
- Regular in-depth six weekly review meetings to establish the next half term of learning, determined by learner and tutor
- Forging links with other providers with referrals made to these providers as appropriate and in agreement with student

The following timeline shows the milestones that were agreed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for the implementation of City Horizons; March-Oct 2010

Action	By When	By Whom
Agree to implement City Horizons option – 2 nd April 2010	Done	HM to be Director overseeing the implementation.
Establish City Horizons steering and implementation group	End April 2010	HM to chair the group
Establish matrix of foundation learning curriculum options, updated as QCF developments are announced	1 st draft by 30 th April 2 nd draft by 5 th July	IG and HM along with Heads of Faculties and CTLs
Establish staff structure for City Horizons with costs	23 rd April	TB to produce final costed version
Agree and publish structure and roles for City Horizons staff with selection process	End May	TB to agree process for selection. HM to publish T&Cs, timescale and selection process TB/IG to agree residual Curriculum Area structure
Agree impact of City Horizons on the structure and teaching resource in Curriculum Areas		
Staff are confirmed in post	End June	HM/TB to undertake selection process
Set up key objectives and targets for City Horizons staff	July 5 th -16 th	Two week induction, training and planning programme for City Horizons staff, including much delivery of CityEx activity.
Training for City Horizons staff	July 5 th – 16 th	
Set up course file, enrolment arrangements and lead debate on funding implications of City Horizons model	1 st draft by 28 th May 2 nd draft by 5 th July	NT to model funding implications and create workable course file/enrolment solution
Set up student information system to support City Horizons including on-line ILP and Citybit area	By 16 th July	JS, AG to work with City Horizons team during July to achieve this
Confirm City Horizons induction programme	By 16 th July	IG and Heads of Fac to work with City Horizons team to confirm activities during July
Confirm processes for admitting City Horizons students	By 16 th July	HM with Student Support and CH Admissions staff
Set up bases for City Horizons learners in B Block and at ITEC, including IT infrastructure	By end August	FS, Estates and IT team
Communicate City Horizons Admissions activity to potential students	August	Student Support with City Horizons Admissions staff
Further staff development and curriculum and activity planning	23 rd August – 3 rd September	HM and City Horizons staff team
City Horizons induction starts	6 th September	City Horizons Team
Final curriculum matrix established for blocks 1-5	15 th October For 1 st November start	HM, IG and City Horizons Team

The new structure has a variety of roles to ensure individual needs are identified and resources allocated to meet them in a flexible and responsive way.

A new learning coach role has been introduced to facilitate this. Most learning coaches in City Horizons are be teachers but others have support roles.

Regular steering group meetings were set up to share this new approach with the City Horizons team.

Sample minutes:

City Horizons Steering Group Meeting **Friday 11 June at 1pm in Wa211**

- Treat as individuals
- Treat as young adults
- Be truthful
- Clear, defined, boundaries
- Guidelines are needed – not rigid
- Student set own targets
 - Write own targets
 - Group targets
 - Ground rules what happens
 - Consequences if?
- Consistency – consequences
- Positive incentives – rewards
- Team/Group/House group reward
- Mutual respect of staff and learners

- Clear guidelines/registers
- Clearer guides for referral from all staff
- All information and all staff involved with individual students
- Good communication and information
- No grey areas for students and clearer guidelines for staff
- Clear understanding of all staff roles
- Contracts with impact from all staff and student
- Personal and Group boundaries
- Attendance, Punctuality, Behaviour, Attitude, Motivation, Personal Stability are all subsets of Attainment and Progression as Attainment includes Personal Development.

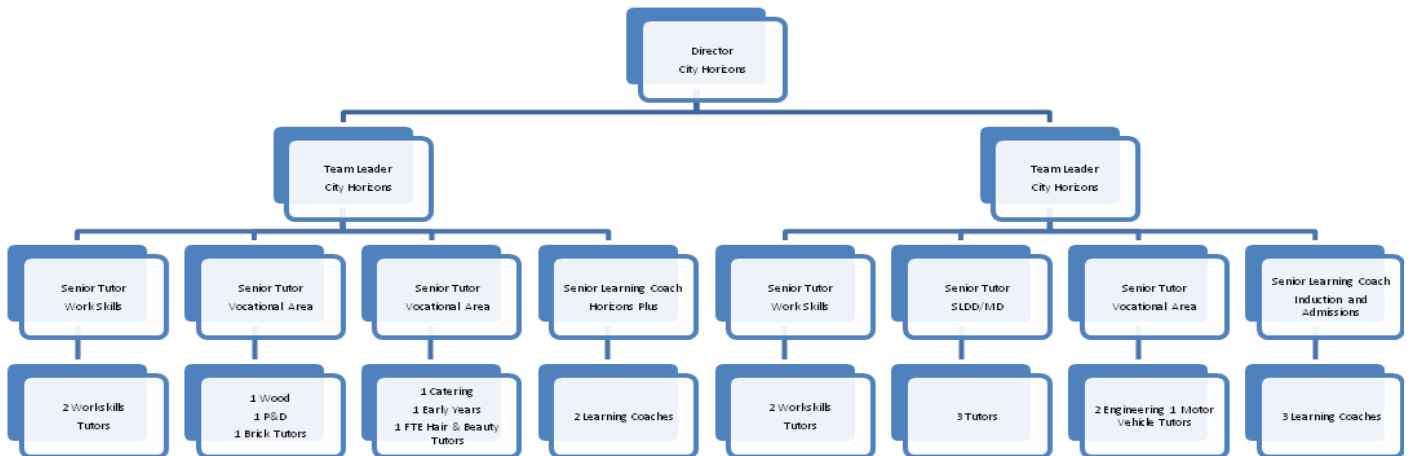
- Are six-weekly reviews often enough? It was felt that some students would need weekly or even daily reviews. The review period should be appropriate for the learners needs. More regular reviews can still operate with six-weekly major reviews.
- How do we ensure conformity for all learners. High support and low support learners will have different needs and may need different review periods. It is important to avoid review records becoming hidden but necessary to ensure information remains confidential.
- City Horizons staff spoke enthusiastically about the Passport document they keep. Is this a vehicle for keeping learner review records and sharing these with the teaching/support team. Records should be 'ring-fenced' so as to only be available to staff working with the learner.

- There may be a training issue here; safeguarding, all staff have completed this but a little reminder about what to do in the event of a disclosure would be useful, confidentiality, staff should be reminded that the advantage of having access to student records comes with responsibility to maintain privacy. Finally, tutors will need to be prepared for what may be some harrowing cases; vocational tutors may not be as prepared as City Horizons team.
 - Student records should be available to the student. This should guarantee no surprises and will help with reading skills if they are asked to read their record and comment upon it.
 - Rewards for positive work
 - Honour roll – scored for hitting targets
 - Potential progression, behaviour and personal stability to be tracked
 - Attainment and attendance to be measured
 - Group targets
 - Lateness and attendance to be tracked electronically
 - Risk assessments
 - No surprises on course
 - Told at the start
 - Contracts signed and rules explained as part of induction
 - Personal tutor – someone to trust, include support network
 - Targets are openly discussed
 - Disciplinary used when necessary (but not during tutorials)

Original City Horizons Structure 2010 to 2011

The problems of the original 10/11 management structure

The original management structure implemented by the SLT was very flat with few managerial levels and this model soon became problematic. To some degree this was due to a lack of managerial experience in the senior tutor team.



The problems that the original 10/11 model presented for Cohort

There were two main areas of concern in the original model, Functional Skills and Workskills:

Functional Skills

- The Initial functional skills offer was very complex. The intention was for topic led workshop delivery. Student and tutor would identify required workshops most appropriate to individual's spiky profile. The student would then opt into the relevant workshops as required.
- This system led to several problems: capacity – some workshops were oversubscribed whereas others had few learners; learners were uncomfortable attending a workshop without their peers; it was virtually impossible to coordinate learners' timetables which in turn led to poor attendance.
- Despite fairly rigorous initial assessments the system did not accurately identify literacy and numeracy levels in order to reflect this in the offer made to learners. This led to students being moved after establishing friendship groups and feeling aggrieved by these moves
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Employability Skills

- When timetables were changed due to the issues identified above student could access fewer vocational workshop hours and were expected to complete a Work skills qualifications instead. Many learners were very disgruntled about having their practical workshop time reduced and saw the work skills qualification as a 'punishment'

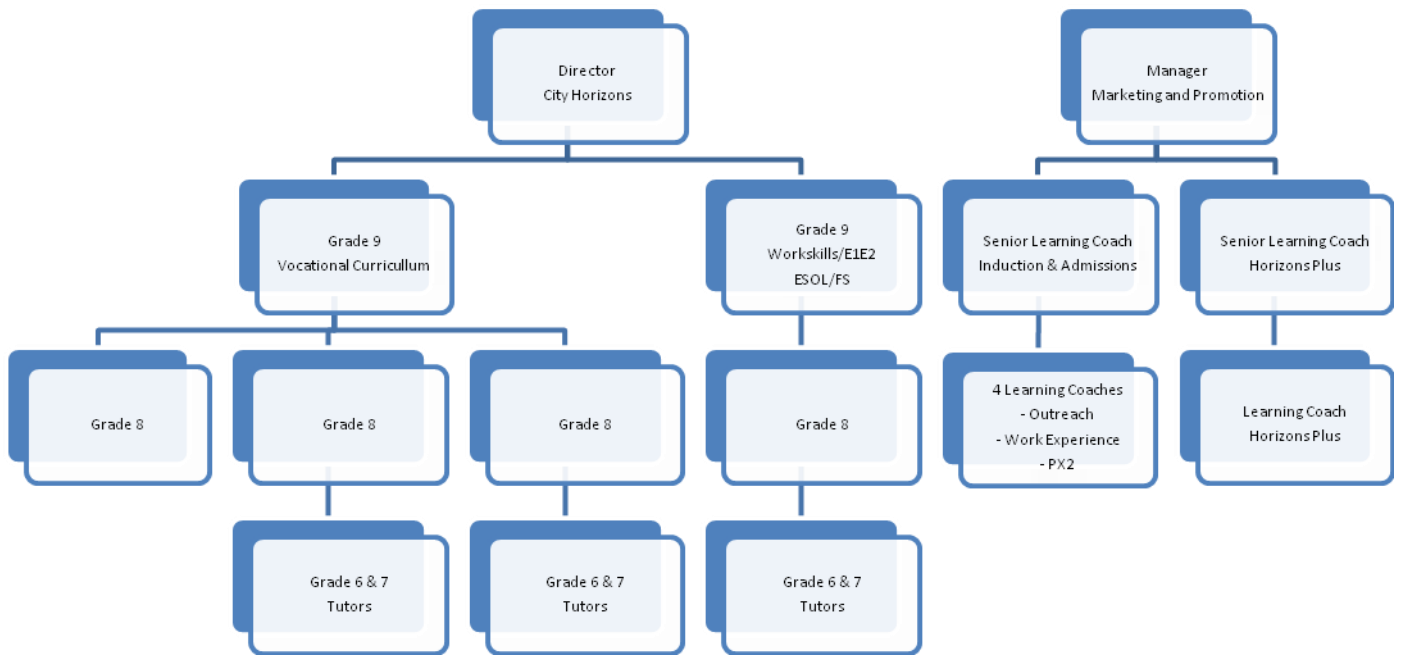
Therefore leadership introduced the following in year changes:

- A series of intensive training sessions were introduced for all senior teachers to ensure they were fully conversant with all aspects of curriculum delivery and management.
- Further quality measures were put in place to ensure staff were fully trained and up skilled in our programme delivery.
- On- going behaviour management training.
- Attachment theory training.
- Continual underpinning of the 'vision'.
- Curriculum revised and rebuilt.
- Staff structure revised again summer 2011.

The new, improved structure was implemented 11/12 model

- Closer working with third sector providers with the most disaffected and disengaged learners.
- New Curriculum Team Leader roles offering clearer management direction.
- Use of a more diverse and bespoke curriculum offer.
- A range of targeted interventions to improve behaviour and engagement with learning.

New Structure 2011 to 2012



An example of the outcome and impact of the work

‘Leaders and managers set high expectations and provide a clear strategic direction. Staff are involved fully in promoting a common vision for students’ success and for the college’s improvement.’ (Ofsted March 2011)

This has produced good success rates and progression that is outstanding.

The Impact

The change in structure has improved confidence and created a clear identity for both learners and staff. Learners are proud of being a City Horizons learner rather than the ‘poor relation’ in the vocational areas. Teachers feel more confident in their approach and have a real sense of identity and being part of a team.

It also ensures the right programme is quickly identified for all students.

Useful links



<http://www.southampton-city.ac.uk/schoolleaver/default.asp?id=235>

Next steps and future plans

It is the intention that this model is expanded and grown.

“City Horizons is totally committed to supporting every young person to achieve their full potential, regardless of background or prior academic success.” We also plan to further develop strategies in partnerships we have formed through this project cluster

March 2012