

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Organisation Improvement Framework

Review Report

Commercial in Confidence



**The Heath – A specialist Technology College
Runcorn**

**UNDERTAKEN BY
Joanne Hamilton**

**On behalf of Investors in People North West Ltd.
(Centre for Assessment & Recognition (NW) Ltd)**

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Introduction

The Heath is a specialist Technology College and has been at its current site in Runcorn since 1977 following the amalgamation of Balfour Road Boys and Heath Secondary Girls schools. Technology status was awarded to the College in 1992. The College was first successfully recognised as an Investor in People organisation in March 2007. The College then underwent a successful assessment against the Leadership and Management Model in June 2008.

The organisation requested to be assessed against the Extended Framework to establish if they currently meet a sufficient number of evidence requirements to be awarded Gold Status and if not, what they need to do achieve this. Longer term the organisation is keen to apply for Investor in People Champion status. Part of this approach has involved the distribution of the liP Survey tool and the production of a report of the findings which the college has received a copy of.

130 people were included within the scope of the Review. 19 staff were selected for interview and this equates to a 15% sample which is in line with liP UK Guidelines which suggest that a sample be taken of between 10% and 20% for organisations of this size. In addition, the Chair of Governors was also interviewed as part of the Review.

Objectives

1. To review the actions against the suggested development points identified at the organisation's last Review.
2. To establish whether The Heath continues to meet all of the evidence requirements of the Investors in People Standard by looking back at past activities.

Also using the table on pages 2 - 3 of this Plan:

3. To examine the effectiveness of the organisation's performance management system to identify how well it focuses on encouraging performance improvement and how well it aligns with the effective delivery of the organisation's Framework (key performance objectives).
4. To look at what mechanisms are in place for effectively engaging and empowering staff to deliver the organisation's objectives.
5. To identify other areas of good practice and areas for development in relation to other parts of the Extended Framework not included within the objectives identified above.

Outcome

Review Assessment – Outcome

Having carried out the assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided for assessors by Investors in People UK, the Assessor was satisfied beyond any doubt that The Heath meets the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. On behalf of Investors in People North West, the Assessor would like to congratulate The Heath on its achievement.

Gold Award

The Assessor also confirms that The Heath has met 149 evidence requirements **above** the Investors in People Standard and this equates to a Gold Award requiring at least 126 evidence requirements. The Assessor recommends to the Moderation Board that The Heath is confirmed as

having achieved this award. On behalf of Investors in People North West the Assessor would like to congratulate The Heath on this additional achievement.

Next Review

The organisation's next review will be at its three year review date – November 2012.

Executive Summary

This report sets out how The Heath is meeting the requirements of the Investors in People Standard and the majority of the requirements of the Extended Framework. It provides feedback in relation to the objectives set and this feedback is also intended to help move the organisation forward so that it continues to achieve its long term aims and objectives through the effective management and development of its people.

Since the time of the college's first Investors in People assessment the senior team have further developed the organisation's people management strategies. The performance management system for example has been revised and now also includes all support staff and there is greater involvement of all people in the development of the college's longer term strategy (Building Schools for the Future). The leadership and management skills of middle and senior managers continue to be a real strength. The college has also recently been awarded Leadership Partner status and as such has a variety of plans that are in the process of being rolled out to further enhance leadership and management capacity within the organisation as part of the college's succession planning strategy. These opportunities will also be extended to other schools within the area.

Strengths

- The college continues to have a robust development planning and evaluation process in place with input from staff at all levels. High Sights meetings are planned in throughout the year and provide an excellent means through which every aspect of school performance is monitored, reviewed and from which corrective action can be taken as appropriate.
- The organisation's approach to work life balance is taken seriously and people welcome the work life balance weeks which are planned into the college year.
- The organisation's recruitment and selection process is considered to be a fair, efficient and effective process; it is totally focused on meeting the needs of the college and is regularly evaluated.
- There is strong evidence of a culture of continuous learning in place. Learning and development needs are identified at every level and are intrinsic to the college's development planning process. Many examples were described by staff which were focused on enhancing the current and future capability of individuals and teams through a variety of approaches.
- Inspirational Leadership is demonstrated by the senior leadership team and staff are highly motivated and proud to work at the college.
- The development of leadership capabilities across the college is evident at every level with many people describing how they are actively encouraged to take on new projects and apply for additional responsibilities as part of their own personal development.

- There is a strong culture of inclusivity which starts with the students and extends to all staff groups. People believe the college is very open, people's views and opinions are regularly sought and people feel comfortable challenging anything that might lead to an improvement in the way in which the organisation operates or in terms of how people are led, managed and developed.

Areas for development are identified within the main body of the report under the heading, "Moving Forward/Continuous Improvement Opportunities" and link specifically to the objectives agreed. In summary they link to:

- Establishing a clearer reward and recognition strategy for the college
- The development of future leadership and management capabilities as part of the work the college is currently undertaking linked to Leadership Partnership status
- Embedding performance management for Technicians
- Interrogating the findings of the liP Survey with a view to further strengthening practice (mainly around more proactively identifying people's learning styles and identifying how team members can be more actively involved in selection decisions when new team members are recruited).

These development areas were also discussed fully during the feedback meeting at the end of the on site assessment with the Head and another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Findings against the Framework

Objective: To review the actions against the suggested development points identified at the organisation's last assessment.

The college has addressed the suggested development areas from its original Investors in People Assessment to positive effect. For example, the performance management system has been enhanced and is now embedded within the Administration Team and is currently being rolled out to Technicians. The organisation also took the decision to be assessed against the Leadership and Management Model, which it subsequently achieved.

Objective: To examine the effectiveness of the organisation's performance management system to identify how well it focuses on encouraging performance improvement and how well it aligns with the effective delivery of the organisation's Framework (key performance objectives).

The performance management system is totally aligned to the college's Development Framework and is focused on improving performance. People frequently described objectives that they had agreed through the process which are linked to the achievement of college objectives and Key Performance Indicators. The process for teachers has been further developed over the past year and now also includes a review against the professional standards for teachers. People feel that this is a more comprehensive approach and are very clear about what they need to do to ensure they contribute effectively. The system for support staff has also been developed further and is now fully embedded for the administrative team and Learning Support Assistants. The process is currently being rolled out to Technicians. Including all staff in this system will ensure that everybody has an opportunity to review their performance, receive feedback about how they are performing and discuss potential development needs going forward, all of which should contribute to improving their effectiveness within their respective job roles.

The management skills of those individuals undertaking performance management interviews are also strong with people confirming that performance management discussions are beneficial and allow for successes to be recognised as well as identifying underperformance. Appropriate mechanisms are then put into place to focus on improving performance when required. One manager described how they had had the opportunity to shadow their manager undertaking a performance management discussion prior to them taking over this responsibility which they had found to be very useful.

Performance objectives are clearly linked back to the college's Development Framework (a three year strategy) which people were all aware of and have an input into developing. Managers at various levels described how they are directly involved in the planning process and are required to either write or contribute their ideas when Departmental Frameworks are formulated. These Frameworks identify a variety of team targets and KPIs that are all linked into the eight strands which make up the college Development Framework. Managers similarly confirmed how they involve their own staff in the development and review of these team targets through discussions at team meetings throughout the year. High Sights meetings are built into to the college year at which senior managers discuss with middle managers progress against expected team performance. Some particularly relevant comments heard included:

"The vision is crystal clear. We want to be a college of the 21st century. A centre of excellence and provide personalised learning for all." "We plan our schemes of work around the Framework." "One of our key objectives is to raise standards in terms of the number of pupils achieving A* and A grades and we are also looking to increase the

number of pupils achieving a C who are on the D/C borderline. “ We have developed an alternative curriculum to reduce the gap between those who do and don’t achieve.” “We are in the business of learning and one of my objectives has been to create a business link.” “There are lots of KPIs, one of the ones we monitor is pupil attendance and the number of exclusions.” “All the targets around pupil attainment have KPIs attached to them.” “The number of lessons that are delivered which are satisfactory, good and outstanding. We have measurable targets around improving the percentages here.” “We are aiming to get 60% of pupils to achieve a grade C in our subject area and this links to a wider college target around borderline C/D pupils.”

Moving Forward/Opportunities for Improvement

Continue to embed the performance management system for all support staff so that everybody has opportunities to receive timely feedback in relation to their performance in their role and to discuss their learning and development needs in a structured way, which is focused on assisting individuals to further enhance their contribution to the college.

Objective: To look at what mechanisms are in place for effectively engaging and empowering staff to deliver the organisation’s objectives.

Inclusion and empowerment are without doubt intrinsic to the ethos of the college and staff regularly referred to inclusivity as being one of the college’s core values. There are many ways through which people are involved and consulted on a variety of issues and this is something which people like and as a result it gives them a lot of ownership of key tasks and it clearly motivates them give of their best.

The school’s longer term strategy linked to Building Schools for the Future is one example of where people have been encouraged to have an input. All those interviewed described the invitation they had had to attend a conference at a hotel in Cheshire to discuss a number of issues including the proposed new build. People described how they have had an opportunity to speak to the Architects both at this event and also at the college, which they have appreciated. The college’s approach to involving people in the ongoing development of its strategy does not however just extend to staff to but to other key stakeholders as well. For example, the college Governors are involved through the Committee reporting structure, the students are involved through the development of a Junior Leadership Team who are each linked into one of the eight strands of the Framework and have responsibility for key projects linked to these areas and parents are involved through the distribution of annual surveys. Including all groups in this way not only ensures that everybody is engaged with what the school is aiming to achieve but the approach also informs the college’s decision making processes.

There are a variety of cross school groups established on which various members of staff sit which allows people another opportunity to direct the school’s strategy/future plans and they also allow individuals to identify opportunities for improvement. The Strategic Leadership in ICT group is a good example of this and is a group on which a number of non teaching staff sit. Faculty meetings and High Sights meetings are all focused on identifying ways through which performance can be continuously improved. Staff also referred to surveys which they are regularly asked to complete as another mechanism through which their views and opinions are continually sought and which are again focused on improving performance. In the past this has included seeking feedback on how effectively staff felt the college was led and managed.

Senior managers ensure there are a variety of mechanisms through which managers and staff are encouraged to share knowledge and information for the benefit of the organisation. Examples regularly referred to included:

- The Within School Variation Meeting at which managers from across the organisation meet to review a variety of performance related issues and to compare practice within different teams/departments
- School briefing three times a week
- Faculty meetings
- Input into the college newsletter
- Making use of the Virtual Learning Environment.

Consultation with other representative groups is also in place and includes meetings between the Head and representatives of the various Professional Associations as and when required. Relationships between the senior leadership team and union representatives are constructive and open and there was an acknowledgement that the Head is always prepared to listen to representatives' view points on a variety of key issues. The recent changes to the college's performance management system and to the introduction of Rarely Cover are two examples where there has been effective consultation with an input on both sides. In addition to this arrangement a School Council also exists and representatives meet with the Head of School regularly during the year in order to flag up any staff issues that need addressing. There is an open agenda here which staff like and examples were described of improvements that had been made to the working environment as a result of this arrangement. Both sets of consultative arrangements have been in place for a number of years. However those directly involved were of the view that if representatives wanted to change the duration or frequency of such meetings, the senior team would be flexible and happy to accommodate any such requests.

People are also empowered within their individual roles and much of this is due to effective delegation and the encouragement and trust managers give staff to take on additional responsibilities and projects as appropriate. There is clearly a coaching culture evident across the college and through this approach managers are seen to be supportive of staff when taking on new areas of responsibility. There were many examples described of how people are encouraged to take ownership for decisions in their day to day work which does have an impact on team and organisational performance. Some examples included:

- A member of the teaching staff being encouraged to go out of school and decide which exam board the college should use for delivering a particular subject
- Newer staff being encouraged to use their experience that they have brought into college to make improvements to the way in which a particular subject area is delivered
- A member of the support staff having the opportunity to input their ideas as to the most appropriate projects that students might undertake as part of their development in one area of the curriculum.

As a result of all of the approaches described above, people were unanimous in their view that they are proud to work for the College and committed to its success. Senior managers also act as positive role models here. ***"It is a very open college and the senior leadership team do like to hear your views and they do act on them."*** ***"What I like is that you are allowed to get on with your job. As long as I deliver the required outcomes, I can organise my work to best suit me."***

Objective: To identify other areas of good practice and areas for development in relation to other parts of the Extended Framework not included within the objectives identified above.

People Management Strategies – Work life Balance

Members of the senior team described the college's approach to work life balance and how this is focused on meeting both the needs of staff and the organisation. Key measures of its success include staff absence levels and turnover while other benefits highlighted include people's

willingness to “go the extra mile” when required and their general flexibility. The main thrust to this approach is the work life balance week which is scheduled into the college timetable every half term. During this week after school meetings are cancelled and staff are encouraged to leave early as a result. All those interviewed really value this week, believing that they are able to better organise social and personal activities as a result and believe this sets the college apart from others in the Borough. People also feel that this week helps to manage stress levels and as a result they are able to give of their best. There was also the view expressed that the Head and members of the senior team lead by example here. ***“The Head genuinely does take it seriously so you don’t feel guilty leaving early.”***

In addition to this week there were also many many examples described by managers and staff where people’s individual circumstances are taken into consideration and solutions arrived at as appropriate to allow people to deal with personal issues as and when they arise (e.g. problems with their own children, sick relatives, medical conditions which require hospital/medical appointments to be made etc.). One manager also described how a member of staff that had been off work for a significant period of time through illness had been introduced back to college gradually with a reduced teaching timetable. Some staff also mentioned the opportunity they have to join a subsidised gym membership and the PPA arrangements that are in place.

Members of the senior team interviewed all believed that the anticipated benefits of having a work life balance strategy in place were being realised. The college has the second highest staff and pupil attendance rates in the Borough and staff turnover is very low. The ability of individuals to be flexible was also a case in point as during the time of the on site assessment road works in the local vicinity had meant that staff had been severely delayed in arriving at the college. Through a whole team approach individuals had rallied round to provide cover, take registers and collect people from a local train station in an effort to keep things on track and to cause the least disruption possible to pupils’ lessons.

People Management Strategies – Recruitment and Selection

There is a clear and robust approach to recruiting and selecting staff which is clearly linked to the ensuring the college has a talented and diverse workforce in place that can deliver the college’s Development Framework. Senior managers confirmed how they regularly review the level of human resource in place and described the planned recruitment needs of the college for the forthcoming year. Managers are involved in the recruitment process and those staff that have been interviewed for posts in the past all believed strongly that the interview and selection process is fair, efficient and effective. Ways through which the college achieves this include:

- All staff that take part in recruitment have been trained including accessing Safeguarding training
- Appointments are advertised internally
- Clear criteria against which selection decisions are based are identified
- A scoring system is applied
- Appropriate and rigorous questioning takes place which was considered relevant to the role in question
- A variety of people take part in the selection process which helps to improve the decision making process
- An independent person sits in on interviews and takes notes in relation to how the interview process is conducted to ensure that the process meets the required standards
- References have a list of criteria against which the person writing the reference is required to comment on for the candidate in question
- Teaching staff are required to teach a lesson which is observed.
- Timely communication of decisions to all candidates takes place and feedback is offered.

Managers also confirmed that they are encouraged to think about whether potential new external recruits demonstrate the type of values which the college takes very seriously. For example

managers described how when making selection decisions they considered such things as how ambitious people were, how open they were to being developed and their ability to work as part of a team.

The majority of staff interviewed believed that their views and feedback were taken on board when selecting new team members, with a minority of exceptions. This often occurred through having the opportunity to meet potential recruits as part of their tour of the college and then being asked for feedback. Other people involved in selection decisions include college Governors when appropriate and member of the Junior Leadership Team (students). There may however be some value in revisiting managers' understanding of how they include team members in the recruitment process and then communicating this process to all staff.

Managers also confirmed that they regularly evaluated the effectiveness of the college's recruitment and selection strategy as well as the appointments made. For example one manager described how they had made changes to a particular aspect of their departmental recruitment process as a result of appointing a member of staff who had scored well at interview but who had then struggled in the role upon appointment. Other managers confirmed that through the High Sights meetings during the year staffing issues was an area for regular discussion and this allowed them to discuss recent appointments as and when appropriate. There are also plans to provide potential new teaching staff in the future with a copy of the professional standards for teachers ahead of the interview process, so that they have more detailed information about the requirements of the role and which in turn should aid their own decision making about whether or not to apply for a particular post.

Structure makes the most of People's Talents

In line with the college's approach to succession planning, building capacity and ensuring equality and managing diversity, there is clear evidence of senior managers regularly reviewing the structure of the college with a view to it being best placed to achieve the college's overall strategy and to make the most of people's talents. A clear example of this has been the decision to appoint a Head of School separate to that of the role of the Headteacher, a post which was temporary for two years and as a result of ongoing evaluation the decision has recently been taken to extend the post for a further two years. This has allowed the Head to take on more of a strategic lead both inside and outside the college while the Head of School role is ensuring that operationally the college continues to deliver the required results and raise standards. The post is also viewed as the ideal preparation for Headship. Similarly the college continues to offer aspiring leaders the chance to take up secondments onto the senior leadership team, which is not only building capacity but is equally allowing those individuals to meet some of their own personal development needs, while also acting as a clear source of inspiration and motivation for other middle managers and aspiring managers that longer term want to develop their careers along this path. One middle manager also described how they had been able to restructure their Faculty so that more people now had a direct input into the development of Subject Frameworks.

All those interviewed without exception believed that they were continually given the opportunity to make the most of their talents. In addition to the examples described above, staff talked of how they had been encouraged to apply for other roles in college which in turn were developing their skills in other areas and from which they were gaining a significant amount of job satisfaction. One person could not believe that at their age they had had the opportunity to take on such a responsible role within the college. Others described how they had recently been asked to complete a Leadership Aspirations questionnaire to identify how they wanted to progress their careers going forward. Faculty Heads have also recently had the opportunity to take on the role of Head of House (previously a senior leadership team responsibility) which is helping to raise their profile and help them to further develop their leadership and management skills. ***“What I like about the school is that they recognise your strengths and you get opportunities to use them. In fact you are actively encouraged to do so. ““They are really good at seeing your potential.”***

Social Responsibility

Members of the senior team all described how social responsibilities are taken into account when developing the college's Framework. One of the eight strands that make up the Framework focuses on "Partnership for Leadership and Learning" and identifies how the college plans to develop collaborative partnerships with a range of stakeholders including; partner schools, education providers, parents, business and industry and a range of community groups. Having been awarded Leadership Partner status, this means that the college also has the responsibility of not only building leadership and management capacity within school but also within the Borough.

Managers and staff all believed that the college took social responsibility seriously and felt that it was very much part of the college's culture. Managers and staff described a variety of ways through which they were engaged in this area. For example, running parental courses, making the college's premises accessible to various community groups, welcoming foreign visitors to the college, adhering to the college's policy around recycling and House Managers working with pupils on various fundraising activities for the Charity which was attached to each of the college Houses. The Head described how she had also taken members of the Junior Leadership Team (students) to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph during Remembrance Week. The college has also recently been awarded International School status. People also believed that their welfare was taken seriously and again referred to the half termly work life balance Week as evidence here. Others believed that the college had a very supportive approach to the way in which staff were encouraged to return to work following a significant period of absence.

Learning & Development Strategy, Action & Evaluation

Whole college planning together with the performance management system provides clear opportunities to identify current and future learning and development needs at all levels. There were many examples described by staff of learning and development that they had accessed and all were totally clear about how this development was intended to improve performance, help them to meet their objectives and/or meet their own personal development needs. There was very much a feeling that learning and development is not just focused on addressing immediate development needs but that there is also encouragement to look at building capacity and meeting people's career aspirations wherever possible. There is also a specific strand within the college's Framework which focuses on "Professional Development for Leadership and Learning." Evaluation of the impact of learning and development on performance takes place in a number of ways and includes:

- Ongoing monitoring of all aspects of college performance through the half termly High Sights meetings
- Lesson observations for teaching staff to identify if learning is being put into practice
- Identifying clear success criteria against which the outcomes of staff learning and development will be measured.
- Analysing feedback from external reviews including the college's School Improvement Partner and the results of staff surveys.

Examples of development needs described that are focused on meeting the college's objectives within its Framework and on building capacity across the organisation include:

- Behaviour management training to ensure a consistent approach by all staff which in turn enables improved learning to take place as a result of less disruption in the class room

- Power Teaching training for two members of staff with a view to these individuals teaching this approach to students and which focuses on more collaborative working and then rolling the approach out throughout the college
- Cross skills training within the administration team to allow for a more flexible team
- Vision to Learn training for some members of staff – an interactive learning platform linked to the teaching of the alternative curriculum aimed at raising standards and specifically assisting pupils to move from achieving Ds to Cs.
- Dyslexia training for Learning Support Assistants to enable them in turn to better meet the needs of students with this condition and to assist the college in its aim of achieving the dyslexia friendly school mark.
- A variety of leadership and management programmes to enhance the skills of current, newly promoted and aspiring managers.

There were also many examples described of people who had had the opportunity to work towards and achieve a variety of professional and vocational qualifications which it was felt was enabling them to meet a number of their personal development needs. For the majority of those interviewed they also confirmed that their learning styles were taken into account when organising training. A minority of managers and staff interviewed believed that this could be stronger. **“We have had Inset in the past that has focused on this area.”** **“I know I am a visual learner and we have been encouraged in the past to think about our learning styles when looking at our development.”** **“It is something I think I could look at more proactively with the team.”** It may therefore be worthwhile looking at how the college can strengthen its consistency of approach here so that the way in which people are developed best meets their preferred learning style, which in turn should ensure the most effective use of their time and the college’s resources.

The identification of learning and development needs was very much considered to be a two way process between the individual staff member and their manager. With the changes to the performance management system there has been an emphasis on encouraging staff to take more ownership for the identification of their individual learning and development needs. **“The culture here is that you are encouraged to progress and to be responsible for your own learning.”**

Senior managers described how they continue to look for innovative, flexible as well as cost effective ways of developing staff through the use of both internal and external resources. For example, over the past few years the college has taken the decision to offer temporary secondments onto the Senior Leadership Team as a means of developing the skills of aspiring senior managers. More recently one member of senior team has had the opportunity to take up a post based in a local business park in order to develop better links with local businesses, which is a development opportunity in itself and is a first for the college. Achieving Leadership Partner status means that the college will now have access to additional funding for a wide range of leadership and management development opportunities which people can access. Effective partnership working with MMU (the college provides placements for their students) means that the college is also able to offer staff places on a Masters programme which is free to them with the only cost being people’s time to attend the programme. Teaching staff described how they also have the opportunity to support other schools in the area which in itself is a development opportunity for them, as they are using their coaching and mentoring skills as part of this approach.

Managers are also clear role models for continuous learning and demonstrate this in a number of ways. For example:

- Through accessing development themselves
- By taking up secondments as part of their own development
- By delivering training to staff and coaching individuals as required
- By regularly communicating learning and development opportunities to staff
- By encouraging and supporting people with their own personal development
- By celebrating learning achievements (through announcements at team meetings or at the college briefing and through the public presentation of certificates as appropriate)

Consequently all those staff interviewed believed that there was a strong culture of continuous learning in place where all learning is valued.

The senior team also encourage all staff members to share their learning within and across teams for the benefit of the whole college as necessary, to ensure that they are maximising the benefits gained from staff undertaking external development. There has also been more of an emphasis placed on utilising the college's own in house expertise to deliver relevant development events. The Monday evening series of drop in workshops is a clear example of this. Staff described how they regularly fed back their learning both within and across teams as required and in some cases this took the form of the running a workshop for a cross section of staff to attend. People regularly confirmed how they enjoyed putting their learning into practice partly as a result of the interest taken by managers and colleagues when feeding back key learning points. There is an expectation that learning undertaken is always discussed and a plan identified of how to utilise this learning to positive effect.

Induction for new staff joining the organisation and those new to a role continues to be in place with the majority of new starters confirming that they also received timely feedback in relation to their performance in the new role. NQTs have two Mentors and have lots of opportunity during the year to discuss their progress, identify their development needs and to be observed. For a minority of a new staff it was felt that they would have liked more opportunities to receive more structured feedback in relation to their performance.

Performance Improvement

Senior managers regularly review how the organisation's investment in learning and development and other people strategies are impacting on the success of the college. Once again the High Sights meetings are an obvious forum for this. The Head and other members of the senior leadership team also regularly report to the various committees on which the Governors sit so that this information is also shared here. The college's newsletter and website are other mediums through which the achievements and successes of the college are regularly communicated. Team meetings and performance management interviews provide opportunities for middle managers to review how team and individual learning and development is contributing to overall performance.

As a result people at all levels were able to describe improvements made to team and the organisation's performance (including KPIs) as a result of the college's investment in people. For example:

- Behaviour management training has resulted in a more consistent approach being rolled out across the college including a clear understanding of sanctions, less incidents of disruption and less exclusions, all of which are measured.
- Power teaching training has resulted in this approach starting to be implemented into the college (implemented into Key Stage 3 schemes of work). Other staff members have shadowed the two individuals that have been externally trained and this together with specific teaching and learning training and lesson observation feedback has led to an improvement in the number of lessons taught that are now "good" and "outstanding", all of which was again quantified.
- Training for a group of staff in Vision to Learn has led to a raising of standards for a group of pupils on the C/D border with a 6% increase.
- Through the appointment of a new manager, the introduction of structured programmes of development and improved teamwork the Learning Support Assistant team has

strengthened over time. Improved paperwork and systems are now place and team members are better able to support special needs pupils and share their experience with relevant members of the teaching staff.

- The college's approach to supporting work life balance is contributing to low staff turnover and low staff absence levels. People regularly referred to this as being a key factor in making the college an employer of choice.

The senior team's evaluation of their investment in the college's people strategies is also used to inform future strategy. For example, as mentioned earlier there are plans to further enhance the recruitment and selection process by providing potential new teachers in the future with a copy of the teachers' professional standards as part of the recruitment pack. This is to help individuals to make more informed decisions about whether to apply for positions. The success of the temporary post of Head of School has recently been extended for an additional two years and the role of Head of House has been devolved down to Faculty Heads as a means of raising their profile and further developing their leadership skills.

Reward and Recognition

All those interviewed without exception believed that their respective contributions were recognised and valued. Senior and middle managers described a number of ways through which they actively created a culture where people were recognised for their work. The college had not however actively put together a clear strategy in this respect. Equally members of the senior leadership team acknowledged that it was difficult to reward people financially given the constraints put on the college in terms of needing to adhere to teachers' national pay and conditions.

Ways however through which managers recognise staff and which staff equally confirmed included:

- Encouraging a "thank you" culture, including gestures of appreciation, cards and emails of thanks and announcements at briefings by the Head in relation to individual and team achievements
- Achievements reported in the local newspaper
- Letters from the Head to staff who achieve 100% attendance in the year
- Work life balance week
- Performance management being used to acknowledge individual achievements
- Organising and paying for staff to pay in a hotel in Cheshire to discuss the college's future strategy
- The organisation of social activities among teams
- The provision of many opportunities for people to progress their careers.

People also believed that team successes were acknowledged as much as individual ones. For example when managers had completed a certificated leadership and management course, their certificates had been presented to them in morning briefing. Others described how similar achievements would be mentioned at team and Faculty meetings as appropriate. Staff confirmed that they are also encouraged to recognise the contribution of their colleagues, once again often through feedback at team meetings. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the whole college. One manager described how she had been given some informal positive feedback about the work of her team from a colleague and asked if this person would put the feedback in writing which she then shared with her team. Staff across the organisation were certainly motivated by the various ways through which they college attempted to recognise contributions and all believed that this is done in a fair and appropriate manner. Some particularly relevant comments heard here included:

“When you are thanked for your efforts it does motivate you, especially when you have put in a lot of time and effort on extracurricular activities.” “We get a card at Christmas and it always has a personal individual message in from our manager and a thank you which I really like.” “I have been rewarded through my ability to progress within the college and I know this acts as a motivator to other staff who want to progress further.”

There was also evidence of the college providing staff with benefits which go over and above legal requirements. Many staff mentioned the work life balance week as an example here. Managers and staff also believed the college’s approach to supporting staff to return to work after a long period of absence was “above and beyond” what they were required to do including access to occupational health support. Other people referred to the subsidised gym membership that was available to them should they wish to take up this option.

People however could not confirm for definite whether the college had a strategy as such and nobody was able to confirm that they had been involved in developing any such strategy. In the liP Survey results this was also borne out as the majority of responses indicated that they were not sure if the college had a specific reward and recognition strategy in place.

Moving Forward/Opportunities for Improvement

The management team will benefit from taking time to stand back and identify what makes up the different elements of the college’s current approach to reward and recognition with a view to putting this into a clear strategy and then communicating this to all staff. Part of this approach could include seeking people’s opinion (including union/staff council representatives) in relation to what the college currently does and with a view to identifying whether there are any further improvements it could make here. Equally benchmarking the college’s approach against other schools/other organisations in industry is also something to think about here to identify if there is again anything else the college could implement to further recognise people, keep people motivated and continue to make the college an employer of choice.

Leadership and Management Strategy

There is a clear leadership and management strategy in place that is focused on building capacity and improving performance. Both senior and middle managers demonstrated an understanding of the sorts of skills, knowledge and behaviours required to effectively lead and manage their teams. Examples of capabilities regularly referred to included, performance management skills, excellent communication skills, the ability to provide constructive feedback, having an inclusive approach, encouraging people’s ideas, being approachable and accessible, being technically proficient and supporting people’s learning and development needs. Staff were equally clear about what to expect from managers and made reference to a number of the same examples.

There was also evidence of senior managers over time identifying the future capabilities required of leaders and managers. Some examples described included more input by Subject Leaders into the development of relevant Frameworks, more direct involvement of Faculty Managers into the recruitment and selection of staff, Faculty Managers taking on the role of Head of House during the past year and members of the senior leadership team now attending Faculty Meetings in order to improve communication further. With the achievement of Leadership Partner status there is also work currently being undertaken to identify the future capabilities required of leaders and managers. The extent to which managers themselves have been involved to date in defining these capabilities however was less evident (also reflected in the liP Survey results) and this is something which the college can now look to strengthen as it develops these leadership and management capabilities as part of the project.

There have been in the past and continue to be clear plans in place to ensure that leaders and managers are supported to develop their leadership and management capability. People for example made reference to:

- The secondment opportunities available onto the senior leadership team
- The introduction of the Head of School role, which is also a clear development opportunity
- A variety of National College for School Leadership courses which managers have accessed in the past and/or are in the process of completing
- Managers having the opportunity to coach and mentor colleagues in other schools which is in turn enhancing their skills
- Internal coaching and mentoring by senior managers with middle managers around their ability to effectively lead their teams, including providing constructive feedback as appropriate
- Relevant discussions around leadership and management approach at the Within School Variations meetings as appropriate

As a result of achieving Leadership Partner status, the college now has additional resources to further build leadership and management capacity and going forward it will be able to offer people a structured career path into leadership and management at a number of different levels. Reference for example was made to the Masters in Teaching and Learning that NQTs will be able to access as well as the Masters in Education Leadership and Management that will be available.

The college's leadership and management strategy is also clearly linked to its Development Framework and takes account of external good practice. As highlighted earlier in the report each member of the senior leadership team is responsible for a strand of the Framework and their development is reviewed in light of their ability to effectively deliver this. Attendance by managers on externally recognised leadership and management courses together with the current project linked to the achievement of Leadership Partner status are clear examples of how the strategy takes account of external good practice. Once again as mentioned earlier, the college was also successful in achieving the Leadership and Management Model in 2008.

Another obvious strength of the college's leadership and management strategy is the fact that all staff are encouraged to develop leadership capabilities as part of the Head's commitment to rolling out the model of distributed leadership. Managers and staff alike frequently described how individuals are encouraged to take on responsibility for various cross college projects, others again described the secondment opportunities that they have been able to access onto the senior leadership team and others talked of having the opportunity to mentor other schools. Some managers described how they had also encouraged staff members to take responsibility for training other colleagues, encouraging peer observation in the case of teaching staff and providing opportunities for staff to mentor various trainees that spend time at the college. All of these approaches are clearly assisting the organisation to continue to build capacity, provide individuals with extra challenges (which makes many want to stay at the college) while also enabling skills and experience to be shared.

Moving forward/Opportunities for Continuous Improvement

The college should consider involving managers at different levels in the development of the future capabilities required of leaders and managers moving forward and as part of the Leadership Partner work that it is currently engaged in. By doing so this should help to improve managers understanding of these requirements, ensure ownership and sign up to them and it should also put the leadership and management development programmes that are about to be rolled out into context.

As the leadership and management development programmes are delivered the college should also consider how it will most effectively evaluate the impact of the significant amount of investment in time and finances that is being put into the project to ensure that the most effective use is being made of these resources and that benefits are being realised from the development both for individuals and the college as a whole.

Leadership and Management Effectiveness

Relationships between line managers and staff were strong and managers described many ways in which they are effective at managing and developing staff which other staff members regularly confirmed. Individuals also readily confirmed how members of the senior leadership team are accessible and supportive and prepared to make time for staff as necessary. Reporting lines through to the senior team are also very clear so that people know who to go to for what. There was lots of evidence of people being coached and mentored at every level and feedback for the majority of staff comes formally through performance management discussions, following lesson observations for teachers as well as more informally as and when necessary during the year.

Senior managers described how they acted as role models in demonstrating the required leadership capabilities and once again both middle managers and staff were of the opinion that this group acted as a source of inspiration and motivation for everyone to give of their best. ***“The more I visit other schools and establishments as part of my role the more I realise how innovative our Head is.” “This college distinguishes itself from other Runcorn schools and a lot of that is down to the vision and actions of the Head.” “The Head is the best I have ever worked for. She is so committed and hard working and is always driving the school forward and this rubs off on you. There is total trust and respect there.”***

People frequently confirmed that there was a clear vision in place that is effectively communicated across the college, people believe that the Head and other members of the senior leadership team lead by example in terms of their hard work, they are accessible and approachable and take a real interest in wanting to develop people to fulfil their potential. Members of the senior team also confirmed how they actively engaged in learning and development as well. The Head is already a Consultant Head to other schools and has just applied to become a National Leader of Education. Observations described throughout this report clearly demonstrate that there is a coaching culture evident across the whole college and this also extends out to providing support to other schools. Similarly there have been many examples described already where staff clearly work effectively within teams and where sharing knowledge and information is actively encouraged.

Part of the open culture evident within the college is also due to the fact that managers are happy to seek and receive feedback from all levels in order to improve their own performance. For example the college has engaged in a number of surveys which have sought staff opinion about how effectively they believe they are led and managed. The High Sights self evaluation and review process asks people to comment on how well they believe their Faculty/departments have been led and managed during the year and there is also evidence of managers informally asking for feedback. ***“At the beginning of performance management with my team I regularly ask is there anything they feel I could be doing better.”*** Staff also believe that managers are receptive to this feedback and will act on it and some of those people interviewed were able to provide specific examples of improvements made, largely through the feedback provided through High Sights.

Continuous Improvement

Examples of ways through which the college has improved its overall approach to managing and developing staff over the past three years were many and include:

- More effective and structured use of internal expertise to deliver a series of planned development sessions for staff.
- A strengthening of the performance management system which is clearly aligned with the college's Development Framework and teachers' professional standards.
- Extension of performance management interviews to all support staff.
- A more structured approach to developing leadership and management capacity within the college through the distribution of the leadership aspirations questionnaire and the creation a number of clear career development paths for managers and aspiring managers

As mentioned earlier in this report the college also uses the High Sights process to regularly identify ways in which it can improve strategies for managing and developing people. The Within School Variation meetings also allows the senior team to compare team's performance on a range of issues and this again can identify variances in how teams are being managed and developed. Equally the college also has used information from external reviews such as its previous Investors in People Assessment and assessment against the Leadership and Management Model to further develop its people management strategies, details of which were provided at the beginning of this report. Commissioning external surveys (including most recently the use of the lIP Survey Tool) linked to how effectively people believe they are managed and developed is yet another effective feedback method through which the senior team can gauge people's view around this area against a variety of measures. Staff attendance and turnover rates are another key indicator to which the college looks when evaluating the effectiveness of the approach to people management and development. Given that the Head is also a Consultant Teacher this means she regularly visits other schools/organisations and in doing so actively looks at other organisation's approaches to people management and development. She did for example look to see what others did in the way of performance management for support staff before rolling out the college's system. However the reality is that given the strength of the practices in place within the college and its achievements to date, other colleges/schools usually visit The Heath to see how they can improve their practices.

Managers were also able to describe how they had overtime attempted to improve the way in which they managed and developed staff through feedback received, from coaching and from attending various leadership and management development courses themselves. They equally confirmed that through the High Sights process as well as more informally they actively sought feedback about their management approach. One manager described how their confidence was increasing when carrying out performance management interviews with their team. Another confirmed how since being promoted they were much more aware of their behaviours and how these impacted on others and had subsequently had become more empathetic in their approach. Another manager confirmed that since attending a particular leadership course they were aware of the importance of using coaching skills in order to increase individuals' confidence and ultimately improve performance.

As already highlighted staff believed that managers were committed to improving their overall approach to managing and developing people and provided some specific examples of this. For example one person described how as a result of feedback through High Sights it had been identified that there could be more structured support in place for Associate Teachers and an improved localised induction for NQTs, both of which had subsequently been addressed. Another manager confirmed how there had been changes made to the way in which in house development sessions were delivered to one particular team based on feedback they had received and which had since been put into practice. Feedback from the team had indicated that learning undertaken was now much more relevant. The Head also described how as a result of one of the previous surveys undertaken and feedback received from staff, the decision had been taken for a member of the senior team to attend each Governor Committee meeting to improve communication.

As a result of all of the practices and approaches described in this report people interviewed believed that the college is a great place to work and are very proud to be associated with the college's year on year achievements.

liP Extended Framework Topic Map

The topic map on page 19 indicates in:

- **Green** - those areas of strength in relation to the Extended Framework
- **Amber** - those areas where Continuous Improvement Opportunities exist and reflect the Assessor's Findings under the headings "Moving Forward/Continuous Improvement Opportunities" within the main body of the report.
- **Red** - those areas of the Extended Framework that are not currently met.

Business Strategy	Learning & Development Strategy	People Management Strategy	Leadership & Management Strategy	Management Effectiveness	Recognition & Reward	Involvement & Empower	Learning & Development	Performance Measurement	Continuous Improvement
The Standard - Top Managers should make sure (and their people should confirm) that:									
<p>Organisation has vision/purpose strategy and plan</p> <p>People involved in the planning</p>	<p>Learning priorities are clear and linked to the plan</p> <p>Resources for learning and development are made available</p> <p>The impact will be evaluated</p>	<p>People are encouraged to contribute ideas & improve performance</p> <p>There is equality of opportunity for development and support</p>	<p>Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage and develop people</p> <p>People know what effective managers should be doing</p>	<p>Managers are effective and can describe how they lead, manage and develop their people</p> <p>People can confirm this</p> <p>Feedback</p>	<p>People believe they make a difference</p> <p>People believe their contribution is valued</p>	<p>Ownership and responsibility are encouraged</p> <p>People are Involved in decision-making</p>	<p>People's learning and development needs are met</p>	<p>Investment in learning can be quantified</p> <p>Impact can be demonstrated</p>	<p>Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies and management</p>

Your Choice - Top Managers should make sure (and their people should confirm) that:									
<p>Clear core values relate to vision and strategy</p> <p>Key performance indicators are used to improve performance</p> <p>Social responsibility is taken into account in the strategy</p> <p>People and stakeholders are involved in strategy development</p>	<p>The learning and development strategy builds capability</p> <p>Plans take account of learning styles</p> <p>People help make decisions about their own learning</p> <p>Learning and development is innovative and flexible</p> <p>There is a culture of continuous learning</p>	<p>The recruitment process is fair, efficient and effective</p> <p>A diverse, talented workforce is created</p> <p>A work-life balance strategy meets the needs of its people</p> <p>Constructive feedback is valued</p> <p>The structure makes the most of people's talents</p>	<p>Leadership and management capabilities for now and the future are defined</p> <p>Managers are helped to acquire these capabilities</p> <p>Leadership and management strategy link to business strategy, taking account of external good practice</p> <p>Everyone is Encouraged to Develop leadership Capabilities</p>	<p>Managers are role models of leadership, teamwork and knowledge sharing</p> <p>Coaching is part of the culture</p> <p>People are helped to develop their careers</p> <p>There is a culture of openness and trust</p>	<p>Reward and recognition strategies link to business strategy and are externally benchmarked</p> <p>Representative groups are consulted (where appropriate)</p> <p>What motivates people is understood</p> <p>Success is Celebrated</p> <p>Benefits strategy goes beyond legal requirements</p> <p>Colleagues' achievements are recognised</p>	<p>Effective consultation and involvement is part of culture</p> <p>People are supported and trusted to make decisions</p> <p>Knowledge and information are shared</p> <p>People committed to success</p> <p>There is culture of continuous improvement</p> <p>People can challenge the way things work</p> <p>There is a sense of ownership and pride in working for the organisation</p>	<p>Learning and development resources are used effectively</p> <p>Learning is an everyday activity</p> <p>Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development are used</p> <p>People are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential</p> <p>All learning is valued/celebrated and is an everyday activity</p> <p>Mentoring is used</p> <p>Personal development is supported</p>	<p>The contribution of people strategies is measured and evaluated</p> <p>Impact on key performance indicators can be described</p> <p>Performance improves as a result</p> <p>Career prospects Improve</p> <p>Flexible and effective approaches to measuring return on investment are used</p> <p>ROI in people is reported to stakeholders</p>	<p>Self review and information from external review are used</p> <p>Effective feedback methods are used to understand people's views on how they are managed</p> <p>Internal and external benchmarking are used</p> <p>People's views on how they are managed improves</p> <p>People believe it's a great place to work</p>

Evidence Requirements assessed were as follows:
(The Standard)

The Standard – Evidence Requirements										
ER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓	D	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	✓	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key:

✓	Evidence Requirement Met		D	Met with Development Opportunity
X	Further Evidence Required			Evidence Requirement Not Assessed

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Objective/Priority/Issues	Suggested Development Activity	Client Action	Assessor Support	liP Centre Support
Reward & Recognition Strategy	<p>Senior Leadership Team to brain storm what they currently have in place. Take the opportunity to seek feedback from staff & staff/union representatives.</p> <p>Visit other organisations including non educational sector to benchmark approach.</p> <p>Formulate & clearly communicate strategy.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>		
Future Leadership & Management Capabilities/Building Leadership Capacity	<p>Use liP Interactive Web Tool to get templates for assisting in the identification of future leadership capabilities. This can be accessed through the investorsinpeople.co.uk website</p> <p>Involve leaders and managers/potential managers in the development of these capabilities.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>		
Interrogate the results of the Investors in People Survey with a view to identifying further areas for development.	Senior team to meet to review in more detail and put together an action plan as appropriate.	Yes		

Conclusion

The Assessor would like to extend her thanks to Jamie Jardine for organising the Review and to all those staff who took part in the Review process.

Joanne Hamilton

Investors in People Assessor

Date: 13 November 2009

Contact Details: joanne@jhbusiness-solutions.co.uk / 07771 798 124

