

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: SCHOOL/COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 29 October 2013
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out the ongoing partnership between Falkirk Education Service and Forth Valley College and to highlight current and future collaborative projects.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Falkirk Education Service and Forth Valley College have had a close working relationship for a number of years.
- 2.2 Consortium arrangements have been in place between schools and the college since 2001. These have given young people opportunities to study courses at college during their time at secondary school
- 2.3 On average 300 young people attend Forth Valley College each year from S4, S5 and S6 to undertake study in a range of courses not on offer within their own secondary school. Around 30 young people from Carrongrange School also attend to participate in courses which take into account their additional support needs.
- 2.4 Forth Valley College delivers SQA accredited Skills for Work vocational courses (or City and Guilds equivalents) which cover areas such as Creative Industries, Engineering, Early Education and Childcare, Construction Crafts, Hospitality and Salon Services.
- 2.5 Forth Valley College also delivers SQA courses not readily available in schools, such as Higher Psychology, Higher Mechatronics and Higher Media Studies.
- 2.6 For young people in S6 studying Advanced Highers in Science and Mathematical subjects, the Scottish Science Baccalaureate is an SQA qualification completed jointly by the school and college. Since 2009, thirty six young people have successfully completed the course.
- 2.7 Forth Valley College also offers 'Alternative Curriculum' courses for referred learners at risk of disengaging from education, including learners from the Mariner Support Centre. Around 30 young people attend these courses each year.

- 2.8 School/college partnership courses are very successful in increasing a young person's chances of progressing to study at college after they leave school. On average around 22% of school leavers from Falkirk Council schools each year have college as their post-school destination. In contrast, around 40% of school/college course participants progress to Forth Valley College after they leave school.

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 In this context, the partners have been working to create more opportunities for young people to experience college while they are still at school.

- 3.2 At the start of this academic session, August 2013, two new initiatives have been developed to further increase opportunities for young people attending Falkirk Secondary Schools to gain experiences and qualifications at Forth Valley College. These are in addition to the other courses previously outlined.

- 3.3 The SCOTS Course (Schools/College Opportunities to Succeed Course)

- This course has been developed to support young people in the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence who may not have previously thought about Further Education as a potential route to a positive destination.
- One hundred and twenty young people from across all the secondary schools are currently working in partnership with Forth Valley College to increase their understanding of what options and range of courses are available to them at college. They are also improving their Skills for Life, Skills for Work and Skills for Learning by completing part of the Falkirk Employability Award in their base schools.
- Throughout this session the young people will attend Forth Valley College for one afternoon a week to participate in eight different curriculum areas. These three week 'taster' sessions cover construction, engineering, business, care, health and sport, salon services, creative industries, and science and computing.
- In their own schools the young people are working on their employability skills and getting a clearer understanding on what is required to make a successful transition from school into a positive destination.
- At the end of the year, young people that have successfully completed the course will have an opportunity to progress to an accredited course in their chosen area of interest as part of the school/college consortium links. They will complete this at Forth Valley College alongside their other school based SQA courses.
- If a young person is successful in their school/college consortium course, then the college will guarantee them an interview for a full-time college course in their chosen area.

- 3.4 Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Mechanical or Electrical Engineering

- This course has been set up by Forth Valley College to enable young people in S5/6 to attend college one day per week to work towards gaining an HNC in either Mechanical or Electrical Engineering.
- If a young person completes the HNC throughout their S5/6 this will allow them to progress into year two of the HND course at Forth Valley College after they leave school.

- Successful completion of the HND could allow the young person to progress to year three of the degree course at Herriot Watt University. A young person would therefore qualify one year earlier than would traditionally be the case.
- For those young people unable to complete the whole HNC course, opportunities have been created to allow them to pick up some of the units. This will help the young person decide whether or not a career in engineering is right for them or not. It will also give them an opportunity to complete some of the units that historically young people have found difficult when starting a course in engineering eg Maths for Engineering.

3.5 Partnership working.

The creation of the new courses has led to improved partnership working between both organisations. So far this has involved:

- Secondary School Pastoral staff having the opportunity to tour the Forth Valley College Falkirk Campus and meet lecturers of various subjects.
- Secondary school staff and college staff spending time together to discuss and work on developing the SCOTS Course.
- Forth Valley College making their "Moodle" virtual learning environment available for school pupils and staff to use. This has led to an increase in communications and sharing of good practice.
- Falkirk Council Employment and Training Unit testing the core skills in numeracy and literacy of all SCOTS students. This will be repeated at the end of the course to check on the progress of the students.

3.6 Improving attainment.

- In spite of the partnership's successes in progression from school to college, successful attainment of qualifications on school/college partnership courses is not as high as the partners would wish. However, when young people remain on their course and attend regularly, attainment is generally very high. Appendix 1 shows three year attainment data on Falkirk school-college partnership programmes.
- Results are reviewed by the partnership annually and adjustments to future delivery made to replace or revise less successful provision. For example, Higher Care was removed from the portfolio for 2012-2013, Higher Sociology is no longer being offered in 2013-2014 and changes have been made to the delivery and assessment scheduling of the City and Guilds Introduction to Hair and Beauty.
- Attendance at school/college courses can be impacted upon by factors such as school prelim examinations, study leave and other school subject priorities.
- Forth Valley College is working more closely with individual schools and with the Opportunities for All Co-ordinator to maximise attendance and sustained participation through an enhanced two way reporting process and active promotion of parity of esteem between school and college curricula. The creation of the Opportunities for All Co-ordinator role has made a very significant difference to effective communication between the college and the schools and it is expected that this will have a positive impact on success rates in moving forward.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 To further develop the successful partnership between Education Services and Forth Valley College the following areas are currently being developed to enable young people within Falkirk Council enhanced opportunities to gain skills and qualifications to improve their chances of moving on to a positive destination.

- Extending the opportunity for HN study for senior pupils to other subject areas.
- Widen the range of vocational courses on offer to include all areas included within the SCOTS college tasters (Administration/Tourism; Fitness, Health and Exercise; Laboratory Science) and Hospitality.
- Working towards a guaranteed place on an appropriate full-time college course for all young people successfully completing a vocational course under the schools/college partnership.
- Further opportunities for schools and college staff to share CPD, both formal and informal.

4.2 The partners note with interest the recently published Interim Report of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (Scottish Government, September 2013) and look forward to the potential opportunities that the continuing work of the Commission may create. A separate committee paper will be compiled to outline in more detail the recommendations and implications from the report for the future of young people within Falkirk Council.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

5.1 As the partnership continues to develop and move forward with their new courses and strategies, it is expected that:

- there will be an increase in the number of young people moving on to college as a positive destination from school
- more young people that had not previously considered college as a post school destination will now apply
- the percentage of young people gaining successful qualifications will improve.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 That Education Executive:

- (i) notes the further development of close partnership working between Education Services and Forth Valley College; and
- (ii) approves the strategies adopted further to improve the destination outcomes of young people within Falkirk council.

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 29 October 2013

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Appendix 1

Vocational Programmes	2010-2011					2011-2012					2012-2013				
	Enrolled	Completed	Pass	% Pass of Enrolled	% Pass of Completed	Enrolled	Completed	Pass	% Pass of Enrolled	% Pass of Completed	Enrolled	Completed	Pass	% Pass of Enrolled	% Pass of Completed
Construction Crafts SfW Int 1	10	3	2	20%	67%	13	4	2	15%	50%	7	4	4	57%	100%
Construction Crafts SfW Int 2						12	10	7	58%	70%	9	4	4	44%	100%
Childcare SfW Int 1	47	28	18	38%	64%						16	10	9	56%	90%
Childcare SfW Int 2	28	18	11	39%	61%	44	32	15	34%	47%	15	11	11	73%	100%
Engineering Skills SfW Int 1	19	12	10	53%	83%						7	4	4	57%	100%
Engineering Skills SfW Int 2	11	10	8	73%	80%	21	11	11	52%	100%	13	12	12	92%	100%
C&G Intro to Hair and Beauty						10	10	5	50%	50%	13	11	6	46%	55%
Skills for Work Hospitality Int 1											5	4	4	80%	100%
Skills for Work Retailing 1 unit						9	6	6	67%	100%	5	5	5	100%	100%
Totals	115	71	49	43%	69%	109	73	46	42%	63%	90	65	59	66%	91%
Higher and Intermediate Programmes	2010-2011					2011-2012					2012-2013				
	Enrolled	Completed	Pass	% Pass of Enrolled	% Pass of Completed	Enrolled	Completed	Pass	% Pass of Enrolled	% Pass of Completed	Enrolled	Completed	Pass	% Pass of Enrolled	% Pass of Completed
NQ Higher Mechatronics	12	11	11	92%	100%	9	9	9	100%	100%	14	12	11	79%	92%
NQ Higher Media Studies	10	9	8	80%	89%	15	11	9	60%	82%	15	14	7	47%	50%
NQ Higher Psychology	41	35	31	76%	89%	22	19	19	86%	100%	36	23	23	64%	100%
NQ Higher Sociology	8	6	3	38%	50%	8	7	7	88%	100%	7	1	1	14%	100%
NQ Intermediate 2 Psychology	21	18	15	71%	83%	22	14	14	64%	100%	28	16	7	25%	44%
Science Baccalaureate Interdisciplinary Project	13	7	7	54%	100%	5	4	4	80%	100%	7	5	4	57%	80%
Totals	105	86	75	71%	87%	81	64	62	77%	97%	107	71	53	50%	75%