

CFE L&D POSC 16-19 Education Provision Visit 2nd February 2010 Summary of Visit

On the 2nd February members of the CFE L&D POSC visited the Thamesview Skills Centre, Gravesend, the Leigh Academy, Dartford and North West Kent College, Gravesend, on a fact finding mission to research 16-19 education provision in preparation for the handover of commissioning responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council to KCC from April 2010.

Members were able to hear from students about their experience of 16-19 provision and what information, advice and guidance (IAG) they received in preparation for their educational and career choices at this age. They also heard from the education providers themselves about their particular model of delivery, their priorities for the future and the challenges they currently face.

Below is summary of some of the findings from the day:

- The students we spoke to seemed to understand the relevance of what they were learning and how it fitted into their future progression.
- Overall the strength of the pastoral support provided by institutions was high and was something students said they valued.
- The small school structure the Academy operated seemed to be working well, particularly for boys whose Contextual Value Added scores (CVA – this measures how well pupils have achieved relative to what they might have been expected to achieve) were impressive (1040).
- The Academy benefits from being based in new buildings but the need for smaller spaces was expressed. This point is being taken into account at the Longfield Academy which is currently under re-construction.
- The nature and speed of change within the economy today means the skills the workforce is required to have are evolving swiftly. Therefore the ability to learn may be the most beneficial skill that young people can be taught.
- The influence of the family on career choices was something which was apparent from talking to students.
- Students' awareness of the full range of options available to them could be improved, for example on Apprenticeships.
- Students voiced their preference for IAG to be provided in person rather than online.