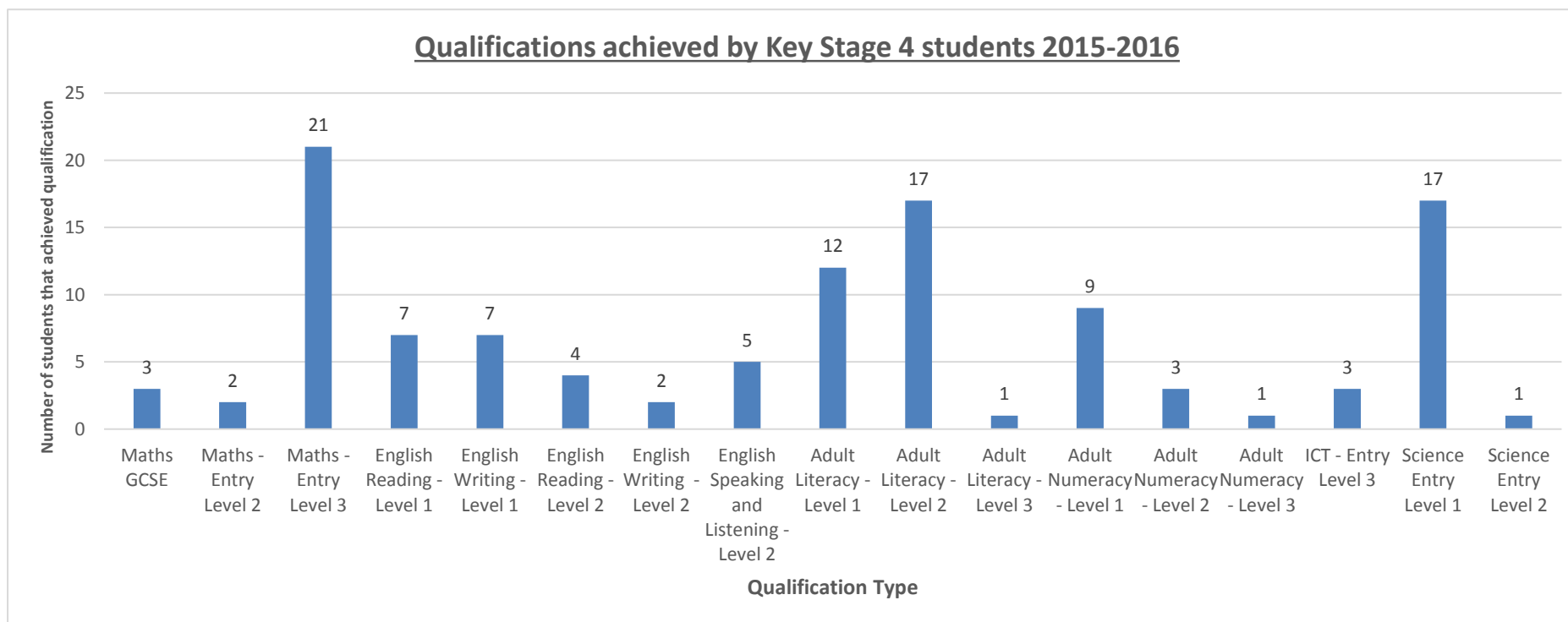


Overview

- 118 Students in both Key Stage 4, (**Year 9, 20 students, Years 10/11, 45 students**) and Key Stage 5 (**53 students**) were entered into a range of assessments including externally moderated examinations, 'In House' tests, and 'Portfolio' based programmes, 192 different qualifications in all.
- Alongside the above qualifications, AQA Unit Awards were also gained. The inclusion of AQA Unit Awards in the assessment process, gives all students the opportunity to work towards an externally verified certificate in a specific field, even if they are not pursuing an academic pathway. However they are costly and require considerable administration.
- The College team focuses, on accreditation that will enable students to access their next course of learning in the mainstream sector, such as GCSE Mathematics and Functional Skills English. Students this year followed demanding, carefully targeted programmes to achieve good results. Over time some students' developments have been notable. e.g Students who struggled at Entry 1, i.e showing significant reading

difficulties, working memory issues, effortful writing skills in Year 9, have successfully achieved Level 1 English in Year 12. This indicates that with motivation and effective teaching, many students with learning difficulties can achieve throughout adolescence. This level of achievement is not always recognised if they move to a mainstream college. (Please see the discussion at the end of this report.)



- Students in Key Stage 4 took a range of Entry Level English and Maths exams. Staff in Year 9 report that this gives them an aim and also offers opportunities for students to be placed in ‘exam conditions’. However these exams are demanding from an administration perspective and are costly. They have very little value as ‘exam currency’.
- Those who took GCSE achieved Grades from C – G. This is exam is set to be far more challenging next year.
- There is a group of higher achievers in Year 11 needing GCSE English. Presently we have no capacity to deliver this ourselves. We are looking to make connections with Grove House to address short falls of Curriculum offer on both sites.



PLTS Data

Students across the College, from Year 10 – Year 14, have been assessed using a measured scale developed in association with Coventry University.

Jon Hutchings has developed a system of monitoring progress in Personal Development, using this nationally recognised framework. The scale ranges from 0-5, 0 being the lowest value, to 5 being the highest. Five fields of personal development are judged. These are; Self- Management, (SM) Teamwork, (TW), Creative Thinking, (CT), Reflective Learning (RL), Independent Enquiry (IE). The value of these together we believe leads to Effective Participation (EP). With Effective Participation in all aspects of learning and life student s will make progress and this is an outcome we strive for.

01/05/2016	01/01/2016		01/05/2016				01/01/2016				01/05/2016			
EP	EP	EP PROGRESS	SM	(SM) manag emo	(SM) Tak & Man risk of fail	(SM) approp	SM	(SM) manag emo	(SM) Tak & Man risk of fail	(SM) approp	TW	(TW) mak & keep agree	(TW) empathy	(TW) approp
3.47			3.67	3	4	4					3	3	2	4
2.87			2.67	3	3	2					2.67	3	2	3
2.73			2.33	2	2	3					3	3	3	3
2.6			2	2	2	2					3	3	3	3
2.6			2.33	2	3	2					3	3	3	3
2.4			2	2	2	2					2	2	2	2
2.33			2.33	2	3	2					2.33	3	2	2
2.33			2	2	2	2					2.33	3	2	2
2.27			2	2	2	2					2	2	2	2
1.93			2	2	2	2					3	3	3	3
1.6			1.67	2	1	2					1	1	1	1
1.47			1.33	1	2	1					1	1	1	1
1.4			1.67	1	2	2					1.67	2	1	2

The table above gives an example of the scores assessed by staff for a tutor group in Year 11. Values in red present challenging barriers to learning. Those in yellow are borderline and set the threshold for movement into development. Blue and green are those students deemed to be making progress. In assessing all students, we have managed to set a numerical ‘benchmark’ for progress in Personal Development which we feel will develop into a robust system and should be more focused than any methods that we have used before. This will run over the year and will be used with



parents and students to note progress or otherwise twice a year. So far the data indicates that students in Key Stage 4 make more progress than Key Stage 5 and this may be due to different levels of motivation as students get older.

Jon has worked extremely hard on this project and should be given credit for the way it has become embedded into our assessment approaches.

Summary and Discussion

The results this year indicate that our most able students can achieve at Level 1 and some at Level 2. This raises their self-esteem and to a limited extent helps them to feel that they are pursuing an 'academic' route in line perhaps with younger siblings. It also gives the same level of comfort to parents. However we must bear in mind that these qualifications are significantly lower than GCSEs, which are the recognised 'currency' in the wider world. There are only one or two students in each phase truly able to take these exams in any year. We struggle to meet the needs of our more 'academic' learners.

Lately the entry requirements and admission processes for mainstream college places have been subject to much change and considerable controversy. Many students achieving Level 1/Level 2 or even passes at GCSE have not been allowed on a Level 1 course. Parents have been dogged and fought for a place, in order to access a course at the right level. Many of our students are put onto the 'Extended Learning Programme at College and repeat much of the work they have done at Thriftwood. This presents us with a dilemma, because at times we feel we are 'over educating' our learners so that can't access the right course. There is more discussion to be had in the course of this year. This includes issues such as transport. Students over 18 do not qualify for free/subsidised travel, course costs and learning support in Level 1 courses.

With a shrinking budget we cannot now afford to spend up to £10,000 on accreditation and are looking to other forms of Thriftwood based certification. This will need to be discussed with parents.

Accreditation remains an important aspect by which to measure our effectiveness, but there are good reasons to radically change the way we assess progress and develop more personalised learning programmes in the future.

Elizabeth Smart September 2016