

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 23rd January 2025

GOVERNORS

Ben Owen, Chair

PRESENT:

Jane Peacock, Vice Chair

Andrew Cropley, Principal and Chief Executive Officer

Kit Salt

Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (Business Support)

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE:

Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience

Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality

Flynn Bainbridge, Student Governor

Arina Borscakova, Student Governor

Ella Brookes, Assistant Principal: Inclusion

Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards

Kirsty Walsh, Assistant Principal: Engineering (from 17:15)

Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies

Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries

Eloise Hopkinson, Head of Governance

- | | | ACTION
by whom | DATE
by when |
|----------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | <u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>
Apologies for absence were received from Scott Smith, Keith Spiers and Joanna Wilson. | | |
| 2 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>
The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on agenda items to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted. | | |
| 3 | <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2024</u>
The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 th November 2024.

There were no matters arising. | | |

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The committee was happy to note the content of the update provided.

5 **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (QIAP) 2024/25 PROGRESS UPDATE**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report, particularly drawing the committee's attention to the following key points:

Attendance

- Overall, attendance was slightly worse than it was in November 2024 and at the same point (January) last year.
- It was noted that there are more hard-to-reach students this year than in 2023/24: e.g. many students will have been home educated or have complex needs. While attendance is below expectations, it was observed to be better than these young people demonstrated at school.
- There is a lot of ongoing activity in relation to attendance, including stringent attendance chasing. Three dedicated attendance chasing roles are being advertised and, in the meantime, a part-time team is in place to chase attendance. In addition, heads of department and the Welfare team continue to work with teachers to chase attendance as much as possible.
- Before Christmas, text messages were sent to students who were absent from English and maths and, as a result, attendance improved by 1.8%. This exercise was repeated during the first week after the break and will be repeated periodically throughout the remainder of the academic year.
- Executive and Quality team members have been visiting lessons to check whether learners are present.
- A new component within PowerBI enables live attendance to be checked, whether this is by curriculum area, by directorate, or by maths and English group, etc. Provided that learners have 'tapped in' to their lesson and/or registers have been taken accurately, this shows which learners are present. It is believed that this will further drive the focus on attendance.
- Teachers, support staff, heads of department and assistant principals, plus the Executive team, are all involved in the attempt to improve attendance. Further measures in place include writing to learners and parents; speaking to learners; making attendance a specific focus of learner voice; and changing timetables. The vice principal indicated that it is not clear what more the college can possibly do to improve attendance.
- Within the position statement validation meetings which took place through January, it was clear that some of last year's poor

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

areas of attendance have improved. However, the pace of improvement continues to require further effort.

- Apprenticeship attendance is nearer leaders' expectations at 89.69%. Again, this is chased and efforts are being made to improve the position.

The business support staff governor asked whether the attendance issue was reflected nationally, particularly in light of student challenges and the fact that there has recently been a swathe of illness. The vice principal explained that the Association of Colleges has not yet released its report, but members of the vice principal's peer network are reporting the same experience as WNC. Complex needs, poor mental health, and vulnerability are proving to be a national issue. As well as electively home educated young people, colleges are seeing a lot of young people who have been school refusers. The latter group of young people often had school attendance of only around 20%, so the fact that some of these have improved their attendance to 40 or 50% since enrolling at college shows clear progress. The vice principal indicated that it would be unrealistic to expect these young people to have 90% or higher attendance, and the need is likely to grow more complex in future years.

The vice chair asked how this aligns with the college's offer, particularly when considering the ability of those learners who do not attend for the majority of the time to succeed. The vice principal explained that most learners with low attendance are making progress, even if they are not reaching their target grade. Staff continue to work with these learners to support them and drive improvement. Skills development and progress are good, which is a credit to the support offered to these young people. Curriculum staff put interventions and 1:1 support in place and are very good at capitalising on the time during which the students are present. It was acknowledged that this was more demanding in relation to staff time and that it can be difficult to teach when there is this gap in knowledge between students with good attendance and students who only attend sporadically.

The chair observed that Access to HE attendance particularly stood out at 82.1%. The vice principal explained that these adult learners often experience a lot of personal barriers to attendance – for example, many of them have children or care for their parents. Again, staff work hard to support students and put interventions in place where needed. She informed governors that there are also some online learning programmes within the Access to HE provision, and attendance levels vary. For example, some learners may do a lot of work in one go but struggle to exhibit reliable attendance patterns due to other commitments. She has been looking into this and, again, a lot has been put in place to ensure that students are prepared, and tailored learning has also been implemented. She assured governors that there is nothing with the teaching of the Access courses which may be driving students

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

to not attend, and it can be evidenced that staff provide good support. In response to a query from the chair, it was confirmed that the awarding organisation used for Access to HE courses was the Cambridge Access Validating Agency (CAVA).

The chair acknowledged that the college is doing a lot to improve attendance. He questioned whether there is a rewards initiative for those students who have good attendance, as this may encourage others to attend. The vice principal confirmed that the college does have rewards schemes in place, and an example given was the WNC coins which can be used within the college's catering outlets. She informed the committee that managers are also starting to look at introducing more competitions, particularly in maths and English. Further to this, 'Maths and English Extra' was introduced for 2024/25. This scheme provides different sessions throughout the day which learners can attend, any learner can attend, but the sessions are particularly aimed at those who have missed lessons. Details of these sessions have been shared with learners and their parents.

The chair indicated that it was good to see the apprenticeships attendance almost at 90%, although it remains below where leaders would prefer it to be. He suggested that it would be beneficial to have some further assurance in relation to the national picture from members of the vice principal's network to reinforce that the college's experience is mirrored elsewhere. The vice principal expressed the opinion that attendance will become more of an issue due to the changes to the framework and the greater focus on inclusion. The landscape of Further Education was projected to become very different in comparison to how it looked before COVID.

Apprenticeships

- The vice principal informed governors that there were 1,099 continuing apprentices studying on 62 different apprenticeship standards.
- Overall retention for 2024/25 was 78.5% at the date of the meeting, and this was 8.2% better than in December 2024.
- The Executive monitoring meetings have been the most positive they have been for a while, and the heads of departments' predictions have been more accurate this year than has been seen in the past. The vice principal indicated that the drive demonstrated within these meetings by the heads of department and assistant principals should be acknowledged – they know the learners exceedingly well and are doing all they can to retain learners and ensure they achieve.
- Retention for future years currently shows no concerns. The vice principal warned that it would be necessary to be mindful of the potential impact of the increase to employers' National Insurance contributions. Employer engagement has already

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

shown that smaller businesses in particular are being steadier in their approach, and recruitment has already slowed down.

- The 2024/25 endpoint assessment (EPA) pass rate was 8.8% above the national rate, and high-grade achievement was 36.1%, showing an increase since November's committee meeting. The vice principal informed governors that it was not possible to access national pass rates by subject, even though the requirements and grading of the EPAs differ significantly.
- Leaders and managers continue to monitor the timeliness of reviews, and this continues to improve. At the end of term in December 2024, 9.55% of learners had not had a review within the past three months, in comparison to a percentage of 11.1% in December 2023. Where reviews have not been as timely as they should have been, each department has provided a narrative to explain the reasons behind this. These explanations include staffing issues; focusing on getting out of funding learners closed down; completion of EPAs being the focus; and additional IQA requirements where there are new staff within a department. Action plans have been put in place in all instances. Clear rationale for this has been given by heads of department in the monitoring meetings, and pre-meetings between the vice principal, assistant principal and heads of department continue to take place.
- At R14, the only change to the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework measures was that employer feedback was no longer judged as 'needs improvement'. The college remained 'needs improvement' for retention and achievement as this was based on the position at the closure of the ILR in October 2024. In response to a question from the vice chair, the vice principal confirmed that a change to this would not be seen until R14 of next year.

The chair observed that a lot of movement could be seen since this same point last academic year and that it felt as though the college were on track to improve. In terms of National Insurance, he indicated that some employers can apply for subsidies, but these were not available to everyone. One governor agreed with these points and indicated that there was some fear in relation to apprenticeships. It was noted that people are waiting to see what emerges from the Skills and Growth Levy.

AGREED: to note the content of the report and updates provided.

6

GOVERNMENT POLICY UPDATE

The vice principal: curriculum and quality provided a verbal update:

- Following the pause and review of curriculum reform, 157 courses which were due to be de-funded in 2025 have been extended.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

- Two areas will be de-funded prior to 2025/26 – these are early years Level 3 alternatives and the onsite construction T Level. The impact of this upon the college is that there will only be a T Level route for early years at Level 3, and the onsite construction T Level will no longer be available. The college did not recruit to the latter for 2024/25 anyway, so the impact was minimal.
- In all other areas, the college will be able to offer an alternative Level 3 qualification as well as the T Level.
- Once the outcome of the pause and review was known, the college acted very quickly and held an information evening for current learners, applicants, and their parents. This well-attended event was successful and enabled attendees to have an in-depth look at the adapted Level 3 offer.
- T-Level delivery has gone well so far within the college.
- The vice principal informed governors that some uncertainty around curriculum reform will continue throughout 2024/25 as the outcome of the Curriculum and Assessment Review is awaited. The timeline of this is scheduled to be released in the spring of 2025, but the full outcomes will not be available until autumn. This will also impact on Level 1 and 2 reforms.
- The vice principal described the college as being in a good position. She and other staff have been attending Department for Education updates. Heads of department and programme area leaders have attended networking events and webinars and, last week, City & Guilds attended to discuss their qualification offer. While there is uncertainty, the college offers some innovative pathways.
- Ofsted is removing single word judgements for schools in favour of a scorecard. This may be slightly delayed for Further Education as it is acknowledged that the complexity and the fact that different colleges operate very differently need to be taken into account. Ofsted wants to put greater focus on the impact of demographics, inclusion, and SEND. The college is a strong position in respect of this focus, considering its Boost, Engage, and Mansfield Education Hub curriculum offers and the Old Brewery. The latter has increased the number of learners studying Entry Level and Level 1 construction programmes. In summary, a range of bespoke programmes to meet the different needs of young people are offered across the college.
- The college has already been looking at approaches in relation to the Get Britain Working white paper and 18-21 NEET, exploring programmes to build resilience and provide pathways into vocational routes. Senior leaders have met with Nottingham College and Futures to look at how this could be achieved in partnership.
- The outcomes of the Skills and Growth Levy and details of foundation and shorter apprenticeships are awaited but, again,

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

the vice principal expressed the opinion that the college would be in a good position to manage these outcomes.

- Devolution will bring opportunities and change relating to the adult skills offer and the aforementioned white paper. The college must ensure that it is involved, so the next few months will be very busy. Senior leaders will engage with the combined authority's team to ensure that the college has the necessary capacity, funding and flexibility.

The chair informed the committee that he read an interesting piece about how devolved authorities are dealing with the Adult Skills Fund – a lot more of the funding is being utilised than when this was central, which is positive. He indicated that it does appear that established devolved areas have a lot more flexibility and less funding is being returned to Treasury coffers.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

7

CURRICULUM UPDATES

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented a detailed update relating to several matters.

T-Level performance report

- Performance overall was described as very positive.
- Attendance for Year 2 was strong at 93.6%. Year 1's attendance, however, was 86.8%. This was predominantly attributed to T-Level Building Services Engineering for Construction and was explained as being due to six learners. Three of these will transfer to the electrical apprenticeship and the other three intend to go to full-time employment outside of the construction industry.
- Overall retention was positive for both Year 1 and Year 2. Almost all learners who had withdrawn from a T Level had moved to an apprenticeship, which is a positive destination.
- Progress against target grades for almost all T-Level learners was green, which is unusual at this point in the year.
- Most learners have reported that they are enjoying the course.
- The vice principal informed governors that students on the building services T Level have struggled as there was not so much practical work in the first term. The course focuses more on how construction works, which is a different style for both teachers and learners to which they need to adapt. Support is in place, and the head of construction is very passionate about the design and planning of these courses and is advocating a very project-based approach. He is also working hard with his team to get them on board with the different style of teaching. The vice principal indicated that she was monitoring the situation but was not unduly concerned.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

- The vice principal indicated that, in engineering, Year 1 learners complained about the theory load in 2023/24. However, now that they have progressed to Year 2, which is mainly practical, these same learners have acknowledged that they can see how the knowledge they obtained in Year 1 is helping them with their final project.
- Animal care learners have said that they would like more practical work.
- Health and social care learners who came to the college with a grade 4 GCSE profile are struggling, and the curriculum team is having to put more interventions in place in relation to both academic skills and communication skills.
- The assistant principal: engineering shared that a T-Level advisory meeting took place recently and the visitor was impressed by the planning and delivery of the T Level. He informed the assistant principal that this was best practice.
- The early years foundation programme was previously commended by the Association of Colleges, and the college has now been invited twice to share practice.
- It was agreed that it is clear that the college is making a success of T Levels, and they are the right qualification for some learners.

One governor observed that such a positive report in relation to T Levels, despite the angst and negativity reported elsewhere, was a real testament to the college.

Looking ahead to 2026

The vice principal informed governors that the college is not going to offer the creative design T Level as the career pathways are too narrow and do not meet the destinations of the college's learners. Furthermore, the college is going to change from the business T Level to marketing. Again, this better meets the needs of local employers and the areas of growth within the employment market. The chair indicated that it was positive to see the college making changes to its curriculum to ensure the offer is appropriate for local young people to progress to meaningful employment.

The college has been applying innovative approaches and flexibility through the Seven Steps curriculum planning process to address the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and is seeking to work closely with EMCCA and partners in relation to the Youth Guarantee.

Throughout the year, the college has been continuously looking at and reviewing the adult offer. As devolution progresses, this will be even more of a focus. Again, the college will be working with EMCCA to ensure priorities align.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

Future reforms

The college was agreed to be well placed in terms of future reforms due to the continued networking and attendance to information events by leaders and managers.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

8

A LEVELS MONITORING – GENERAL UPDATE

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed written report, and key matters highlighted were:

- A new head of sixth form commenced in post on 6th January. The new structure is now fully in place, with five curriculum area leads sitting below the head.
- Year 13 attendance was at 88.1%, which was a slight improvement but still fell below expectations. Year 12 attendance was at 91.6%, resulting in a green RAG-rating. Both years showed better attendance than the overall college rate.
- The college's Pre-3 programme was designed to prepare learners for A Levels. Some of these young people had been home educated, and their attendance was naturally lower than that of peers.
- For Year 13, the residual score at progress check 2 was -0.79, which was slightly better than at this point last year. For Year 12, the residual score at progress check 2 for Year 12 was -0.73, which was similar to the score at the same point last year.
- During the first week after the Christmas break, Year 13 students sat JCQ-regulated mock exams; therefore, progress check 3 will provide a robust indicator of their progress towards their target grades.
- Interventions have been put in place following the mocks in order to enable staff to work with learners where needed. It is important to ensure that those students who are not where they should be are being given every opportunity to improve before their final exams take place. The sixth form college has a good 'feel', and there is a focus on making students believe in themselves.
- The ALPs score at progress check 2 showed a decline from grade 5 to grade 6, but there was a narrative in place for this.
- Five subjects out of 21 showed an improvement – this was of concern, but the vice principal indicated that it would be necessary to await the results of the mock exams and then assess the impact of intervention.
- There were no major concerns for Year 12, but it was noted that those subjects characterised as blue within the ALPs chart were being closely monitored.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

- At risk strategies were in place for those learners who were struggling, and these would be increased further between now and the end of the academic year.
- Year 13 retention was 81.2%, which was 8.2% better than at the same point last year.
- Year 12 retention was 98.3%, which was similar to the position at the same point last year.
- In relation to the predicted grade forecast for Year 13, the average ALPs grade at progress check 2 was 6.
- In summary, the vice principal indicated that there was a lot of focus on A Levels. The ALPs scores looked better in comparison to the previous year, and the team was continuing to do everything possible to make sure learners were supported and that learners had belief in their own abilities to succeed.

The business support staff governor indicated that he would be interested to see how the change in structure impacts the area's data. He raised a query in terms of business studies as there is a disparity between the grades at the two progress checks. The vice principal confirmed that the head of sixth form is working with staff to ensure that the progress checks are providing an accurate reflection of where the students are and an accurate measure of improvement over time. She also explained that a harder assessment was used for progress check 2.

An observation by the chair was that Year 13 biology also shows a significant difference in grades. The vice principal indicated that the mock exam results will be best indicator, and each curriculum area lead has been tasked with reviewing moderation and marking. Progress check 3 will be the most robust measure of grades.

The chair is visiting the Chesterfield Road campus the week after the committee meeting and will meet the new head of sixth form. He indicated that it feels as though the area is improving and that this will continue. However, he indicated that further improvement is particularly needed in relation to the progress checks and retention. The vice principal assured governors that, now the new structure is in place, there is closer management and greater focus. She was optimistic that there would be enough time to see a real impact before the end of the academic year.

The vice chair asked to what extent the Executive team is setting targets and to what extent the new head of sixth form can use the data and information to set her own targets in turn. The vice principal advised that the new head had already had extensive meetings and that all data had been shared. An intensive handover exercise has also been delivered by the assistant principal. The vice principal continues to meet with the head very frequently, and the head has also been visiting classrooms and meeting with teachers to get under the skin of the department. She has

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

already done a lot in a short space of time. It was clarified that the principal sets the vice principal's targets, and these inform the head's targets which in turn influence the targets set for the team.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

9 **BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) – 2024/25 OBJECTIVES MONITORING**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality indicated that, on this occasion, the item would be included wholly under the risk update and so there were no details to share. Appendix 1 was the balanced scorecard as at the end of 2024, which was presented to the whole Corporation Board in December.

The chair raised a question in relation to the employer advisory panels as this matter was still RAG-rated as amber, but he thought they were doing quite well. The vice principal indicated that some were further ahead than others, and the overall measure is RAG-rated amber because of this disparity. Construction's advisory panel took place last week, animal care and childcare are going well, and engineering is getting started again after a hiatus due to lack of employer availability. Employers are engaging with the engineering team and having input into curriculum planning, but the formal advisory panel is simply not working well. The assistant principal: engineering agreed with this summary and explained that last minute apologies are common. However, she has spoken to some of the employers and now has a plan in place to target a very small, niche group of employers who are committed to making the advisory panel work. The assistant principal will aim to hold small meetings to create momentum and will then invite more employers to join. The meetings will include some small-scale upskilling opportunities for the employers to give them more value. It has been agreed that they will take place via Teams or even at individual employers' premises. However, it will be part of the agreement that, if employers want to be part of the group, they need to turn up to the meetings. The chair was assured by this robust plan.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

10 **RISK REPORT (RED RAG-RATED ITEMS) – REVIEW OF RISKS WITH STANDARDS COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the report, providing an update against the red risks that were not covered elsewhere within the reports to the committee.

Hard-to-fill vacancies

- The air conditioning and refrigeration role remains the college's biggest challenge, but a full-time lecturer has been recruited and is currently working notice. It was discussed that this challenge

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

is the same for other colleges – it is a very popular apprenticeship, and suitable lecturers are very hard to secure. The college has been innovative in terms of applying a block release approach to enable employer demand to be met, but the challenge will be about keeping the staff once they are in place.

- In maths and English, there has been some internal alignment of roles to strengthen the structure. The vice principal informed governors that this seems to be working well.
- Governors were informed that there are still vacancies in plumbing, electrical and brick, and recruitment is underway.

One governor, whilst acknowledging that the college's 'grow our own' approach was very good, raised a question in respect of the hard to fill vacancies. The question raised was whether this struggle to recruit staff was a national picture across Further Education, and it was confirmed that the challenge was experienced nationally.

Failure to improve target grades

- Overall, vocational subjects performed well at progress check 2, and Teaching to the Top has started to yield results across the college.
- At progress check 2, the residual score for vocational 16-18 learners was -0.44; for adults, it was 0.09. Leaders and managers continue to provide scrutiny and challenge through performance management review meetings.
- The residual score for GCSE Maths was -0.46 at progress check 2; for Functional Skills Maths, it was -0.64. For GCSE, progress check 2 was a selection of exam questions taken from previous exam series. For Functional Skills, it was a past exam paper. The overall residual for both GCSE and Functional Skills was better than at the same point last year, but it was noted that the progress checks will grow more challenging as the year progresses.
- The residual score for GCSE English was -1.22 at progress check 2; for Functional Skills English, it was -0.15. For GCSE, progress check 2 was two reading questions and an exam paper writing question. The overall residual score for English was noted to be similar to the score at the same point last year.
- The mock GCSE exams will take place week commencing 3rd February, and there will be two papers for both maths and English. For the first time, the college will need to use an external venue to accommodate the number of students and all exam access arrangements/normal ways of working. Mansfield Civic Centre has been hired for this purpose. The college is accustomed to exam days and all staff support with the invigilation and other duties, but using this external venue will present an additional and previously unknown challenge. The hard work of the Exams team to ensure the exams run smoothly was acknowledged.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

- Additional drop-in sessions have been timetabled on all sites to enable learners to access extra help.
- The vice principal will be able to report the outcome of the mock exams at the next committee meeting, and governors agreed that it would also be interesting to see the level of attendance within the exams.

An observation by the chair was that low attendance in lessons and high attendance in exams was a national trend last year. He also indicated that he would like GCSE English to be monitored closely as progress check 2 shows some concerns, although he acknowledged that progress check 3 will provide a clearer picture.

The vice principal assured governors that the college now has some strong collaboration in place in relation to maths and English, working with a feeder school and another college. For English, the college is piloting the 'perfect story' strategy, evidencing how collaboration is serving to drive improvements.

The vice principal signposted governors to the resits information within the Quality Improvement Action Plan. In maths, 54% of the 57 entries achieved a grade 4, which provides some confidence. The English resit pass rate was 36%.

The chair was pleased to acknowledge that it was positive to see the assurance provided within this update.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 **PERFORMANCE REPORT – DATA ON A PAGE**

The assistant principal: quality and standards introduced this item, particularly drawing the committee's attention to the following data:

Education programmes for young people

- Attendance (85.2%) is 2.1% below where it was at the previous committee meeting (November 2024) but is 0.2% above the position reported in January 2024.
- Retention (96.6%) is 1% below the position in November 2024 but is still 3% above the 2023/24 position. It is 7.7% above the national average.
- Vocational attendance (86.9%) is 2% below the figure reported in November 2024 but is 0.5% higher than in January 2024.
- The vocational progress score is -0.43, which is an improvement on both November 2024 and January 2024.
- English attendance (80.2%) is 2.2% below November 2024 and 2% above January 2024.
- The English progress score is -1.24, which is a decline on the position reported in both November and January 2024.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

- Maths attendance (79.6%) is 2.1% below November 2024 and 0.5% above January 2024.
- The maths progress score is -0.53, which is an improvement on both November 2024 and January 2024's position.

Adult learning programmes

- Direct delivery attendance (86%) is 1.7% below the position at the previous committee meeting but is 1.2% above the position in January 2024.
- Direct delivery retention (95%) is 1.4% below the position reported at the previous committee meeting but is 0.3% below January 2024. This is still higher than the national average of 92.2%.
- Subcontracted delivery retention (92.2%) is the same as was reported to the previous committee meeting but is 2% below January 2024. It is the same as the national average. Achievement (70.8%) is 13.2% below the position reported to the committee in November 2024. This is still 7.2% above the same point last year but is 16% below the national average.
- Community delivery retention (95%) is 7.8% above the same point in 2023/24 and 2.8% above the national average; however, it has reduced by 2% since November 2024. Achievement (86%) is 0.3% above the percentage reported to the last committee meeting, 25% above the position in January 2024, and 0.8% below the national average.

Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Attendance (90%) is 0.4% below the position reported in November 2024 and 2.6% above January 2024's figure.
- Retention (78.3%) is 1.4% below the position in November 2024, but 8.5% above that reported in January 2024.
- Achievement (24.2%) is 7.4% above November 2024 and 6.2% above January 2024. Although this is still 30.4% below the national average, this will rise as the academic year progresses.
- Recording of 20% off-the-job training (24%) shows a 0.8% improvement compared to November 2024 and a 4.9% improvement on the position in January 2024.
- Recording of six hours of off-the job training (6.9%) shows a decline of 0.3% since the previous committee meeting but is 0.7% better than in January 2024.
- Reviews in the last three months (86.6%) is 0.6% below the position in November 2024 but 3.1% above January 2024.

Learners with high needs

- Overall attendance is 85.9%, which is 2% below the figure in November 2024 and 0.3% below the figure reported in January 2024. Retention is 97.4%, which is 0.4% above the position

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

reported in November 2024 but 0.4% below January 2024. The progress score is -0.65, which is an improvement since the last committee meeting but a decline compared to January 2024.

- Vocational attendance is 87.1%, which is 2.3% below the position reported in November 2024 and 0.4% above the position in January 2024. The vocational progress score is -0.35, which is the same as at the last committee meeting but shows a decline in comparison to January 2024.
- English attendance is 83.3%, which is 1.2% below the position in November 2024 and 2.7% below January 2024. The English progress score is -1.01, which shows a decline on the position both at the previous committee meeting and at this same point in 2024.
- Maths attendance is 83.7%, which is 1.2% below the position in November 2024 and 0.4% below January 2024. The maths progress score is -0.72, which is an improvement on both November and January 2024.

Free school meals

- Attendance (82.9%) is 4% below the position in November 2024 but 0.2% above January 2024.
- Retention (97.2%) is the same as was reported to the committee in November 2024 and 1.5% above January 2024.
- The progress score is -0.60, which is an improvement on both November and January 2024.

BAME

- Attendance (86.9%) is 2.2% below November 2024 but 0.9% above January 2024.
- Retention (96.9%) is 1.2% below the position in November 2024 but 0.4% above January 2024.
- The progress score is -0.48, which is an improvement both on the previous meeting and on the position at this same point in 2024.

Deep dives meeting expectations (percentage grade 2 or better)

- Deep dives of classroom-based learning show that 70% (seven out of ten) achieved grade 2 or better.
- Deep dives of apprenticeships show that 50% (two of four deep dives carried out) achieved grade 2 or better.
- One of two cross-college deep dives scored grade 2 or better (50%). Therefore, overall, 62.5% of deep dives of college direct delivery scored a grade 2 or better (10 out of 16).
- At the date of the meeting, no deep dives of subcontracted delivery had been carried out.

In relation to T Levels retention, the chair questioned where learners go if they are not retained. The vice principal confirmed that one young

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

person went back to school, but for the most part the withdrawals were into apprenticeships.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12

2024/25 IN-YEAR EXCEPTIONS REPORTS

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her detailed combined report.

Safeguarding

- The college has seen a significant increase in incidents taken through CPOMS. In some measure, this is due to increased student numbers but, in part, it is also due to complexity of some of these cases. As a result, referrals and connections with external agencies have increased. The team has been involved in 65 meetings with externals, year to date, some of which can be up to four hours long.
- There had been five Prevent concerns in-year, but none met the threshold for police intervention.
- The vice principal attended a Prevent briefing the day before the committee meeting and will soon be updating the safeguarding and Prevent risk register accordingly. Some points of note from this briefing were brought to governors' attention:
 - Referrals for young people have increased by 20% since 2020 and are particularly in relation to young white men accessing and sharing extremist material online or repeating what they have seen online. The vice principal has asked Sam Slack to attend the leadership conference in April to brief heads of department and programme area leaders.
 - If Nottinghamshire were to experience a terrorist attack, it would more likely be self-initiated, rather than by a member of any particular group.
 - There have been a higher number of referrals for extreme right wing, which is an issue in Ashfield particularly.
 - There has been a flurry of extreme views linked to Reform party activity.
 - Islamist terrorism is the fourth biggest risk to the local area but is more concentrated in Nottingham city.
 - An online group called '764 Network' was also mentioned – a young person who was involved with this group has recently been convicted. This group is involved in sharing and encouraging some very unpleasant activity and is active through Discord, which is heavily used by the college's students.
- The college has seen a rise in concerns involving drugs and alcohol. There was a search dogs exercise at Chesterfield Road,

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

Derby Road and the Old Brewery before Christmas as a result, but nothing of concern was found. The police are now booked to visit the Old Brewery again and have informal, friendly chats with students.

- Through Keeping Children Safe in Education, there is a requirement for the vice principal to present an annual report in relation to online safety mechanisms. The vice principal presented an updated report and provided assurance that the college has measures in place to ensure students' online safety, including web filtering and Smoothwall.
- The vice principal provided an update in respect of the relational schools practice trial which is taking place in the health and social care department. While not without challenges, this seems to be going well. Data suggests that this has had a positive impact on the progress and retention of students. Linked to this, the college has applied to become part of the Attachment Research Community, a national community of school and colleges that are on a relational journey. This will provide access to resources and training at a cost of only £250 per year.
- The vice principal was tasked with completing Nottinghamshire County Council's safeguarding audit, which she has done. There were two findings from this, firstly that a second member of the Executive team needed to undertake designated safeguarding lead training; and secondly that the college did not have a formal file transfer policy in place. Consequently, the HR director has now signed up to complete the DSL training and will then take on the staff concerns part of the safeguarding duties. Furthermore, the vice principal will write and formalise the file transfer policy.

The vice chair raised a question in relation to the designated safeguarding lead, namely whether there was not already a person who would fill in for the vice principal if she were absent in term-time for any reason. The vice principal indicated that she and the safeguarding manager arrange their absences so that one or the other of them is always in college at any given time. However, the recommendation is that this should be a senior person, i.e. a member of the Executive team. As there is not another member of Executive who is DSL-trained, the vice principal is effectively on duty all the time. When the HR director has completed her training, she will be able to share this responsibility.

The vice chair raised a question in relation to the multiagency work. As all agencies will be stretched, she questioned whether the college was having any concerns in relation to young people falling through gaps. The vice principal advised that this was not the case as such. However, there have been a few cases this year which social care has closed with no further action even though the vice principal and her team feel the young person is at risk. More concerns have been escalated through team

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

managers within social care this year, mostly where parents do not want to engage or do not think there is a concern. A few concerns have also been escalated through the MASH education officer. Furthermore, some local authorities have reduced or closed their early help teams and are expecting schools and colleges to fulfil the lead professional role. The vice principal and colleagues have started to look at the implications of this for the college. The vice principal informed governors that the CAMHS waiting list is exceptionally long, also, which adds to the problem. Where it is felt that there is a risk, the college does push back and re-escalate for social care to re-open – this does not mean that the case will be re-opened, but the college does what it can.

The chair observed that there has been a lot of movement around the review of Prevent, and he questioned whether it is likely that there will be more changes in future. The vice principal advised that a recently introduced category was ‘fascination with extreme violence without an ideology needing to be present’. The threshold for Prevent to take this on is incredibly high, however, and an individual would need to be engaging in some high-level concerning behaviour. However, it has also been suggested that the Prevent threshold may be reviewed in response to the Southport incident, as the perpetrator of that incident had previously been referred into Prevent three times with no action.

The chair raised a question in relation to pre-application/enrolment triage. He indicated that the college is seeing more demands and challenges, such as exam access arrangements, and he asked what mechanisms are in place or planned through the application and enrolment process to triage some of this more effectively. The vice principal indicated that a number of things are in place:

- The college has invested in transitions and progression manager role, and this person oversees those young people who are currently in alternative provision, home educated, or open to probation, as these are the ones which tend to have the largest risk factors. Very robust and effective transition plans are in place for these young people. Alternative providers are invited in for a visit before applications are even submitted, and the manager and the team then work closely with the young person to ensure the college can react appropriately and support need.
- The Welfare and Inclusion teams are also working closely with vulnerable students and those with SEND needs.
- The process is perhaps not as effective where a young person is on roll at a mainstream school and it is only discovered after some time that they actually had not attended the school for a number of years. There is work to do with local schools about information sharing in

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

order to ensure the college can support the young people sufficiently.

Governors were happy to note this update and acknowledged the high volume of work and the varying challenges faced physically and online. The committee agreed that governors need to consider how they can support the college and staff with this important and demanding issue.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- The vice principal, assistant principal: inclusion, and welfare manager attended the second roundtable in relation to inclusion within the Ofsted framework. This meeting resulted in a slight concern in that the definition of vulnerability which Ofsted will be looking at was incredibly broad. Although it is accepted that anyone can become vulnerable, being too broad with this definition will not enable colleges such as WNC to demonstrate what they do for those very vulnerable young people who have many factors affecting them. A broad definition of vulnerability will also be very hard to measure within an inspection situation.
- The Public Sector Equality Duty requires recommendation for approval by the board. The version presented was missing the actual destinations data, which will not be available until March. This is normal for this point within the year. The vice principal also explained that, outside of this report, the college is looking for a mechanism to identify those students who have declared a SEND need but for whom the college is not currently providing support. Committee members were happy to recommend the Public Sector Equality Duty report for approval as presented, and they understood that the actual destinations data would be added once it was available and before the report is published.
- Outcomes of the SEND peer review were presented to governors for information. The vice principal provided assurance that good headway was being made in relation to a lot of these points already. She also advised that a piece of work is underway to look at normal ways of working and exam access arrangements – e.g. whether these are being used, whether they are appropriate, etc.

Priority data

- Attendance data for young people in supported housing is significantly behind that of their peers. The vice principal has scheduled a meeting with the Virtual School and a supported housing provider to look at how the organisations can work together on strategies to improve attendance. This may involve college team members physically visiting providers to encourage students to attend.
- Progress against the safeguarding and EDI key performance indicators was also presented. Again, young people in supported housing are a key risk and this is being closely monitored.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

Governors agreed it would be positive to get another designated safeguarding lead in place and were happy to note the comprehensive report. They felt assured that the college was doing everything possible to keep students safe, particularly its most vulnerable.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update provided
- to recommend that the Corporation Board approve the Public Sector Equality Duty Report (as it pertains to students) as presented, with the additional of actual destinations data once available.

13 **LEARNER/EMPLOYER VOICE – 2024/25 MONITORING AND EMPLOYER SURVEY**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report.

Learner voice

- The learner induction survey had an 85% response rate.
- While the college remains in the lower quartile in terms of students being contacted when they are absent and preparation for work placement, improvement was made compared to the previous year.
- Results by were analysed by directorate, and the sixth form and engineering were the least satisfied departments.
- A-Level students were the least satisfied with the outcome of tutorials, and the team is now reviewing how these are managed.
- The minutes of the Your Voice meeting were provided for governors' information. Attendance to this meeting was good.

Employer voice

- Only 67 of 532 employers responded. This is a very low response rate, but it is around the same level every year.
- The results are quite disappointing, with satisfaction showing a decline in all questions. This does not correlate with the improvement from 'amber' to 'green' within the Apprenticeships Accountability Framework. The explanation for this was that employers only respond to the survey if they have complaints, which would skew the data and outcomes.

Governors agreed that the response rate to the employer survey was disappointing. The vice principal indicated that the college had previously bought into the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce's app which enables pulse surveys of employers. The college now has a new link within the Chamber to help revisit this, and it is hoped that this will

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025

provide another way to obtain employer feedback. Those employers who are engaged in the advisory panels are largely positive about the college.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

14 **CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE REPORT**

In its most recent Compass self-assessment, the college scored 100% in all but one of the Gatsby Benchmark self-assessment areas. This one lower-scored area was in relation to information sharing between schools and colleges, as the college cannot evidence that it has a complete picture of a young person's journey. There is a data sharing issue which the employability and careers manager is trying to unpick.

The college has signed up to the Careers Impact Review, and a small internal working group will be pulled together. Efforts are also underway to secure an external review team to come into the college in March or April to conduct a careers impact peer review.

The vice principal informed governors that the employability and careers manager recently took parents and young people to a university open evening. She used the journey to speak to them about funding, finance, Higher Education in general, and other pertinent topics. 75 people signed up to attend this visit, and feedback received indicated that the parents and young people really appreciated the opportunity. Many of them previously felt unable to attend open events for various reasons, so this was an invaluable opportunity for them. This was clearly a brilliant idea, and it was agreed that it should be repeated.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of additional business.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed to be Thursday 27th March 2025 at 17:00.

Meeting closed at 19:00.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 27th March 2025