


Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 1st July 2025

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Ben Owen, Chair
Jane Peacock, Vice Chair
Andrew Cropley, Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Joanna Poon
Kit Salt (from 18:00)
Scott Smith, Staff Governor (Academic)
Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (Business Support)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience
Ella Brookes, Assistant Principal: Inclusion
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies
Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries
Kirsty Walsh, Assistant Principal: Engineering
Eloise Hopkinson, Head of Governance
Joanna Wilson, Head of Mansfield and Ashfield Sixth Form Centre

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from Keith Spiers, Arina Borscakova, Flynn Bainbridge, and Nic Williamson (head of department: English and maths).		
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 27TH MARCH 2025</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 27 th March 2025.		

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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There were no matters arising.

4 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The committee members were 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

- Attendance was noted to be lower (83.71%) when including maths and English. Without maths and English, attendance was 84.93%, which was very similar to the same point within the last two academic years.
- Level 1 and were noted to be having quite a noticeable negative impact on attendance, at 77.8%.
- Entry Level construction was also low, at 62.2%, compared to 81.2% across Entry Level overall (including maths and English).
- Bespoke programmes have a 0.4% impact on attendance overall. Despite slightly lower attendance, these students were making good progress as at progress check 5.
- Lots of measures have been put in place to try to engage learners and improve attendance. These strategies, such as text messages, have been reported to governors throughout the year and have had a positive impact.
- Attendance to the summer exams was between 92% and 94%.
- A competition was held towards the end of the year to try to improve attendance further.
- Governors had a really good discussion with heads of department and other staff at the strategy day, and there was a clear message that this needs to be looked into from the very beginning of the academic year. For example, one plan for implementation is some work within tutorials to allow teachers to spend more time getting to know their learners better.

The chair indicated that it was very good to hear from curriculum leaders at the strategy day and receive information about the challenges they face. The vice chair agreed that the case study examples presented were indicative of the lengths to which the college is going to support and get young people in.

Governors were interested to see that the bespoke programmes only have a 0.4% impact on the attendance. They asked the vice principal whether this came as a surprise considering that she has previously

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reported that these students are potentially having a significant impact on the data. The vice principal indicated the data as presented does not include Entry Level or Level 1 construction, only the bespoke programmes. Including these would make more of a difference, but these are not bespoke and so were not removed. The vice chair indicated that, in future, it would be good to have the data presented both with challenging courses separate and included, to really highlight the narrative. The vice principal agreed that this was possible, and she assured governors that she was confident the work being done in tutorials would have an impact for 2025/26. The business support staff governor asked how many construction learners are on Level 1 and Entry Level, and the vice principal indicated that there are around 40 learners.

VP: C&Q

Oct 2025

One governor questioned whether there were any particular reasons for the attendance in construction being lower than in other areas and what additional steps could be taken to address this. The vice principal explained that the college has a good cohort of teaching and support staff in place at the Old Brewery site, where lower-level construction is delivered. However, many of the young people have been in alternative provision or homeschooled, meaning that they have significant challenges which staff are working hard to overcome. Interventions have been put in place, and the low attendance has not impeded progress. The governor was assured by this response and agreed that the construction team is very dedicated.

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience added that she has had a conversation with the local authority about the college accessing pupil attendance data from schools. The local authority will not be able to provide this by September 2025, but it has suggested that the college run a pilot where, upon receiving a list of names from the college, the local authority will provide individualised student data from schools to enable the distance travelled to be tracked.

The chair referenced the fact that, for the past couple of years, exam attendance has been considerably higher than in-class attendance. He indicated that some young people from other colleges reportedly saw this as a form of protest – they knew they were not going to pass but that they had to attend their exam, and so they turned up deliberately to fail. He asked whether this might be the case at WNC as well. The vice principal suggested that students understand the importance of maths and English, but it is genuinely a challenge for some of them to sit in formal classes, particularly at lower levels. She explained that, in 2025/26, the college will stream most of its English and maths groups by grade. Furthermore, the Pearson Award for Number and Functional Skills are now being used at the Old Brewery. There is a robust exemption board in place which will be used to ensure that students are studying English and maths at an appropriate level. Furthermore, there will be a trial of a two-week induction for maths and English to allow time for

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accurate assessment to be carried out in order to identify where the students need to be. It is hoped that this will make the pitch and pace less overwhelming for lower-level learners than the current mixed model. It was agreed that high attendance to exams versus low attendance in class is a strange phenomenon which is occurring nationally.

The business support staff governor asked for a breakdown of the streaming data, and the vice principal indicated that she would work with the head of digital transformation to obtain and analyse this data, and some learner voice will be conducted to ascertain the impact on students' learning experience.

Apprenticeships

- The vice principal indicated that overall retention was better than at the same time last year, although it had dropped by 1.1% since the previous committee meeting.
- The achievement data was on track against the college's prediction of 60% achievement. The vice principal indicated that she did have some nervousness due to the time of the year, as delays in scheduling endpoint assessments and receiving their results can be out of the college's control and cause rollovers into the next academic year.
- Overall, the college was in a much better position than at the same point in 2023/24, and all staff were working hard to ensure this could continue.
- Achievement of high grades was showing an improvement, having increased by 0.3% since the previous meeting.
- Under the accountability measures, the only areas still flagging are achievement and retention, which will not move until later in the year.

Governors agreed that this was a positive and welcome update, particularly in relation to the pass and high-grade achievement rates. They asked that thanks be passed to all involved in driving these improvements. Governors were also pleased to see that the employer feedback had improved, which was agreed to be indicative that the college is doing the right thing.

The chair reminded committee members to take time to look through the QIAP itself, if they had not already done so.

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

6

CURRICULUM UPDATES

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

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- Following the pause and review of curriculum reform, the college has been able to offer alternative Level 3 routes in all subjects in which there is also a T Level with the exception of design surveying & planning for construction and childcare & education. There is no alternative Level 3 for early years, but the college will offer a teaching assistant pathway which aligns very well to the old BTEC.
- There have been no significant changes to the offer at the sixth form centre. There is an intention to deliver a small health and social care qualification at that campus – this is an alternative academic qualification (AAQ) for learners who want to take a smaller vocational qualification alongside two A Levels with a path to university, and it is not intended to take away from the college’s own health and social care department.
- The college continues to grow its inclusive programmes, with Growth piloted last year to re-engage learners who previously left the college within the first 42 days. This provided a short course offer with the intent that learners would progress to a full-time course in September. This pilot was successful and will run again.
- There will also be the new Roots programme for learners who are not yet ready for mainstream education. This will involve both outdoor and classroom activity, with a staggered and very individualised approach to eventually getting young people into mainstream education.
- Boost is changing slightly – from 2025/26, it will sit within the sixth form centre. The offer has been expanded to enable learners to take up to five GCSEs (this was previously three).
- Level 1.5, 2.5 and 3.5 programmes continue for those learners who are not quite ready for the next level. This is mostly in relation to employability and maths and English, where learners have not achieved the grades, skills or behaviours to enable them to progress to the next level. These ‘.5’ courses are being expanded into other curriculum areas, namely hospitality and catering and art and design.
- Apprenticeships will stay broadly the same for 2025/26, bar some changes within the engineering department. There is still an intent to grow electrical and air conditioning and refrigeration (depending on recruitment of staff), and the college still intends to offer a low carbon standard.
- The college plans to offer a business admin Level 2 standard once an EPA organisation is in place. However, this will be monitored very closely due to the impact which business admin has had on apprenticeship data in the past.
- The new foundation apprenticeships in digital and construction will be offered. These are due to be released in August 2025, but the quality assurance mechanism has not yet been agreed. This

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will be a very good stepping stone for many young people to move to another apprenticeship, particularly in construction.

- The college will continue to work with EMCCA, the Department for Work and Pensions, and employers to continuously review employer needs and local government agendas, and there are plans in place and funding for the Youth Guarantee.


A challenge from the vice chair in reference to the detail within the QIAP was that there have been lots of professional development opportunities, some of which seem to have had only a small uptake. She wondered whether there was any correlation between those staff who are not taking part in these opportunities and the areas which have graded lower. The vice principal explained that the college previously moved to an individualised CPD model which means that not all staff take part in all opportunities. She provided assurance, however, that this is monitored robustly throughout the year and at PMRs, wherein progress against the QIAP and the CPD which has taken place are measured and discussed. She indicated that there has been some correlation to be seen between the use of HOW2 and the outcomes of observations. Some areas which were previously graded as a 3 have demonstrated good progress and improvement by the end of the year. English and maths outcomes have remained a key challenge, but this is the case across the country. The vice chair asked whether the vice principal was confident that those staff members who are identified as needing development are getting it, and the vice principal provided assurance that she is. She acquiesced that there are perhaps some individuals who are not engaging as much as would be preferred, but assistant principals always work with heads of department to resolve any such issues when they arise.

Multiple governors raised a question in respect of lots of deep dives indicated that accessibility 'was not met', specifically what this means and why there are so many instances. The vice principal explained that this is in terms of being compliant with accessibility requirements in relation to resources, PowerPoints, etc. It does not refer to normal ways of working, exam access arrangements, or adapting resources for individual learners. The college was described as being on a journey – this measure was only brought in this academic year, and leaders would expect to see a big improvement within next year's outcomes. She confirmed that this is improving as time moves on and people receive the relevant training.

The chair asked whether the students' talking heads videos are used as marketing tools, and it was confirmed that some of them are, but others would not be appropriate. However, the vice principals confirmed that the T Level recording, which was scheduled to be played at this meeting but will now go to the board, certainly will be.

VP: CESE

Oct 2025

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AGREED: to note the content of the report.

7 **A LEVELS MONITORING**

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

- Year 13 attendance, at 88.4%, was slightly better than previously reported but still slightly below college expectations.
- Year 12 attendance was 92.4% and, as such, was not a concern.
- The head of sixth form has predicted that the ALPS score will move from 8 to 7.
- A lot of intervention activity has been implemented, with many students having attended interventions during Easter and May half term and even more having received individual interventions. The vice principal anticipated that there would be some improvement but acknowledged that more remained to be done.
- Retention for Year 13 was 80.2% which, although around 9% above the same point last year, was still lower than expectations.
- Year 12 retention was 91.4%, a decline of 6.9% since the previous committee meeting. This will be monitored.
- Year 12 students have just taken their mock exams. Once these have been marked, college staff will work with the learners and put September interventions in place where required.
- Overall, the vice principal indicated that this presented an improving picture.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

8 **2024/25 INTENDED DESTINATIONS AND INTERNAL PROGRESSION**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her report, asking governors to particularly note the following key points:

- Destinations and progression were mostly positive and were recorded with only two weeks of the academic year remaining.
- Excluding A Levels, 82.5% of students recorded a positive destination, including 26.4% stating that they would go to an apprenticeship or full-time employment.
- However, the number of young people wanting apprenticeships is a concern, particularly in construction, as there are simply not sufficient opportunities available. The college has carried out quite a lot of work to ensure these young people have a 'plan B'.
- 87.6% of Year 13 A-Level students have recorded a positive destination, with 73.3% stating university and 12.4% an apprenticeship. It is necessary to await results day in order to ascertain whether these destinations have been secured, other than where students have been given unconditional offers.

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The academic staff governor raised a question around capturing data for those learners who want to start a business, as the college could support them if it knew who they were. He suggested that this would link neatly with the vision.

The chair raised a question about unknown destinations, and the vice principal indicated that some of these young people might have said that they would go to part-time employment or take a gap year, whereas some may simply have left the field blank. Each PMR looks at intended destinations, and staff will continue to work with these individuals, including providing careers interventions.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

9 BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The vice principal indicated that all balanced scorecard red items were covered in detail elsewhere on the agenda and that there was nothing to cover within as a standalone report. The report cross-referenced where these will arise or have already been discussed. It was noted that the measures within the balanced scorecard excerpt presented were mainly RAG-rated green.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

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 already presented.

Hard-to-fill vacancies

- The HR team continued to perform well in recruiting to most roles but was still struggling with the air conditioning role. This post did go out to offer, but this was rejected. However, another person has been offered the role and there is a provisional start date in place. The vice principal indicated that, although she was quietly confident, she was remaining cautious about being too optimistic. The head of apprenticeships in construction has been working with the HR team to try to fill this role.

Not achieving target grades in comparison to previous year

- The residual score for GCSE Maths was around two tenths of a grade worse than at the same point last year, but there is overall improvement of half a grade in-year.
- Functional Skills Maths was almost quarter of a grade worse than last year, but there will be opportunities over the summer for learners to sit their exams and improve this.

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- There was a concern in relation to GCSE English as this residual score remained the same as at the start of the year.
- The residual score for Functional Skills English was just over a quarter of a grade worse than at the same point in 2023/24, but this is an on-demand assessment. Some learners were also awaiting results, and they can re-take this exam if needed.
- Lots of interventions have been put in place and there has been an overhaul of the schemes of work for both Functional Skills and GCSE. The college has been working collaboratively with Tibshelf Academy and Loughborough College to receive training on strategies and share best practice.

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 (82.3%) is 1.6% below where it was at the previous committee meeting (March 2025) and 0.8% below the position reported in June 2024.
- Retention (90.7%) is 2.3% below the position in March 2025 but is still 1.8% above the 2023/24 position and the national average.
- The progress score (-0.58) has improved since the March 2025 meeting but is slightly less positive (-0.07) than in June 2024.
- Vocational attendance (84.2%) is 1.5% below the figure reported in March 2025 and only 0.2% lower than in June 2024.
- The vocational progress score is -0.50, which is worse than in June 2025, when it was -0.43, but slightly better than reported in June 2024 (when it was -0.57).
- English attendance (77%) is 2% below March 2025 and 0.1% below June 2024.
- The English progress score is -1.01, which is an improvement since March 2025 (-1.62) but a decline on the position reported in June 2024 (-0.76).
- Maths attendance (76%) is 2% below March 2025 and 1.4% below June 2024.
- The maths progress score is -0.36, which is an improvement since March 2025 (-1.05) but is worse than the position reported in June 2024 (-0.11).

Adult learning programmes

- Direct delivery attendance (86.4%) is 0.9% below the position reported at March's meeting but 2.8% above the position in June 2024.

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- Direct delivery retention (88.4%) is 1.3% below the position reported at March's committee meeting and 4% below June 2024. This is also lower than the national rate of 92.2%.
- The direct delivery progress score, at -0.03, has improved slightly since March 2025 but is slightly worse (-0.12) than the position in June 2024.
- Subcontracted delivery retention (96.3%) is 1.6% higher than was reported to March's committee meeting, 3.1% above the position reported in June 2024, and 4.1% above the national rate. Achievement (71.3%) is 1.1% above the position reported to the committee in March 2025. This is 4.7% below June 2024 and 15.5% below the national average.
- Community delivery retention (84.2%) is 5.7% below June 2024 and 8% below the national average. It has reduced by 4.5% since March 2025. Achievement (78.2%) is 1.2% below the percentage reported to the last committee meeting, 8.8% above the position in June 2024, and 8.6% below the national average.

Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Attendance (89.8%) is 0.2% above the position reported in March 2025 and 1.6% above June 2024's figure.
- Retention (75.6%) is 1% below the position in March 2025 but 8.6% above that reported in June 2024.
- Achievement (52.6%) is 17.8% above March 2025 and 21.7% above June 2024. This is 2% below the national rate.
- Recording of 20% off-the-job training (25.1%) shows a 1.8% improvement compared to March 2025 and a 3.3% improvement on the position in June 2024.
- Recording of six hours of off-the job training (8.1%) shows an improvement of 0.4% since the previous committee meeting and is 0.2% better than in June 2024.
- Reviews in the last three months (79.2%) shows a decline of 11.2% against the position reported in March 2025 and is 7.1% below June 2024.

Learners with high needs

- Overall attendance is 84.1%, which is 0.8% below the figure in March 2025 and 1.4% below the figure reported in June 2024. Retention is 94.6%, which is 0.2% below the position reported in March 2025 and 2.3% below June 2024. The progress score is -0.52, which is an improvement since the last committee meeting but a very slight decline compared to June 2024.
- Vocational attendance is 85.2%, which is 1.4% below the position reported in March 2025 and 0.8% below the position in June 2024. The vocational progress score is -0.26, which shows an improvement since the last committee meeting but a very slight decline compared to June 2024.

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- English attendance is 82%, which is 0.6% below the position in March 2025 and 3.7% below June 2024. The English progress score is -0.87, which shows an improvement since March 2025 but a decline compared to June 2024.
- Maths attendance is 82.3%, which is 0.8% below the position in March 2025 and 0.6% below June 2024. The maths progress score is -0.52, which is an improvement compared to March 2025 but a decline compared to June 2024.

Free school meals

- Attendance (79.9%) is 1.7% below the position in March 2025 and 0.5% below June 2024.
- Retention (90.1%) is 3.3% below the position reported in March 2025 and 2.3% below June 2024.
- The progress score is -0.56, which is an improvement compared to March 2025 but a slight decline since June 2024.


BAME

- Attendance (85.6%) is 1.4% below March 2025 and 1.2% above June 2024.
- Retention (89.9%) is 1.5% below the position in March 2025 and 3.6% below June 2024.
- The progress score is -0.39, which is an improvement since both the previous meeting and 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 70.4% (19 out of 27) achieved grade 2 or better.
- Deep dives of apprenticeships show that 66.7% (six of nine deep dives carried out) achieved grade 2 or better.
- One deep dive was carried out of the sixth form, but this did not score a grade 2 or higher. The same is the case for community learning.
- Two of three cross-college deep dives scored grade 2 or better (66.7%).
- Overall, 65.9% of deep dives of college direct delivery scored a grade 2 or better (27 out of 41).
- Two of three deep dives of subcontracted provision scored grade 2 or better (66.7%).

In response to a question from the chair, it was confirmed that subcontracted achievement for adults had fallen behind due to a timing issue. The vice principal explained that it was predicted to end the year at around 88% – slightly below 2023/24 – due to changes within the skills academy. The chair gave a note of caution that the college will start to see this become very process- and data-driven now that the adult education budget has been devolved, and this was acknowledged.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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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 and Prevent

- The number of referrals remains high, with 1,000 of these having related to attendance. Governors were informed that this was because the college introduced a system whereby teachers can clearly see on the register which students are high risk and, therefore, can notify the safeguarding team quickly. This has sometimes generated three or four concerns per day about the same student. This was noted to be a good thing, but it does contribute to the upturn.
- The revised Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance from the DfE was still awaited, and a recent update suggested that this would not be provided until August. The vice principal expects that there will particularly be some revised guidance around gender questioning children, but the majority of the changes will be technical updates. The college's revised procedures must be published by 1st September; however, as the final board meeting of 2024/25 will take place before the KCSiE guidance is available, the vice principal asked the committee to recommend that the board grant delegated authority to the chair of the Standards Committee so that he can approve the amended procedures and the vice principal can then publish them in time for the deadline.

Priority data

- The vice principal pointed out that there has been an alarming decline in attendance and retention among young people in supported housing. This relates to three students, who have all withdrawn from programme since the previous meeting. The vice principal has scrutinised the support that was in place for these young people, and she is confident that the college did everything possible to try to retain them. The college also worked with the supported housing provider to try to encourage the students to remain in education.
- The vice principal informed the committee that she had noticed a lack of accountability for checking on young people in supported housing and making sure they are safe. She has escalated this to the local authority's commissioning team as she feels there should be a duty of care on the part of the housing provider.
- KPIs did not reflect a particularly positive picture, and the vice principal confirmed that a number of these will not be met, particularly the one relating to the retention of young people in

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supported housing. The vice principal will review whether the college is being too stretching in targets, although she indicated that the team does prefer to be ambitious. At the point of the meeting, some KPIs were awaited, e.g. the exit survey results. The BAME outcomes will not be available until the course results and pass rates data have been released.

The vice chair asked whether the CPOMs recording for high-risk young people has led to staff being able to support them back into college or encourage higher attendance. The vice principal indicated that, in some cases, it has; however, this is not always the case. She advised that the college has been working with other agencies to support, but the involvement of the safeguarding team sometimes helps to concentrate focus. She was not able to state for certain that this has had a large impact. The vice chair suggested that it was good to receive the data, but she would like this to have more of an evidenced impact on encouraging learners to get back into class.

The chair indicated that it was positive to see learners with an EHCP in line with college retention data, and there were some really positive stories within the ALS data. He asked that the committee be kept updated in relation to the support received from the social housing providers. The vice principal stated that the staff churn within some supported housing settings is very high and does not help. It makes it hard for young people to build professional working relationships with the individuals if they do not stay with the provider for long, but these young people need consistent and supportive bonds more so than others.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update provided
- to recommend that the board delegate authority to the Standards Committee chair to approve the college's updated safeguarding procedures via email.

13 **CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (CEIAG) REPORT**

The vice principal explained that the team has engaged in a new way of assessing the impact of careers systems. Part of this involved an internal review, which has been led and conducted by a range of staff across curriculum and support to assess the maturity of the careers system. The outcome of this self-assessment was presented to the committee as an appendix to the report, and this outcome has led to the proposed careers development plan.

Another part of this activity is a peer review of the careers system, which was scheduled to take place during the first week of July at Chesterfield

VP: CESE

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College. The outcome of this would be reported to the committee in October.

The vice principal presented the careers strategy for approval, explaining that this had been split into two parts, one being the strategy itself for 2025-2029 and the other being the annually reviewed programme. She explained that the Gatsby benchmarks changed very slightly at the end of 2024 and, although the headers did not change, this has prompted some slight tweaks. It is an expectation that colleges will reflect these amended benchmarks within their measures by the end of September.

The academic staff governor asked that the Gatsby benchmarks be filtered down to teacher level in future, stating that this information currently stops at head of department level in some areas. The vice principal indicated that she would raise this at the next curriculum and quality management meeting to ensure that teaching staff have the information.

VP: C&Q

Oct 2025

The vice chair found the impact review report interesting, especially in the light of knowing that the college's careers service usually performs really well in external reviews. She asked how the college's self-assessment would measure against other colleges and their general position. She also asked whether the vice principal would have expected WNC to score slightly higher or whether this would provide an aspirational target and so be a useful tool for development. The vice principal stated that she has not seen impact reviews from any other colleges, and was not certain whether many will have completed this activity, so she was unable to make a comparison. However, she did feel that there was a level of prudence and caution when conducting the self-assessment, along with a reluctance to award top marks until the team could categorically state that the college was definitely meeting all the requirements, as this is a new activity. She informed the committee that she was interested to see what might emerge from the peer review. The vice chair asked for an update following the peer review, as well as any information which emerges in relation to other colleges.

VP: CESE

Aug 2025

The chair agreed good to see where college is and positive to hear of the peer review taking place.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update provided
- to recommend that the Corporation Board approve the Careers Strategy as presented.

14 **LEARNER VOICE – 2024/25 MONITORING**

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

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The final 'Rate Your Course' summary for 2024/25 was included. This received almost 1,700 responses, a high number for this kind of survey. It was noted that the outcomes from this were relatively good, with 91.4% overall agreeing that they learned a lot or some new things. This was a slight reduction from the previous survey of 2024/25 but a slight increase compared to the end of year survey in 2023/24.

A negative point was that only 49.5% of students within construction crafts agreed that they learned a lot or some new things. Students within the sixth form were less likely to recommend the college, but this area had very low response rate – only seven sixth form students completed the survey. The vice principal theorised that this could have been due to the fact that the students were taking exams – both real and mock – at this time of year.

The learner voice calendar was presented and governors were invited to notify the head of governance if they wished to attend any of the Your Voice meetings. The vice principal offered thanks to those governors who have attended these over the year, as their presence is always appreciated.

The vice principal indicated that the final Your Voice session of 2024/25 was very good. Students were asked to state what the highlights of the year were; what would have made things better; what would encourage them to attend English and maths; and what advice they would give to incoming students. She indicated that it may be necessary to extend the Big Welcome presentation to include some of this advice as it was particularly excellent. The number of students saying that they would advise incoming students to be brave, take chances, and step outside of their comfort zone was higher than usual, which suggests that the messages around resilience are probably getting through.


Students' next steps were described as brilliant, with many going to university or having already secured apprenticeships and employment. No learner gave a score lower than eight when asked how well prepared they felt for these next steps.

Governors were pleased to see this positive update and were again encouraged to engage with the Your Voice activity wherever possible.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented the proposed milestones for 2025/26. She explained that three core aims have been retained within the strategy, with the milestones set beneath them to reflect what the college aims to achieve. She made it clear that the work of the board's special advisor: employer

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 7th October 2025

engagement is only just beginning. Therefore, depending on how this work progresses, some of these milestones may change slightly following. However, the vice principal will bring the milestones back to the committee for further approval if any changes are more significant than expected.

The chair indicated that this was an exciting time, particularly considering devolution, and there is a lot of focus on local skills need. He indicated that it was good to see the college echoing this within the employer engagement milestones, investment, and partnerships. It was agreed that this was very employer responsive and evidenced the college's awareness of what employers want.

The vice principal was asked when the special advisor's work would be complete. She indicated that it would never be complete as such, as this sort of work tends to be ongoing; however, she will bring an update report to January's committee meeting. She explained that the special advisor was looking at how the college can be more responsive to the SME market and how to promote the college's offer more widely.

Governors were happy to approve the milestones as presented, on the understanding that they would potentially change slightly.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update provided
- to approve the milestones as presented, including any minor changes which may take place (significant changes will be brought back to the committee for further approval).


16 **COMMITTEE ANNUAL REVIEW**

The head of governance presented the annual review of the committee, inviting governors to look at the membership, meeting dates and work plan for 2025/26 and make any comments or suggest any changes as required.

Governors were also asked to raise any comments around on the committee's performance against the responsibilities assigned via the Terms of Reference.

The committee agreed that it was positive to see a good level of attendance over the year.

In relation to the committee's performance against its Terms of Reference, the vice chair indicated that clause 4.8 discusses complaints – specifically that the committee will receive an overview of formal complaints and be informed of trends. She indicated that this implies that the committee has a handle on these matters, which she is not certain it does, and she questioned whether this was the right wording.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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The committee members were reminded that the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience does bring a complaints report to the committee twice per year, which summarise formal complaints received and compares them to the previous year. The vice principal questioned whether governors would like to see more detail than this, or whether the Terms of Reference should be re-worded. The vice chair acknowledged that the committee does receive these overviews, but she reiterated that she was not sure that it really drills down into the complaints or concerns.

The vice principal indicated that concerns about staff behaviour are reported through the Workforce Development Committee, and the head of governance explained that whistleblowing disclosures also go to Audit Committee, with details and outcomes disclosed to the chair of that committee and the chair of the board. With all of this in mind, it was agreed that clause 4.8 would be modified to refer specifically to curriculum and teaching and learning complaints.

Head of Gov.

Oct 2025

The vice chair also indicated that the pending Ofsted changes may result in further amendments to the Terms of Reference, if they were amended now. It was agreed that this was a possibility and that it was worth delaying the review and approval until the Ofsted toolkit had been released. The vice principal: curriculum and quality indicated that she had recently received another copy of the draft handbook and there had already been changes since the previous draft proposal, with more likely to take place before it is published. The chair suggested that the Terms of Reference should state that the committee would, 'continue to scrutinise the Ofsted standard implemented and adapt to this.'

Head of Gov.


Oct 2025

The vice chair also reminded the committee that the head of governance is trying to assign link governors in line with recommendations. She suggested that the Terms of Reference should ensure that these essential areas are reflected and tight reporting mechanisms are in place.

Head of Gov.

Oct 2025

Finally, the head of governance put forward a recommendation to increase the committee membership to nine, as this was the current level of membership, and that the quoracy be tweaked to stipulate that at least two or three of the members in attendance must be external governors. In relation to the latter point, four individuals (40% of membership) must be present for a committee meeting to be quorate. As three members of the committee are college employees (two staff governors and the principal), the committee could feasibly be quorate with only one external governor in attendance in addition to these three, which the head of governance indicated was not appropriate. Governors were invited to discuss whether they feel two external members would be sufficient or whether this should be set at three. The outcome of this discussion was that the number should be set at a minimum of two external governors present. Although three was the preference, it was

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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felt that this would lead to last-minute quoracy challenges on occasion, and it would not always be straightforward to rearrange meetings and still remain aligned with the board cycle, particularly at certain points within the year. It was agreed that these two amendments would be made to the document.

Head of
Gov.

Oct 2025

With the above discussions in mind, it was agreed that the head of governance would present the Terms of Reference 2025/26, with all changes made, in October 2025.

The committee agreed that the work plan was a helpful document, and they were glad to have this in place. The chair asked that it be ensured that there is sufficient time spent on scrutinising the SAR at the December meeting. To ensure that this would be possible, the head of governance indicated that she would extend this meeting by 30 minutes.

In respect of the committee review, governors were happy with the committee's performance. The vice chair asked the vice principals to present any areas for improvement from their point of view. The vice principal: curriculum and quality felt that the committee is robust, with the balance of papers presented at the right time and items brought when needed. She indicated that she feels governors provide sufficient challenge and there are always actions to take away. She also indicated that the involvement of the assistant principals strengthens the cascade of information and practices through the teams and enables discussions within curriculum and quality management meetings to be even more informed.

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience indicated that she feels there is some repetition between the employer engagement paper presented directly to the board and the report which she carries out for the committee. She suggested that this should just come to the Standards Committee and then be reported to the board as part of the chair's report. The chair indicated that he would be happy to ask this question of the board in his report in July, and it was agreed that it is important to avoid duplication.


AGREED:

- to note the content of the update
- that the committee Terms of Reference would remain as they are until the Ofsted toolkit is released in autumn 2025 and would go through review and approval at that point.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of additional business.

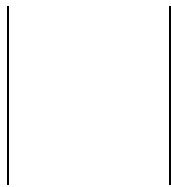
18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING


Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 7th October 2025

This was confirmed to be Tuesday 7th October 2025 at 17:00, subject to the final sign-off of the calendar of meetings.

Meeting closed at 18:45.



Signed: _____  _____ Chair

Date: 7th October 2025