

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025

GOVERNORS

Ben Owen, Chair

PRESENT:

Jane Peacock, Vice Chair

Andrew Copley, Principal and Chief Executive Officer

Kerry Pilcher, Staff Governor (Academic) (from 17:05)

Joanna Poon (from 18:30)

Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (Business Support)

Keith Spiers

ALSO IN

Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality

ATTENDANCE:

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

Avery Alsop, Student Governor

Ella Brookes, Assistant Principal: Inclusion Service

Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies (until 18:00)

Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards

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

Nic Williamson, Head of English and Maths

Eloise Hopkinson, Head of Governance

Joanna Wilson, Head of Mansfield and Ashfield Sixth Form Centre (from 17:40)

1

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Kit Salt and Claire Dube.

2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on agenda items to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted.

3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH OCTOBER 2025

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 7th October 2025.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed: _____



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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.

(Kerry Pilcher joined the meeting.)

5 **SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2024/25**

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

- During August, 28 meetings took place involving relevant curriculum staff, heads of department and the assistant principal, the vice principal, and the assistant principal: quality and standards. These meetings provided an opportunity to debate each area's strengths and areas for improvement. Provisional judgements were then made based on the closure of the ILR and the data provided.
- Position statements, written by the heads of department, were validated via a round of meetings which took place in November. These were attended by critical friends and, in some cases, college governors. Once validated, the position statements informed the college's SAR, which was then subject to robust scrutiny.
- It was noted to be clear that the quality of teaching and learning within vocational programmes continues to improve, and GCSE Maths saw an improvement in the number of learners achieving grades 4-9. However, there was still more work to be done in maths and English, particularly as the gaps between priority groups and their peers primarily relate to maths and English achievement.
- Apprenticeship achievement showed an improvement and finished in a strong position.
- The following grades were proposed:
 - Overall effectiveness – good
 - Quality of education – good
 - Behaviour and attitudes – good
 - Personal development – outstanding
 - Leadership and management – good
 - Education programmes for young people – good
 - Adult learning programmes – good
 - Apprenticeships – good
 - Provision for learners with high needs – good
 - Meeting skills needs – strong.
- There were two opportunities for the SAR to be scrutinised and validated – one with critical friends and the other with the Executive team. The proposed grades were debated and agreed.

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- Comments were sought from the members of the Standards Committee to inform any further changes before final approval and sign-off of the SAR by the Corporation Board during its December meeting.
- Once approved, the SAR will be emailed to Ofsted in January.
- The vice principal reminded the committee that this was the last time that the old-style judgements would be used as future SARs will be informed by the new framework.

Committee members recorded their gratitude to the vice principal and all staff who had contributed to this process. One governor indicated that she had attended the construction apprenticeships internal validation meeting, and she was pleased to engage in the constructive dialogue and to note the critical and reflective approach taken by the apprenticeship manager when evaluating the programme. She noted that, within that meeting, it was positive to hear that the EPA assessment facilities had been rented to Nottingham College, providing an opportunity to promote the facilities and generate income.

The vice chair asked for details of the amendments suggested by the critical friends. The vice principal stated that the following recommendations were made:

- That the percentage of learners which made up the college's alternative provision should be included.
- That detail should be included to show how well those learners who are not experiencing mental health challenges achieve.
- That, in relation to those destinations which were not positive, the detail should still be included to show where learners intended to go.

The vice principal indicated that all of these suggestions would be included in the final version to be submitted to Ofsted, once the committee and board had approved the SAR.

The vice chair noted that one critical friend was unable to join the validation meeting, and she questioned whether this meant they had not been able to provide any input. The vice principal explained that they gave her some suggestions verbally outside of the validation meeting, and the committee members were assured that this provided sufficient critical input in relation to the validation.

The vice principal informed the committee that the critical friends particularly commented on the personal development judgement, with a focus on enrichment, and questioned why apprenticeships had not been judged as 'outstanding'. However, she was able to explain and justify the 'outstanding' and 'good' judgements respectively well enough that the critical friends accepted these judgements.

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In relation to the 'outstanding' judgement against personal development, the vice chair challenged whether the vice principal was content that the narrative provided enough evidence to support this. The vice principal explained that one of the critical friends – also a vice principal – had confirmed that it read as an 'outstanding' area. The committee was comfortable with this assurance.

The vice chair suggested that the SAR should cross-reference other documents to provide the college's wider context, such as the strategic plan. As a lot of the college's offer is informed by the impact of its geography, social mix and economic context, it would be good to include a link to show a reader where they might find this level of detail. The vice principal agreed to include a sentence at the beginning of the SAR to state that it should be read in conjunction with these other documents which would provide the broader context. The committee agreed that, under the new Ofsted framework, this context will be really important.

The vice chair made a comment in relation to the collaboration with ATTFE and Inspire, suggesting that the SAR could include a bit more detail about why this was good. The vice principal agreed to include a more detailed explanation as to why collaboration with these key partners was beneficial.

In relation to guest speakers, the vice chair noted that one person was named as a private individual rather than as a company, suggesting that this stood out as being a little odd. She also suggested including more detail in relation to the impact of these external speakers. The vice principal agreed to add this detail, but it was pointed out that the individual was personally named because he is a sole trader in his own brand, delivering sessions under his own name rather than a company name.

The business support staff governor felt that the narrative within the SAR supported an 'outstanding' judgement for learners with high needs. However, the vice principal explained that this had been debated at length within the validation meetings, and the reason for the 'good' judgement related to the gaps in maths and English achievement. These gaps meant that it would not be possible to confirm an 'outstanding' judgement for this area, particularly considering the increased focus on inclusion. The committee noted that this was appropriate and agreed with this decision.

One governor particularly commented on the attention to detail, referring to the clear rationale behind the judgements. However, he questioned whether the improvements in relation to apprenticeships have been sufficiently considered and whether this area would be worthy of an 'outstanding' judgement. It was noted that the 'impact' section reflected the fact that there was more work to do, and the

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college particularly needed to reduce the number of learners studying past their end date. The college's apprenticeship provision is in a strong position and heading in the right direction, but it is not yet 'outstanding'.

The vice principal provided a brief explanation of the new framework to give governors an idea of what they might expect to see were this same SAR with the same narrative and data being put forward for approval in 2026/27.

In reference to the earlier comment made by one governor, the chair agreed that apprenticeship provision is very close to 'outstanding'. However, he confirmed that he understood the trepidation given the journey which the college has been on. Overall, he noted that the SAR reads well and describes the evolution of the college. The 'intent' section is strong, particularly around skills, and provides a very good base to form an understanding of the landscape. He also felt that high needs provision was very close to 'outstanding', albeit he understood the justification for it being judged as 'good'.

Governors agreed that it was particularly positive to see the level of assurance, peer review and validation by critical friends. The principal also acknowledged the work which staff have put into the SAR. He referred to the comparison between these grades and those given at the college's last Ofsted inspection, noting that – while the grades might appear weaker individually as a previous 'outstanding' has been replaced by a 'good' judgement – the 'good' judgements in place are stronger than they were previously. Therefore, overall, there is improvement. He also noted that it was pleasing to have been challenged a few times in relation to the decision not to self-assess apprenticeships as 'outstanding'.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the report
- to recommend that the Corporation Board approve the SAR, with the amendments made as detailed within the discussion.

6

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025/26 PROGRESS UPDATE

The vice principal: curriculum and quality drew governors' attention to the following details, particularly advising governors to focus their attention on the highlighted parts of the QIAP, which marked the changes made since the document was last presented to the committee.

Attendance

- Overall classroom-based attendance had improved by 0.91%.
- Vocational attendance was 89.46%, which was very slightly below the level to be RAG-rated green.
- Maths and English attendance continued to be a challenge, but levels were broadly the same as at the same point in 2024. English attendance was 82.4% and maths attendance was 81.9%.

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- Apprenticeship attendance was 90.92%, which was similar to the position at the same point in 2024 and met the threshold to be RAG-rated green.
- The focus on attendance continued, and a lot was being done to drive improvements. Live reports were being pulled off and monitored. The college had continued to send text messages to learners when they were 20 minutes late for English and maths lessons, which improved attendance by just over 1%. Furthermore, for 2025/26, the college has been able to stream learners at Derby Road, which has made adaptive teaching easier for staff. Feedback so far has indicated that this is going well and has been well-received. During the maths scorecard review, one critical friend commented positively on the streaming.
- The vice principal provided a verbal update to explain a new incentive campaign wherein learners are given stars to acknowledge good attendance, quality of work, attitude, and other positive things. Learners can wear these on their lanyards and, after collecting a certain number, they can exchange them for a larger star.
- Meetings continue with heads of department and assistant principals to identify students who have missed more than two weeks of college and explore reasons behind these absences.
- Attendance remains a challenge as a lot more learners are coming in with complex needs or having been home educated or in alternative provision. Whilst maths and English attendance was not where the college would prefer it to be, most learners are attending well, particularly given the challenges which some face.

The vice chair questioned whether the college had managed to obtain any attendance data from Nottinghamshire County Council, as had been mentioned as a possibility during October's committee meeting. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience advised that a technical issue had arisen in that the college uses a unique learner number (ULN), whereas schools use a unique pupil number (UPN). Unfortunately, these are not the same. The vice principal had queried whether the data could be provided if the college sends National Insurance numbers and dates of birth, or any other information, for each young person. The college's data team was continuing to liaise with its counterpart at the council. The vice chair agreed that this sounded positive and it was reassuring that the local authority was open to this suggestion. It would be good to evidence progression and improvement in attendance levels for these young people.

Progress in maths and English

- Progress check 1 was an initial assessment of starting points via Century Tech, and all learners will repeat the same assessment at the end of the year to monitor their progress over time.

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- The progress check 1 residual score for GCSE maths (-0.61) was nearly two tenths of a grade better than at the same point last academic year. However, the residual score for Functional Skills Maths (-1.00) was four tenths of a grade worse.
- The progress check 1 residual score for GCSE English (-0.83) was nearly a tenth of a grade better than at the same point last academic year. However, the residual score for Functional Skills English (-0.93) was nearly half a grade worse.
- The vice principal reminded governors that Functional Skills assessments can be taken on demand at any point in the year, whereas GCSE exams only have the one window.
- Since the November resits, the college has commenced its 'Maths and English Extra' sessions, which allow students to access support outside of normal timetabled lessons. These are promoted across the college through tutorial and by vocational staff. To encourage uptake, students are able to collect a star after attending a certain number of sessions.
- The next progress check will show whether or not there have been any improvements.

The chair questioned whether the structure of Functional Skills is the reason for the differences in the outcomes of the progress checks, compared to GCSE. The vice principal explained that students complete an initial assessment, which covers all skills broadly, and then a diagnostic, which looks at individual skills in more detail. Outcomes will be used to inform focus and close knowledge gaps. Past assessment papers will then be used for future progress checks (or actual assessments, where learners have taken these), to further inform areas for improvement.

The chair indicated that this felt like a positive update and was indicative of some progress having been made.

One governor asked how students receive the stars as part of the rewards campaign referred to. The vice principal explained that the college was still in the process of agreeing this, and governors were interested to see how this scheme develops and whether it has an impact.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7

GENERAL CURRICULUM UPDATES

The vice principal: curriculum and quality provided a general update in relation to internal and external curriculum matters.

Internal

- The college has implemented eight T Levels over the past two academic years. T-Level Marketing was not viable for a 2025/26

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start due to low recruitment. T-Level data for both attendance and progression was positive, and students had made good progress against starting points. Feedback from curriculum areas shows that, overall, students are working hard and enjoying their studies.

- Boost – the GCSE resit programme – has moved to the sixth form centre, which seems to have had a positive impact on the student experience. Attendance has improved significantly to 87.6%, and these students are enjoying being part of the sixth form centre and, again, are working hard to excel.
- The college rebranded the 'Pre3' course for 2025/26. It is now named 'Flourish' and has been moved to the Business department. The number of learners on the course has almost doubled, and some of these have complex needs. Feedback from parents and students has been positive so far. Attendance is lower than on other courses, but levels are still higher for these young people than when they were at school. Overall, the course has had a good start this year.
- The college's new offer, Roots, is based in Walesby and is aimed at young people who are not ready to enter mainstream college provision. Again, attendance is lower (76%), but this was noted to still be good for this level of vulnerable student.
- The 'Growth' offer was piloted last academic year and is being offered in 2025/26. Seven learners have been enrolled to the first cohort, and two further cohorts are planned for 2026.

One governor asked how it has been identified that Boost students have benefited from the move to the sixth form centre, particularly asking whether they have been surveyed. The vice principal explained that this was a brand-new cohort and so it was not possible to compare against last year's experience, but moving the offer to the sixth form college and expanding it to allow learners to sit up to five GCSEs has made the culture feel more 'mature'. Furthermore, the course has been limited to young people who are capable of achieving a grade 4. The governor pressed for more information as to why staff feel that the move from one campus to another has made the difference, and the vice principal explained that the mood of learners is an indicator of improvements. The environment and culture at the sixth form centre are conducive to a more academic feel.

The vice chair asked about the makeup of the Boost offer, particularly questioning why that specific combination of subjects had been decided upon. The vice principal explained that the college had tried to consider what it could do well. Boost is intended to provide another chance for young people who have missed out on achieving their GCSEs for various reasons, and the college was keen on being able to offer this and do it well with the resources already in place. Furthermore, many T Levels

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require GCSE Science, which also informed the inclusion of that subject within the Boost offer.

The head of sixth form informed the committee that has been very positive to watch the Boost students at work in the classroom – they perform as a team and work very well together. All of the learners have a story and a reason as to why they are on the course, and this unites them.

The vice chair queried how many of the Boost learners have taken five subjects, and the response was that only two or three of them are sitting all five. Most are sitting three, and a few have taken four. It was confirmed that a couple of the learners are only taking two, but the college plans to offer a minimum of three next year, allowing more efficient timetabling.

External

- Ofsted inspections under the new framework commenced from 10th November 2025 and will continue until the week before Christmas. The vice principal explained that the scorecards and evaluations were not expected to be published until January.
- The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper was published in October. This sets out how the government will reform the education and skills system to support the development of the workforce.
- The final report relating to the Curriculum and Assessment Review was also published. The recommendations from this include the following:
 - The introduction of a third pathway – V Levels – alongside T Levels and A Levels. It is expected that these will be smaller qualifications in the main, but it is also recognised that there may be a need for a larger V Level in some subjects.
 - Reducing the assessment burden in T Levels and to look at incentives for employers based on industry placements, as the need for these will increase due to the planned defunding.
 - Two separate pathways at Level 2: one occupational, for students who want to go into employment rather than a higher level of study, and the other for those who wish to progress to level 3. Nonetheless, young people should still be able to progress to Level 3 study from the occupational pathway, if this is the right choice for them.
 - The introduction of Level 1 ‘stepping-stone’ qualifications for English and maths. These will be modular, and students will be able to bank their progress. This will focus on the mastery of skills gaps and

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- put young people in a stronger position to achieve a grade 4 in their GCSEs thereafter.
- Seeking to strengthen guidance on non-delivery activity – expecting the core enrichment offer to provide the transferrable skills needed for stepping into adulthood.
- The vice principal indicated that the college would once again face a challenge at Level 3 due to the defunding of alternative courses in subjects where there is a T-Level option. The proposed changes are out to consultation, and the college will be sharing this feedback.

The vice chair queried whether there was any early feedback from inspections under the new Ofsted framework. The vice principal indicated that the inspections are reported to 'feel different'. The process has been designed to be more supportive, but being inspected and judged is naturally a stressful process, and everybody wants to receive the best result possible. However, feedback so far largely seems to focus on the fact that the bar for 'expected standard' has been set higher than colleges would have anticipated.

The vice chair noted that the low retention on T-Level Building Services (56.6%) had been explained within the report, but she raised a question as to what will happen moving forward – i.e. whether the same thing was likely to happen again. The vice principal explained that this was the first cohort on this T Level, and the teaching methodology was new for both students and staff. She indicated that she had a lot of confidence in the head of department to turn this around. This T Level is very different to others in that the core is general and students do not get to focus on their subject specialism until the second year. This was a shock to some students. However, she felt that the college had learned a lesson and this provision, and retention thereon, will improve moving forward. She has provided feedback to the awarding organisations that the first-year curriculum makes it harder to keep learners interested and also creates challenges in relation to finding work placement opportunities (as students are lacking subject-specific knowledge).

In relation to Ofsted, it was acknowledged that it always takes a year for the inspectorate to shake out any bugs in the system whenever a new framework is introduced. It was noted to be a bit of concern that, as all judgements need to meet the same standard in order for that standard to apply, one low judgement will drag down the overall findings. The vice principal fed back that, if the college is found to require 'needs attention', an inspector will be assigned to revisit the college but will only look at that particular area or areas and will then change scorecard on the basis of their new findings. It has been fed back that the inspectorate expects to see spiky profiles.

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The principal gave a verbal update in relation to the regional support teams, suggesting that governors should read the paper in relation to intervention and what might trigger this. He indicated that it would be very valuable for the college to draw on the support which other colleges might offer and learn from them. He indicated that he was not sure what sort of individuals would be recruited to these regional support teams (i.e. what qualifications and experience they might hold). He noted that these changes would usually take place over a larger period of time, but a lot is currently being introduced in quite a short timeframe, and governors need to be sure that they college is meeting all of these requirements and that they understand the wider landscape.

In relation to the Post-16 Skills White Paper, the principal encouraged governors to read this and respond to the consultation. He noted that there was much concern about the Level 3 reforms and what these will mean for the college's inclusive offer, as some of the proposals will potentially make it very difficult for the college to offer some of its alternative/bespoke courses. He was concerned that this will create a block to doing the best for the college's communities and young people. Governors agreed that the board needs to be aware of this and take note of the changes over the next 12 months.

AGREED: to note the content of the updates.

8 **A LEVELS MONITORING – IN-YEAR UPDATES**

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

- Year 13 attendance was 91.1%, 3.5% better than at the same point last year, and was RAG-rated green.
- Year 12 attendance was 1.6% better than at the same point last academic year.
- For Year 13, the residual score at progress check 1 was -0.79 against a target of zero by the end of the academic year. This was almost the same as at the same point last academic year.
- Year 12's residual score was -0.56 against a target of zero by the end of Year 13. This was almost two tenths of a grade worse than at the same point last academic year. Methods to improve included interventions, close monitoring, support for students, and clear plans where progress was not quite meeting expectations. The vice principal was confident that the measures in place would lead to improvements.
- Retention had improved by 5% compared to last academic year and was 88.1%; however, there was still more work needed as this remained lower than the expectation. Year 12 retention was 99%.
- At progress check 1, the average ALPs grade was 6. The vice principal had been working with the head of sixth form and

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noted that the grade was expected to be 5 by the end of the academic year.

- The department was focusing very firmly on attendance, with swifter chasing via parents and carers. Extra lessons were also having a positive impact. A 'golden ticket' incentive had been introduced – these golden tickets are given to learners who then report to the head of sixth form and explain why they have been given a ticket. At set points, the head of sixth form draws a name at random and the learner is then celebrated. This incentive has been well received by learners.
- This area underwent an early scorecard review, joined by a part-time Ofsted inspector and A-Level specialist, and the outcomes were as follows:
 - Curriculum, teaching and training, achievement and operational leadership – 'expected standard'
 - Participation and development – 'needs attention'
 - Operational leadership and management – 'expected standard'.

In relation to participation and development, there was more work to do to ensure that learners develop an understanding of critical tutorial subjects and to ensure that they benefit from enrichment activities and meaningful work experience. Improvement will be closely monitored through PMR meetings.

Governors were pleased to note the golden ticket incentive as an innovative idea to recognise and motivate learners.

Governors observed that improvements had certainly been made, noting that the improvements in retention were particularly positive. The chair also commended the team for involving practicing inspectors within the internal scorecard review.


AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 **BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIS)**

The vice principal curriculum and quality presented a brief update focusing on the monitoring of 2025/26 objectives and progress against the 2023 Ofsted areas for improvement. She noted that the key balanced scorecard areas had already been covered within other reports. She also informed the committee that the Ofsted areas for improvement were RAG-rated as 'amber' but were moving in the right direction.

Governors agreed that this was a positive, succinct update.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

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10 **RISK REGISTER – REVIEW OF RISKS WITH STANDARDS COMMITTEE
OVERSIGHT**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her report, providing an update against the red risks that were not covered elsewhere within the reports already presented or planned for later on in the meeting. On this occasion, this was the risk in relation to hard-to-fill vacancies.

The vice principal explained that air conditioning and refrigeration roles remain the hardest to fill. However, it had recently been a little more challenging to recruit a GCSE Maths teacher and learning support assistants. A maths teacher was eventually recruited, and air conditioning also seemed to be in a better position. It was hoped that the college would now be able to take on more apprentices in that area.

One governor asked whether the challenges in air conditioning are due to this being a niche area, the fact that it is hard to find trained staff, or a combination of both. The vice principal explained that it is a national challenge to obtain and keep staff in this area. Many colleges have moved away from this subject due to the difficulties, which include the fact that colleges can rarely compete with industry salaries. However, WNC now has an experienced teacher in place, plus trainers with a lot of industry knowledge who are being supported by teaching and learning coaches to improve their pedagogical skills. The first air conditioning and refrigeration endpoint assessments will take place this academic year. It has been reported that there is a high failure rate nationally, so the college is working with the awarding organisation to schedule some staff CPD in relation to EPA preparation. The college has been creative in relation to the course design – this was moved to a block release model to provide intensive learning and then sufficient time on the job to practice the skills.

The vice chair observed that two new risks had been added – one relating to ICDS and the other to community intolerance. She suggested that the committee should particularly note and be aware of these risks, and she requested an update on the situation.

In relation to the ICDS risk, the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience indicated that a restructure was underway within Nottinghamshire County Council, and this would impact the ICDS team structure. The college currently links with a specialist team, but the arrangement was moving to a place-based approach with a Mansfield and Ashfield team that would cover all ages. The vice principal and assistant principal: inclusion recently met with the leads and gave them a tour of the college. They previously worked in the schools sector, as did most of the staff within their teams, so they do have some level of knowledge. However, it was unlikely that they would be entirely aware of everything that a post-16 institution can provide. The vice principal felt that the meeting helped them to get a view of the

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college and what it offers, and the key will be continuing to build positive relationships. As the funding models and structures are very different between schools and Further Education colleges, it will be necessary to work together and educate the new team.

Under the new structure, case managers will be allocated who will follow each young person throughout their time under the service, rather than having specific workers per institution as is currently the case. This will be beneficial for the young people, but it means that institutions will be working with more case managers than at present and building relationships will be very important. The college's current key contact within the county council will no longer have oversight of the college, but she has indicated that she would be very happy to retain the strategic link.

A further point is that Nottinghamshire County Council is currently reviewing how it funds high needs places. Element 3 funding is currently based on individual need, but the council is now exploring a tariff-based model of funding where the money is allocated by set funding bands rather than according to individual need. Providers will end up drawing down more funding than necessary for one student and less for another, so WNC and the council have agreed to run the college's data through this model to see what the impact might be.

These changes are being implemented now, and the place-based team will be in situ after Christmas. The vice principal reiterated that a lot of work was underway to build relationships at team manager level, and those positive first steps have been made. One of the place-based leads will also be involved in the inclusion scorecard review in March 2026.

The assistant principal: inclusion service stated that more details of the banding model may be available in January's white paper.

Governors were interested to note the changes, and it was discussed that this was a result of the council's Ofsted inspection and the need to streamline the service following some poor feedback from parents and families in relation to the speed of processes.

In relation to the intolerance experienced at the start of the academic year, the vice principal explained that there had been a reduction in the level of tension. However, the college had put together a small working group to look at how to positively challenge divisive views. Additional tutorials have been put in place for students. The college was keeping a close eye on the situation as there may be a further swell depending on local events and issues in the media.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

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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

- Overall attendance (87.5%) is 0.2% above the position reported in November 2024 and 1.6% above September 2025’s position. Retention (98.3%) is 9.4% above the national average, 0.7% above the position reported in November 2024, and 0.6% above September 2025’s position. The progress score (-0.74) has declined since September 2025, when it was 0.00, and shows a -0.06 variance on the November 2024 position.
- Vocational attendance (88.8%) shows a 2.1% increase since September 2025 and is only 0.1% lower than in November 2024. The vocational progress score is -0.46, which shows a decline since September 2025.
- English attendance (82.1%) is 0.3% above the position reported in November 2024 but 2.6% better than in September 2025. The English progress score is -1.25, which shows a decline since September 2025 and a -0.21 variance on the November 2024 position.
- Maths attendance (81.6%) is 2.9% above the September 2025 position and only 0.1% below what it was in November 2024. The maths progress score is -0.88, which shows a decline since September 2025 and a -0.05 variance on the November 2024 position.

Adult learning programmes

- Direct delivery attendance (87.9%) is 2.3% above the position reported in September 2025 and only 0.1% above the November 2024 position. Retention (97%) is 0.1% above the position reported to the committee in September 2025, 0.6% above November 2024’s position, and 4.8% above the national rate. The direct delivery progress score, at 0.07, is slightly better than was reported in November 2024 (when it was -0.01) and also shows an improvement since September 2025.
- Subcontracted delivery retention (96%) is 3.8% above both November 2024’s position and the national rate and is 3.5% higher than in September 2025. Achievement (73.8%) is 3.8% below the position reported to the committee in September 2025 but is 10.2% below November 2024 and is 13% below the national average.
- Community delivery retention (99.5%) is 2.5% above November 2024’s position, 6.2% higher than in September 2025, and 7.3% above the national average. Achievement (96.4%) is 10.7% above the percentage reported to the committee in November 2024, 13.1% better than in September 2025, and 9.6% above the national average.

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Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Attendance (91.5%) is 0.4% above the position reported in September 2025 and 1.1% better than in November 2024. Retention (77.5%) is 2.2% below the position reported in November 2024 and shows a 1.8% decline since September 2025. Achievement (18%) is 1.2% above November 2024 and 8.2% higher than in September 2025, but it remains 36.6% below the national rate.
- Recording of 20% off-the-job training (25.3%) is 2.1% above what it was in November 2024 but 0.8% below the position reported in September 2025. Recording of six hours of off-the job training (8%) is 0.8% above what it was in November 2024 and shows a 0.4% improvement since September 2025.
- Reviews in the last three months (79.9%) shows a decline of 7.3% compared to the position reported in November 2024 but a 21.1% improvement since September 2025.
- Stringent monitoring and oversight continue via the Executive monitoring and departmental meetings.

Learners with high needs

- Overall attendance (88.9%) is 1% below the position reported in November 2024. Retention (99.3%) is 1.9% above the position reported in November 2024. The progress score (-0.58) shows a -0.58 variance on the November 2024 position.
- Vocational attendance (89.6%) is only 2.2% lower than in November 2024. The vocational progress score (-0.22) shows a -0.22 variance on the November 2024 position.
- English attendance (86.2%) is 1.9% above the position reported in November 2024. The English progress score is -0.89), showing a -0.89 variance on the November 2024 position.
- Maths attendance (87.4%) is 2.2% above what it was in November 2024. The maths progress score is -0.82, which shows a 0.18 variance on the November 2024 position.

Free school meals

- Attendance (85.3%) is 0.4% below the percentage reported in November 2024. Retention (98.9%) is 0.2% below the position reported in November 2024. The progress score is -0.73, which shows a 0.27 variance on the November 2024 position.

BAME young people

- Attendance (88.8%) is 1.1% above the percentage reported in September 2025 and the same as was reported to the committee in November 2024. Retention (98.4%) is 0.5% below the position reported in November 2024 and 0.4% below September 2025. The progress score is -0.68, which shows a variance of -0.68 compared to November 2024.

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BAME adults

- This data has previously been reported together with the data for young people, and so a direct comparison to either last year or the previous meeting is not strictly possible now that the two are being reported separately.
- In November 2025, at the point of the data being provided for this committee meeting, attendance was 90.9%; retention was 97.7% and the progress score was 0.18.

Scorecard reviews meeting 'expected standard'

- Three scorecard reviews have been completed within classroom-based learning. Two of these met expectations for curriculum teaching and training, achievement and leadership and management. While there is some very good activity taking place, enrichment in some areas needs further work.

In response to a question from one governor, the assistant principal confirmed that the gaps in community provision were simply due to the sequencing of delivery.

It was noted that learners having had reviews within the last three months was of concern at only 80%, which was 7% down on the same point last year. Governors were assured that, while it is acknowledged that improvement is necessary, it is known that the gap is due to staff prioritising EPA preparation so that learners can complete their courses.

The chair indicated that this seemed to be a positive picture, and the report provided a very clear sense-check of the position. The vice principal also highlighted that the data in relation to apprenticeships justifies the decision not to grade apprenticeships as outstanding, which the committee noted.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.


(Joanna Poon joined the meeting.)

12 2025/26 IN-YEAR EXCEPTIONS REPORTS

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her detailed combined report, highlighting key points for governors' attention.

Safeguarding and Prevent

- Even though the college has enrolled more students this academic year, CPOMS has remained largely consistent with no spike in referrals. Furthermore, anecdotal feedback from staff suggests that this year's intake of students does not seem quite as complex as has been the case in the past.

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- Of four Prevent concerns submitted by the college, one is currently being assessed by the police Prevent team. This concern relates to a fascination with extreme violence, including school shootings. Given the nature of the concerns, the young person concerned is not currently attending college.
- At the request of the regional Prevent coordinator, the vice principal attended the consultation in relation to the Department for Education's review of training materials, and she has fed back how she thinks these might be improved.
- The college started this year with a lower number of students open on a child in need plan (five) than it has had for some time.
- The vice principal is part of an educational reference group working with Nottinghamshire County Council on the impact of social care reform, exploring the notion of creating family hubs, which would subsume early help services. Derbyshire County Council has completely disbanded its early help services and now expects colleges to be the lead practitioner in these cases. The vice principal did not feel that Nottinghamshire would quite do the same, but she noted that education providers will still be expected to take a far larger part than was previously the case. She explained that there will be a CPD implication for staff, and possibly a resource implication. It was agreed that this needs to be monitored.
- The Virtual School had invited the vice principal to sit on its advisory panel as the Further Education representative, with a view to exploring how to work more closely together to drive improvements for care experienced young people. The key theme emerging from this was that colleges and schools need to work more closely in relation to the needs of some of the young people in care. Suspension rates for these young people are high.
- The college's journey to becoming a trauma informed provider is gathering pace, and the Virtual School has agreed to provide funding to support some consultancy time. This funding has been used to pay for a guest speaker, who delivered some excellent CPD to the vast majority of the college's teaching staff during October's staff development days. This individual is also mentoring the head of department: hair & beauty and the head of English & maths to explore how to embed trauma informed practice in those areas. She has also agreed to be involved in the inclusion scorecard review in March 2026, and to support some heads of department to carry out self-assessments to show where they are on the relational journey. It was noted that this fits well with the Ofsted inclusion piece. The college's next leadership conference will also involve some work with heads of department in relation to how they can make sure classrooms and workshops are inclusive environments.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

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- The numbers of incidents received to date were largely in line with last academic year. However, the vice principal was closely monitoring student-on-student sexual abuse and harassment figures, as incidents decreased last year but the college has already seen an increase this year.
- The Executive team has agreed to sign up to the AoC's EDI charter, and the college's public statement of intent will be published on the AoC's website.
- The vice principal intends to write an inclusion strategy for the college, which she will present to the committee once drafted.

Priority groups

- For the vast majority of priority groups, retention is in line with peers. Notable exceptions are young people living in supported housing and in residential care, for whom attendance and retention are both below college averages.
- The vice principal discussed the planned introduction of a project funded through the Youth Trailblazer to pilot delivery at the YMCA's premises. 30 of the young people in residence there are not engaging with work or education, and the intention is to look at what can be offered to hopefully bring these young people around into a positive routine, get them engaged, and improve their self-belief. It is hoped that this will gradually encourage them to access the college.

In response to an observation by one governor, it was agreed that the lack of routine and structure leaves these young people at a loose end, and it is necessary to give them a reason to get up and take part in a structured day. Many not have attended any kind of education for many years, even alternative provision; furthermore, many have been involved in substance abuse or other legal issues. These challenges will be very tough to overcome.

- The vice principal indicated that a column has been added to the priority data table to show attendance over the past four weeks so that progress can be tracked.
- The vice principal also provided a year-to-date update on the KPIs, noting that half of these were RAG-rated green. She explained that the NEET data would not be available until the actual destinations data has been obtained in January or February 2026.

The vice chair made an observation in relation to the cross-college scorecard review on inclusion in March 2026. Given the new framework, it is important to look very carefully at the whole inclusion piece, and the vice chair was aware that this may mean her focus as SEND link governor needs to change. The vice chair explained that she and the assistant principal: inclusion service have discussed this, and they will meet again

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in January to look at how governance might link into the new piece on inclusion. The vice principal agreed with these observations and suggestions and indicated that she would bring a report to the committee at the next meeting following the scorecard review. She explained that the review would involve more externals than usual, including other colleges, the ICDS, the Virtual School, and other externals with pertinent experience and skills. The college needs to ensure it is secure in the way it presents and delivers inclusion.

The chair asked the vice chair to present his chair's report at December's Corporation Board meeting, and he asked that she use this time to remind governors of the need to be aware of the challenge, focus and requirements in relation to inclusion. Not many colleges match WNC in terms of its inclusive offer and issues such as corporate parenting, and it was important to remain live to this. It was noted that this links very closely with the leadership and governance element of inspection – the governors need to be very aware of inclusion throughout all aspects of the college's culture and provision, not just as a standalone area.

The principal noted that the framework's interpretation of inclusion was very narrow, and his concern was that the college's work to create opportunities for learners will not be recognised. However, he does not wish anyone to be deterred by this. It was agreed that the vice principal: curriculum and quality had done well in bringing this matter to the forefront and working with teams even at this early point to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive, teaching practice is universally high quality, and adaptive teaching is in place.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

13 **INTERNAL STUDENT PROGRESSION – 2024/25 INTO 2025/26 ACTUAL**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented this report, and key highlights were as follows:

- The report presented the number of students from 2024/25 who progressed within the college in 2025/26. The vice principal indicated that the full, detailed progression data would be available in January or February 2026, to be presented to the committee in March.
- More continuing students moved to a higher level of study linked to last year's course, with slightly more moving to a higher level of study within a different curriculum area.
- Slightly more learners repeated a level of study, and slightly more returned to study at a lower level. Of 187 learners who studied at a lower level, 12 had been withdrawn in-year and, therefore, would not have completed their original programme of study.
- Fewer learners studied Year 2 of a two-year programme of study.

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- Of 175 learners who completed their programme of study but returned to study on a lower level of programme, 50 completed a Level 3 programme in 2024/25. Of those, eight returned to study English and maths only or community-based programmes; 14 applied for study programmes where Level 2 is the highest at which a student can start (e.g. plumbing or hairdressing); and five learners moved into a new hospitality leadership programme, designed to better prepare learners for industry.
- Further investigation will need to be undertaken in relation to 11 learners who progressed onto a Level 2 programme even though they could have gone straight to Level 3.
- 26 learners progressed from Level 1 to a programme which is coded as a lower level of study. However, 15 of these were to a T-Level foundation programme, which constitutes positive progression and only flags as a lower level due to internal coding conventions.
- 20 learners moved from a Level 2 course in 2024/25 to Level 1 in 2025/26, and it will be necessary to explore reasons behind this.
- 204 learners moved to the same level of study. 23 of these moved from Step Up and Progress or Mansfield Education Hub into core vocational provision so, whilst technically the same level of study, this is still considered to be progression. 22 had withdrawn from their programme of study in-year. Of the students who completed, nine moved from one Level 3 programme to another, and 49 moved from one Level 1 programme to another (with further investigation required to identify the reasons).
- 117 learners progressed from one Level 2 programme to another. 33 of those moved into programmes where the highest level of entry is at Level 2, and the remainder will require some further investigation.

The vice chair observed that this was some very interesting data, and she asked whether the outcomes of the further investigation would be brought back to the committee when the full destinations data was presented. The vice principal confirmed that this would be the case.

The chair indicated that this update was timely considering the challenges relating to the new framework and policy update. He indicated that destinations would be a key focus moving forward, particularly in relation to adults and apprenticeships. He asked whether this data is reported separately and, upon being informed that progression data for adults is included alongside that for young people, suggested disaggregating this. He suggested that having a separate set of data for adults would better enable the college to delve into it and evidence where destinations link to the national priorities, etc. He explained that the shift of adult skills oversight to the Department for

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Work and Pensions is certainly intentional with a view to link adult provision more closely to the labour market.

The principal agreed that the college could provide a separate destination report for adults. However, he noted that it can be a challenge to record adult destinations sensibly, considering the range of adult provision. For example, many individuals undertaking community learning are doing so for reasons other than to access work. Nonetheless, he suggested that destinations from Access to HE could be provided as a standalone dataset. This will be presented at the next available meeting after the data emerges – this was discussed in the meeting as being January, but it was noted afterwards that it was more likely to be March’s meeting. He assured governors that the college now captures why adults are taking a particular course and what their intentions are. He stated that he and the vice principals would give some thought to how they might report this to governors in a way that brings value.

VP: CESE

March
2026

The chair indicated that the sector as a whole has not necessarily been good at showing the value and impact of progression, and it would be beneficial for the college to buck this trend.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

14 COMPLAINTS – ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented the annual complaints report pertaining to the previous academic year.

The number of complaints received was largely consistent with the previous year, at 56 received compared to 60 in 2024/25. For a college this size, it was noted that this is a relatively small number, so most of the issues were clearly dealt with at the informal stage.

The largest number of complaints related to teaching and learning, but this was unsurprising as it is the college’s core business. 19 of the 39 teaching and learning complaints related to how students had been spoken to by staff members. Although advice in relation to handling difficult conversations has been issued to individual staff members where needed, the vice principal suggested that there may also be value in a wider piece of work relating to communication. The college has dealt with some challenging parents recently, so it is clear that expectations are changing, and staff may need support in relation to responding to these challenges.

Safeguarding complaints are naturally closely monitored, and the vice principal was able to assure the committee that both of these complaints related to bullying allegations against other students. Therefore, while these were complaints relating to safeguarding, they were not about the

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college's safeguarding practice. The college continued to see peer relationship issues such as low-level bullying and disagreements, and it was noted that this would probably always be an issue. It would not be realistic to expect students to never fall out. However, it was noted that parents often misconstrue a disagreement or bickering as bullying.

The chair noted that parents of young people do tend to complain when their children are challenged, particularly around their attendance. He was pleased to see the slight decrease in the number of complaints compared to 2023/24.

AGREED: to note the content of the annual update.

15 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of additional business.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed to be Monday 26th January 2026 at 17:00.

The meeting closed at 19:10.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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