

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 26th January 2026

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Ben Owen, Chair
Jane Peacock, Vice Chair
Andrew Copley, Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Kerry Pilcher, Staff Governor (Academic)
Joanna Poon
Kit Salt
Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (Business Support)
Keith Spiers (until 17:30)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience
Avery Alsop, Student Governor
Claire Dube, Student Governor
Ella Brookes, Assistant Principal: Inclusion Service
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
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 Nic Williamson (head of English and maths). All members of the committee were present at the opening of the meeting, although it was noted that Keith Spiers needed to leave the meeting at 17:30 and would aim to return if possible.		
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 2ND DECEMBER 2025</u> The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.		

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2025.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The committee members were happy to note the content of the update provided. There were no actions currently due, with the next due date being March 2026.

5 **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025/26 PROGRESS UPDATE**

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

The vice principal then particularly highlighted the following points:

Attendance

- Overall classroom-based learning attendance was 87%, which was 0.2% lower than at the same point in 2025.
- Vocational attendance was 88%, which fell short of leaders' expectations and was 1.4% lower than was reported to the previous Standards Committee meeting.
- Attendance in English was 80.4%, which was 2% lower than last reported and 2.5% lower than at the same point in 2025.
- Maths attendance was 79.9%, which was also 2% lower than reported to the previous committee meeting and 1.9% lower than at the same point in 2025.
- Apprenticeships attendance was 90.89%, which broadly mirrored the position reported to the previous Standards Committee and that at the same point last academic year. This also met the college's requirements to be RAG-rated green.
- Activity to improve attendance continued across the college, with the text message campaign once again being in place where learners had not attended maths or English. This was carried out during the week before Christmas and the college did see some improvement; however, attendance was still lower that week across maths, English and vocational classes.

The vice chair noted the information presented at point 2.2 of the written report, which listed those groups of students with lower attendance. It was acknowledged that these are the students which the college knows will impact on overall attendance, and they are mostly quite small groups. Therefore, the vice chair questioned what impact these groups have on the college's attendance overall. The vice principal indicated that they only impacted by a very small percentage. However, she did explain

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that, while Flourish Growth and Engage are very small groups, there are larger numbers of students within Mansfield Education Hub and lower-level plumbing, business and construction. Governors asked that, in future, the numbers of students within each group or category are also stated so that governors can better assess the impact.

VP: C&Q

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The vice chair also asked whether there were any individuals on Growth, Flourish and Engage with extremely low attendance who were bringing the overall percentage down for these groups or whether students are generally at around 61% across the board. The vice principal confirmed that specific individuals will be having an impact, but it is still the case that attendance on these courses is low across the board. Nonetheless, she was certain that attendance was better than these young people would have exhibited in the past, and it remained necessary to be mindful that they were not accustomed to mainstream education. Furthermore, if they had originally enrolled on a different course, they would carry some negative attendance from their previous enrolment. The vice chair suggested that it would be interesting to know for certain if a small number of students were having a serious impact on the overall data. As these tend to be smaller groups, there only need to be a few students with very poor attendance to have a significant impact. The vice principal agreed to include more context when next presenting the attendance data. Governors were very keen to have visibility of this additional context, particularly from an inclusion perspective.

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The vice principal assured the committee that students are very well supported on these courses and that everything is documented and would stand up to audit if this provision were audited. They are nurturing programmes and remain very important to the college and students alike.

Progress in maths and English

- At progress check 2, the residual score for GCSE Maths was -0.85, which was a third of grade worse than at the same point last academic year. This progress check was a 'mini-mock' which included questions from both papers and was felt to provide a robust indicator of learners' performance against their starting points.
- The Functional Skills Maths residual score was -0.62, which was the same as at this point last academic year. This was a mock paper and again provided a robust assessment of performance.
- In January, a very small number of learners in January sat the Award in Maths, which is a steppingstone to Level 1 Functional Skills. This involves an external assessment with the option to resit in the summer, and outcomes of the first assessment were awaited at the date of the meeting. To assess who should sit this qualification, a robust process was followed which involved an exemption board – consisting of the head of maths and English,

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the assistant principal: inclusion, and the vice principal: curriculum and quality – to review the learners in depth.

- At progress check 2, the GCSE English residual score was -1.27, which was the same as at this point last year. This involved a 'mini-mock' based on Paper 1 which was designed to test specific skills and knowledge relating to learners' writing ability.
- The residual score for FS English was -0.42, which was a quarter of grade worse than at the same point last academic year. Again, a mock paper was set in order to give a robust comparison against starting points so that teachers could then look at which gaps needed filling.
- The vice principal reminded governors that Functional Skills assessments can be taken on demand at any point during the course, depending on when learners are ready.
- The college has now introduced 'Maths and English Extra' sessions at every site to provide opportunities for learners to have extra tuition outside of their normal timetabled hours. Uptake is slow, however, and so efforts are underway to promote these sessions as well as having a targeted approach to signposting learners to them.
- 'Functional Skills Extra' sessions are in place for learners in Step Up and Progress and at the Old Brewery.
- Attendance is 2.6% better in streamed maths classes and 2.4% better in streamed English classes. Progress check 2 results were also better in streamed English groups but slightly worse in maths. Feedback from teachers has been positive – learners are reported to be working harder, and engagement and participation have both improved.
- A standards coach is being assigned to focus purely on quality improvement. This will involve working strategically and going into lessons where there are hotspots of challenging behaviour.
- A number of incentives have been implemented to further engage learners. These include the 'perfect story' strategy, a 'read for maths' campaign, and a star initiative to reward attendance, participation and hard work.
- Individual coaching and CPD plans also continue for staff.

One governor noted that learners on certain programmes do not perform well in maths and English and questioned how these learners can be encouraged to improve their performance. The vice principal reiterated that the campaigns previously listed have been implemented to try to combat this; however, she indicated that this a real challenge, as is the case for many other colleges. Students do not enjoy these lessons and have perhaps not had many successes in the past. She explained that the second progress check is the first test-style assessment set for learners and, between this check and the actual GCSE mocks, it is hoped that gaps can be identified for each group so that teaching can be adapted to focus on these gaps. She assured the

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committee that the college is trying everything it possibly can to improve attendance and motivation. However, she felt that the full impact of streaming would not be seen until the end of the year.

One governor asked whether the college has considered having 'student champions' to feed back to peers about how passing English and maths has helped them in their vocational studies. The vice principal indicated that this is not a strategy currently in place, but she noted that she would raise this with the curriculum assistant principals.

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AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 CURRICULUM UPDATES

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

T Levels

- The college has successfully implemented eight T Levels, and these were described positively.
- Overall Year 1 attendance was 92.7%, which met the college's threshold to be RAG-rated green.
- Cumulative attendance for Year 2 was 87.6%, which fell slightly short of expectations. This was down to the impact of attendance on T-Level Maintenance, Installation and Repair and T-Level Building Services. The vice principal confirmed that interventions were in place to support those learners who were falling behind due to attendance issues.
- At progress check 2, the majority of learners in both Year 1 and Year 2 were demonstrating good progress. The residual score for Year 1 was 0.04 and for Year 2 was 0.32. Therefore, while attendance was low in a few areas, the residuals were more positive.
- At progress check 2, learners from ethnic minorities and on EHCPs performed worse than their peers in Year 1. Learners from ethnic minorities who do not have a grade 4 in English and maths performed worse than their peers in Year 2, proving how important English and maths are.
- Retention in Year 1 is currently 97.5%.
- Retention in Year 2 is lower (79.5%) due to the impact of T-Level Building Services and T-Level Health. The reasons for withdrawals have all been identified and learners mostly had valid reasons to leave the course and had secured positive destinations.
- T-Level students are working hard and the qualifications are challenging. Students need to be able to undertake multiple things at once, such as revising for their mocks and completing the employer-set project.

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- The main challenge for the college as the curriculum reforms progress will be the increasing learner numbers on T Levels, particularly as this will exacerbate the difficulty of securing sufficient placements in the digital and construction industries. However, the college is working hard to ensure these will be available.

The chair observed that the Year 1 retention was positive, and he noted that migration of learners from Year 2 to other provision was always going to be a risk.

The vice chair thanked the vice principal for including examples of the projects within the written report, noting that it was good for governors to see what the students were working on. The chair asked committee members to note that T Levels are a significant investment in terms of staff and employer time, considering the teaching and preparation for projects. A lot of hard work is involved, and a good relationship with employers is essential for the development of a successful T Level. It was also noted that this experience stands students in good stead as they move into the world of work.

Curriculum reforms and planning

The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper was published in October 2025, and the outcome and recommendations from the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR) were released in November 2025. The consultation closed on 12th January 2026 and the outcomes of this were awaited. The principal's response to the consultation had been included as an appendix to the written report, and the content was broadly mirrored by other colleges' responses. It was clear that the sector overall was hoping for some changes as a result of the consultation. Currently, the proposals in relation to Level 3 reform will cause some challenges for all colleges as there will be no alternative Level 3 qualifications where there is a T-Level route. The vice principal hoped that she would be able to provide further detail by the date of the next committee meeting.

One governor asked whether the Association of Colleges had submitted a group response to the consultation. The principal confirmed that it did and that he had seen a draft but not the final version. It was agreed that, if possible, the final version would be found and shared with governors.

The vice principal explained that the college had recently completed another round of 'seven steps' curriculum planning. The main challenge next academic year will be that, unless something changes, there will be no alternative Level 3 offer in digital or healthcare. Assistant principals and heads of department are being creative and exploring the potential of offering smaller qualifications in digital and a technical occupational entry to social care in health. However, the general feeling is that the latter will not support learners who specifically want to go into nursing.

Head of
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Should this definitely be the case, the college will need to explore A-Level options or signpost learners to resit their GCSEs through Boost. It was emphasised that it would be better if the alternative qualifications could remain funded until it is clear what will happen with T Levels and V Levels.

The college is also considering the introduction of Level 1 courses in curriculum areas such as travel, performing arts and health and social care so that those learners who do not meet the entry requirements of the higher levels can still take a vocational pathway. This will help to prepare for the government's plan to introduce automatic enrolment for learners with no post-16 study plan.

Work on the Youth Guarantee continues to progress well, with the second wave of funding starting from April 2026. The college was also working to align its adult offer with EMCCA and other local and national priorities, including growing bootcamp provision.

The vice principal informed governors that the first Ofsted inspections under the new framework have been conducted and reports are awaited. Having spoken to contacts within schools and attended multiple Ofsted update sessions, the vice principal was able to confirm that 'expected standard', 'strong standard', and 'needs attention' will be the most common findings. Providers are likely to see more amber on their scorecards than green, blue or red. She indicated that the bar has raised significantly and it is necessary to manage expectations as to what might be achievable. The vice principal has scheduled a sharing of practice meeting with a school that has been inspected and plans to arrange the same with a peer college that is being inspected soon.

Governors asked when the outcome of the consultation will be known, but this information was not available. However, leaders hoped that it would be soon as delays would impact curriculum planning. The principal reiterated that the key issue for the college is that of qualifications being defunded. It will create a significant piece of work for teachers to prepare to deliver a completely brand-new qualification in just a few months. He informed the committee that the college's annual strategic conversation would soon take place with the Department for Education, and he would definitely labour this point. However, this is a ministerial decision and so it was acknowledged that the local DfE team will be limited as to their influence.

The vice chair asked whether the principal's response to the consultation aligned with the responses submitted by the AoC and, broadly, the sector. The principal suggested that the AoC's response was likely to be slightly less strongly worded and would not have the same detailed data that he included. He suggested that it would have been a good idea if the AoC had provided a template for responses and used these to build a

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whole picture, as it would have been more powerful to combine feedback from all colleges into one response. He expressed the view that college principals sit in three camps: some share his opinions; some feel that the reforms will work out as proposed; others feel that it does not matter what happens as they are unable to control the change. The principal indicated that he spoke directly to DfE officials at the AoC Conference and warned them that this was not a good plan, and this comment was applauded by others in the room. There is huge feeling within the sector against these reforms, but it is a question of whether this will be reflected within the feedback provided.

It was noted that there is not much information about adult learning within the reforms, so there were still challenges in relation to adult skills funding. However, the 16-18 reforms will not solve the short- and medium-term skills challenges.

AGREED: to note the content of the updates.

(Keith Spiers left the meeting at 17:30.)

7 A LEVELS UPDATE

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

- Year 13 attendance was 90.8%, which was 1.3% better than at the same point last academic year and was RAG-rated green.
- Year 12 attendance was 93.6%, which was 2.6% better than at the same point last year.
- The Year 13 residual at progress check 2 was -0.89, which was a tenth of a grade lower than at the same point last year. The head of sixth form reported that a few learners were struggling academically, but these were being targeted for interventions and additional monitoring, and staff were working with parents and carers where necessary. A lot of intervention was taking place within the sixth form and had been all year.
- The Year 12 residual score at progress check 2 was -0.98 and the vice principal reported that there were currently no major concerns in respect of this cohort. Monitoring continued through progress boards and meetings with parents and carers.
- Retention for Year 13 was 88%, which was 0.1% lower than was reported at the last committee meeting. Notable improvements had been made in comparison to this same point last academic year.
- Year 12 retention was positive 97.9% which was noted to still be positive even though it was very slightly lower than was reported at the previous committee meeting.
- The head of sixth form predicted that the average grade score for learners taking exams this academic year would be 6 which, if achieved, would be the same as last academic year.

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- There are reward campaigns in place within the sixth form, such as the golden ticket scheme, and learners receive a lot of support and intervention from the achievement coaches.

The chair observed that positive movement has been made. The principal also informed the committee that the team at the sixth form had been working in very disruptive working conditions due to the ongoing building work, and he commended them for continuing to drive improvements and support the students.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIS)

The vice principal curriculum and quality presented a very brief update noting that all items were covered within other papers and so would not be repeated.

AGREED: to note the brief update.

9 RISK REGISTER – REVIEW OF RISKS WITH STANDARDS COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her report, providing an update against all quality and standards-related risks for this committee's oversight.

The key focus was on the red risks. Hard-to-fill vacancies still remain in air conditioning and refrigeration. However, it was reported that things seem to be in quite a good place so far and it may be possible to take on another group. The first group will soon take their EPAs and a lot of support is in place for these learners as it is a very challenging EPA. The college also recently struggled to recruit a maths teacher, which was a new challenge in comparison to experiences with similar roles in the past. Filling communication support roles within the additional learning support team has also been challenging.

It was noted that, of the other risks, maths and English was a major area of focus but this had already been covered in detail within the earlier papers.

Governors were signposted to point 14 of the report, which focused on apprenticeships. The latest update shows that the college is still on track in relation to all apprenticeship accountability framework measures, and a full update on this issue could also be found within the QIAP presented.

One governor noted that the air conditioning vacancy was still being advertised. The vice principal explained that this vacancy was being kept open due to there being a large waiting list of students. The college does

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not want to risk negatively impacting the quality of learning or letting students down if staff leave and the provision cannot be adequately serviced. This was described as forward but with sensible steps being taken to maintain the position. The employer engagement and construction apprenticeship teams continue to work together closely to meet demand and ensure the quality is maintained.

One governor asked whether there have been any additional applications so far, and the vice principal confirmed that the apprenticeships manager was in the process of talking to a potential candidate. She noted that a few individuals have seemed very interested and have even visited the college to discuss the role but then have stopped responding to contact. Therefore, she did not feel able to comment at this point on whether this contact would materialise into a job offer. She informed the committee, however, that the apprenticeships manager also frequently contacted individuals with suitable experience on LinkedIn to enquire whether they might be interested.

The vice principal also noted that people direct from industry are desirable as students benefit greatly from their industry knowledge and experience. However, as they usually have no teaching experience, the college works with them to improve their pedagogy over time.

The chair raised a question about confidence among employers in respect of apprenticeships recruitment, noting that there are a lot of challenges and potential changes afoot in relation to apprenticeships. He asked how the college is performing against recruitment targets and what the appetite of employers seems to be. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience confirmed that the college is slightly behind and will not hit January's target. February and March's targets are slightly lower, however, and the vice principal was of the opinion that the college may have closed the gap by March. She advised that confidence levels among employers are mixed and were particularly poor in the first half of the academic year as they were awaiting the budget statement and National Insurance announcements. She also noted that there is more confidence in some sectors than in others.

The chair invited the Executive team members to consider whether they want to extend the risk relating to curriculum reform to apprenticeships due to this lack of confidence. However, there was noted to be some interest among construction employers in relation to the new foundation apprenticeships. The vice principal also explained that the college was preparing to run a large recruitment campaign for some of the larger engineering employers, so the hesitation is not consistent across sectors, but she acknowledged that it may be worth considering adding this matter to the risk register. It was agreed that the Executive team would

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review and consider adding further detail to the risk register in respect of apprenticeships. It was noted that getting air conditioning up and running was a huge step as this is a very well-paid apprenticeship programme with significant demand. However, it is necessary to maintain balance so as not to overwhelm teachers. The principal assured governors that any risk relating to apprenticeships is covered within the finance risks, and the finance director has budgeted fairly conservatively around expectations. Any risk to finances continues to be monitored very closely and effectively.

One governor commented that the key was not only to ensure that the risks were accurately logged but also to look at the assessment and staffing requirements. It was agreed that, at this stage, it was still a case of watching what happens.

Another governor particularly noted that recent assessment reforms were having an impact on apprentices: quick turnaround is required in many cases.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

10 **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 (86%) is 0.8% above the position reported in January 2025 and 1.5% below November 2025's position. Retention (96.7%) is 7.8% above the national average, 1.6% above the position reported in November 2025, and 0.1% above January 2025's position. The progress score (-0.77) has declined since November 2025, when it was -0.74, and shows a -0.64 variance on the January 2025 position.
- Vocational attendance (87.5%) shows a 1.3% decrease since November 2025 and is 0.6% higher than in January 2025. The vocational progress score is -0.48, which shows a very slight decline since November 2025 and is very slightly less favourable than in January 2025.
- English attendance (80.2%) is 1.9% below the position reported in November 2025 and is the same as in January 2025. The English progress score is -1.31, which shows a decline compared to both November and January 2025.
- Maths attendance (79.6%) is 2% below the November 2025 position and is the same as in January 2025. The maths progress score is -0.92, which shows a decline since November 2025 and a -0.4 variance on the January 2025 position.

Adult learning programmes

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- Direct delivery attendance (86.1%) is 1.8% below the position reported in November 2025 and 0.1% above the January 2025 position. Retention (96.6%) is 0.4% below the position reported to the committee in November 2025, 1.6% above January 2025's position, and 4.4% above the national rate. The direct delivery progress score, at 0.00, is slightly worse than was reported in November 2025 (when it was 0.07) and January 2025 (when it was 0.06).
- Subcontracted delivery retention (96.7%) is 4.5% above both January 2025's position and the national rate and is 0.7% higher than in November 2025. Achievement (92.3%) is 21.5% above the position in January 2025, 5.5% above the national rate, and 18.5% above the position reported to the committee in November 2025.
- Community delivery retention (97.8%) is 1.7% below November 2025's position, 2.8% higher than in January 2025, and 5.6% above the national average. Achievement (85.9%) shows a 10.5% decline since November 2025 and is 0.9% below the national rate but only 0.1% lower than was reported in January 2025.

Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Attendance (90.8%) is 0.7% below the position reported in November 2025 and 0.8% better than in January 2025. Retention (77.3%) is 0.2% below the position reported in November 2025 and shows a 1% decline compared to January 2025. Achievement (26.4%) is 8.4% above November 2025 and 2.2% higher than in January 2025, but it remains 28.2% below the national rate.
- Recording of 20% off-the-job training (24.4%) is 0.9% below what it was in November 2025 but 0.4% above the position reported in January 2025. Recording of six hours of off-the job training (7.4%) is 0.6% below what it was in November 2025 and shows a 0.5% improvement compared to January 2025.
- Reviews in the last three months (78%) shows a decline of 1.9% compared to the position reported in November 2025 and is 8.6% below January 2025's position.

Learners with high needs

- Overall attendance (87.5%) is 1.4% below the position reported in November 2025 but 1.3% above January 2025. Retention (99.6%) is 0.3% above the position reported in November 2025 and 1.8% above January 2025. The progress score (-0.61) shows a -0.03 variance on both November and January 2025.
- Vocational attendance (88.4%) is 1.2% lower than in November 2025 but 1.7% better than in January 2025. The vocational progress score (-0.22) is the same as was reported to the committee at its previous meeting and shows a 0.13 variance on the January 2025 position.

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- English attendance (84.8%) is 1.4% below the position reported in November 2025 and 1.2% lower than in January 2025. The English progress score is (-0.95), showing a 0.06 variance on November 2025 and -0.31 on January 2025's position.
- Maths attendance (85.7%) is 1.7% below what it was in November 2025 but 1.6% above January 2025. The maths progress score is -0.86, which shows a 0.01 variance on the January 2025 position but -0.04 compared to November 2025.

Free school meals

- Attendance (83.5%) is 1.8% below the percentage reported in November 2025 but 0.8% above January 2025. Retention (97.2%) is 1.7% below the position reported in November 2025 but 1.5% above January 2025. The progress score is -0.75, which shows a -0.02 variance on both November and January 2025.

BAME young people

- Attendance (87.2%) is 1.6% below the percentage reported in November 2025 and 1.2% better than in January 2025. Retention (97.6%) is 0.8% below the position reported in November 2025 and 1.1% above January 2025. The progress score is -0.69, which shows a -0.01 variance on both November and January 2025.

BAME adults

- Attendance (89.1%) is 1.8% below the percentage reported in November 2025. Retention (97.9%) is 0.2% above the position reported in November 2025. The progress score is 0.13, which shows a -0.05 variance on both November 2025.

Scorecard reviews meeting 'expected standard'

- Classroom-based learning – four scorecard reviews have been completed.
- Apprenticeships – two scorecard reviews have been completed.
- Sixth form – one scorecard review has been completed.
- English, maths and Functional Skills – four scorecard reviews have been completed.
- College direct delivery in total – eleven scorecard reviews have been completed. 72.7% were meeting expected standards for curriculum, teaching and training; 81.8% for achievement; and 18.2% for participation and development. In response to a question from principal, the assistant principal confirmed that this latter score was largely driven by attendance.

The business support staff governor asked what is impacting attendance, and it was confirmed that this is sometimes illness, particularly considering the season, but that the usual maths and English challenges are also a factor.

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The chair challenged the fact that 22% of learners have not had a review within the past three months, and he asked for the reasons behind this. The assistant principal explained that this was largely due to staffing changes and the prioritisation of teaching, particularly in air conditioning. Some delays were also caused by the Christmas period which has created a longer gap between reviews. The vice principal does not feel that this will impact achievement and retention, but she agreed that the college needs to get smarter in this respect as these need to be completed and the gaps will impact the college's position within the new framework. It was confirmed that closing this gap was an area of focus.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 **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. She stated that the online monitoring had not been included but would be presented at the next meeting.

Safeguarding and Prevent

- Referrals were slightly higher in comparison to the same point last year.
- There were 611 CPOMS concerns relating to attendance, which was also higher than at the same point last year. However, the vice principal explained that there is a high-risk indicator on the at risk register, and this can result in multiple reports in a day for the same student, if that young person is absent from multiple classes.
- Work continues in an attempt to improve the attendance of care experienced young people and those in supported accommodation and residential care. The college is seeing specific attendance challenges in respect of one or two students. These are very rarely present, and the college is working hard with professionals to bring them in. In one case, this will result in the young person moving to a placement closer to the college.
- In relation to Prevent concerns year to date, one was open to the police Prevent team but this is now closed as it did not meet threshold. Also, prior to Christmas, the college had enrolled an adult student who was known to the police. A robust risk assessment was undertaken, but this individual has now moved to a different area and so will no longer attend the college.
- There are lower numbers of young people on social care plans compared to last year.
- The college has seen more child-on-child concerns than last year, with these having reverted to the same level as the year before. These concerns range from comments to unwanted physical attention, but there have not been any serious concerns this academic year.

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- Students continue to be actively monitored by the welfare managers – 13 students are currently at significant risk.
- The college is also keeping a close eye on early help developments in Nottinghamshire. The vice principal is part of an education reference group for the county council, and the direction of travel seems to be that the council will expect schools and colleges to get more involved with early help processes than they do currently. The vice principal is looking at the safeguarding team's structure as she feels that it will probably require an additional officer to be responsible for taking charge of early help matters.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Of the concerns reported so far this academic year, 15 related to racist abuse and bullying, with some of these having been reported to the police but with no further action taken.
- The vice principal included the Public Sector Equality Duty report as it pertains to students. She indicated that this was largely complete and contained nothing that has not been seen in previous years. The actual destinations data would not be available until March, so the committee was asked to recommend the report to the board for approval on the understanding that the data would be added once available.
- A summary was included of the college's progress against the AoC's Mental Health Charter. The self-assessment has been completed and the raw percentage scores presented. There is work to be done around the audit and presentation, and the college will set KPIs for its mental health work.

Priority groups

- Attendance concerns continue for care experienced young people, those in supported housing and residential care, care leavers, those in receipt of free college meals, and those with EHCPs. The college continues to work with these young people, also involving professionals in most cases.
- The college is now exploring bespoke programmes for some learners with EHCPs as their attendance levels mean that they are unlikely to achieve their current course.
- Some young people have withdrawn to take up employment as they need money.
- The vice principal had included the progress made against the safeguarding and EDI KPIs. It was acknowledged that the actual destinations data was blank as it was not yet available.

In relation to those matters that had been referred to the police by parents but with no further action taken, the vice chair questioned whether the college was in agreement with the police's stance or whether this was a cause for concern. The vice principal advised that, in

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some cases, the college was broadly in agreement with the police assessment. However, it was noted that the police's threshold to take further action was clearly higher than the college's. In some cases, the police will not take action but the college will still discipline the student as a result of the issue. However, the college must wait for the police process to conclude before proceeding. It was confirmed that the college is not seeing any cases in which it is felt that the police should have taken action but has not done so.

In response to a question from one governor, the vice principal indicated that the new safeguarding role described in respect of early help was likely to be an additional responsibility for an existing member of the team. The governor asked what the expectation was, whether the requirements of the role had been clearly listed, and whether the person had been identified yet. The vice principal indicated that these details had not yet been decided. In response to the last point, she noted that a couple of members of the team had the required skillset, but they would still need some training as it will involve a different way of working to what they are accustomed to (although some elements of the early help support will align with their current responsibilities).

One governor asked whether there was any indication of when Nottinghamshire County Council would finish reviewing its early help service. The vice principal explained that the process had only just started, and she felt that it would probably be the end of the academic year before any details were known. However, the college was trying to align its own services in advance.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the report
- to recommend the Public Sector Equality Duty report (as it pertains to students) to the Corporation Board for approval.

12 **INCLUSION STRATEGY (FIRST DRAFT)**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented this document and invited governors to provide feedback. Key points of note were as follows:

- This was a first draft for comment only and was not yet being presented for approval.
- The strategy focuses on the learner experience and journey and sits alongside the more general EDI statement of intent, the Community Engagement Strategy and the Community Pledge.
- The vice principal has tried to follow the learner journey through stages, starting with the offer then moving to transition, on-programme, and progression.
- Input and feedback have been obtained from the leadership team.

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- The intention was to use this strategy as a tool during the scorecard review on 4th March to assess how well the college is achieving its ambitions and where it might need to focus its energies a little more closely.
- The strategy will remain in draft form until after 4th March in case further tweaks are necessary. After that, it will come to the committee for final approval before it can be published. It was noted that feedback had already been received from the vice chair as the SEND link governor.
- Governors were invited to submit their comments both during and after the meeting, with the deadline for the latter set as 19th March 2026.

The vice chair will be joining the scorecard review on 4th March and noted that it will be interesting to see how the work in progress starts to fit with the Ofsted scorecard.

The business support staff governor indicated that the strategy feels 'right' and mirrors what the college is about. The chair agreed with this point, and governors agreed that they were in support of the strategy in its current form. The final draft will be presented to the committee for approval on 26th March 2026.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

13 **LEARNER VOICE – 2025/26 MONITORING**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented the learner voice data.

- The induction survey results were largely positive, and the return rate of 84% was very good. 96% of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with the college and 98% with the subject. The college was in the top two quartiles in all but two questions. The only question in which the college did not see an improvement or at least stay the same related to students being contacted if they were absent from college. The percentage of students who agreed with the statements did not drop below 90% across the whole survey.
- The first 'Rate Your Course' survey took place in November and had a good response rate of nearly 1,700 students along with quite positive results. 91.7% agreed that they learned lots of or some new things, and 93.6% would recommend the college to a friend.
- The first full Your Voice meeting also took place in November, and the full minutes were provided for the committee to note. This meeting involved a good discussion about mental health and the work being done in relation to the Youth Guarantee. A lot of student reps volunteered to become student mental health ambassadors, and this sparked a discussion about whether the

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college should have ambassadors for other things, such as SEND. This scheme involves acting as buddies or mentors for incoming students to help and support them.

- The key outcomes from the college's Self-Assessment Report were also presented at the Your Voice meeting, and learner reps were largely in agreement that these statements and judgements reflected the college.
- More general requests were received from students for quiet learning spaces or less overwhelming places in which to eat lunch, which is challenging considering the college's space pressures. Learner reps also asked for more support with maths.
- The next Your Voice meeting will take place on 12th March, and governors were invited to attend.

The chair observed that induction is clearly working, and he commended everyone who had had input into this exercise.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

14 EMPLOYER VOICE – 2025/26 MONITORING

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented the summary of the latest employer survey.

- The response rate was 24% which, although low, was noted to be higher than usual and double the response rate of last year's survey.
- 81% of employers would recommend the college. While this was lower than preferred, it was still noted to be an improvement on the previous survey.
- Every question had improved in comparison to last year, so it was agreed that things were moving in the right direction.
- Employers were the least satisfied around communication in general, such as how well they are informed about their apprentices' progress. Nonetheless, this question had had the biggest improvement compared to the last survey.
- Last year, large employers were the most satisfied, but this has now switched to micro employers. For large employers, the main issues seem to be the lack of flexibility around the location and timing of training and some of the onboarding processes. The vice principal noted that she is trying to unpick these responses.

The vice chair suggested that some employers may be more likely to respond if they have something negative to report, and it was noted that this can be the case.

It was noted that, while it would be ideal if the data were better, this does give some pointers as to what the college needs to improve, and it is positive from that side.

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The chair noted that it was particularly interesting to see the changeover of feedback based on the size of company. It was noted that the majority of WNC's employers are SMEs.

Governors were pleased to see the improvements and particularly acknowledged the very important link between the quality of training and the impact on businesses.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

15 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE REPORT

The vice principal presented this update, firstly highlighting the positive EMCCA strategic careers report for 2024/25. The college scored 100% across all eight Gatsby benchmarks, placing WNC ahead of the schools and colleges average. EMCCA has also established a governors' forum and details have been forwarded to the careers link governor.

Recommendations from the report include encouraging teachers to attend 'teacher encounter days', but these tend to be focused on schoolteachers and include coordinated visits to employers and businesses. Leaders feel that the college's own industry placement practice is more beneficial to WNC's teachers than this would be.

In terms of the 2025/26 autumn review against the Gatsby benchmarks, the bar has been raised in terms of what institutions need to do to meet 100% compliance. Therefore, on this occasion, the college has hit 100% in two of eight benchmarks, rather than across the board. The lowest scoring category was a stable careers programme at 69%. Areas for improvement relate to including parents and carers within the careers programme and ensuring that the careers programme is accessible on the college website and in other forms of communication. The changes made to the website should help with this, and the careers team is currently exploring ways to include parents and carers. The careers action plan for 2025/26 should support improvement in the benchmark scores as the year progresses.

In reference to careers activity for 2025/26, some student panel members last year requested more information about apprenticeships earlier in the year. The college reacted to this by offering a series of workshops at the start of the year, and survey responses indicate that this has had a positive impact. It was noted that some Level 3 students may prefer higher apprenticeships to university; however, these are often harder to secure than a university place.

In respect of university applications, the careers team is working hard to encourage Level 3 students to apply. There have been 461 applications so far, which is the highest for some time. It is anticipated that there will be more. The vice principal confirmed that the employability and careers

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manager will be running the 'careers coach' again this year, which involves taking trips to universities for young people and their parents or carers.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

16 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The college scored 98% in the recent formal assessment of supported internships conducted by Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The committee extended its commendations to the team.

17 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed to be Thursday 26th March 2026 at 17:00.

The meeting closed at 18:40

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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