

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Tuesday 8th October 2024

GOVERNORS

PRESENT:

Ben Owen, Chair
Andrew Copley, Principal & Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor (Business Support)
Scott Smith, Staff Governor (Academic)
Jane Peacock
David Gillies
Kit Salt

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE:

Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience
Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Ella Brookes, Assistant Principal: Inclusion
Sarah Morley, Assistant Principal: Quality and Standards
Kirsty Walsh, Assistant Principal: Engineering (from 17:20)
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies
Nikki Slack, Assistant Principal: Health, Education and Service Industries
Eloise Hopkinson, Clerk to the Corporation

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR 2024/25</u> The committee nominated Ben Owen as chair and approved his reappointment. AGREED: to appoint Ben Owen as chair of the Standards Committee for 2024/25.		
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. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.		
3	<u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> There were no apologies, and all members of the committee were present.		
4	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2024</u>		

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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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 18th June 2024.

There were no matters arising.

5 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The committee was happy to note the content of the update provided. The workplan presented was agreed to be a helpful document.

6 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (QIAP)

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report focusing on a number of matters. Key points highlighted were:

- Area for improvement 1, 'to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning', has been merged with 'teaching to the top' to avoid duplication across the two areas.
- There has been a lot of change in relation to apprenticeships as a result of the accountability measures. The section of the QIAP detailing the actions to improve apprenticeships provision has been sent to the ESFA in line with their request.
- The latest apprenticeships data shows that achievement has improved to 'needs improvement', and retention has also improved slightly but is still not in the 'on-track' threshold. Based on the information provided in relation to individual continuing apprentices, leaders have predicted a potential retention rate of 57.4% and achievement rate of 53.9%. This is broadly in line with the predictions provided to the Department of Education over the summer.
- Maths and English and A Levels have been separated within the QIAP so that cross-college maths and English can be reported upon separately from A Levels, which is a standalone curriculum area. Further improvement is required in these areas as not enough students met their minimum target grades in 2023/24.
- The focus on retention across the entire college in 2023/24 has been revised, and the focus will potentially be entirely on adult provision moving forward. However, this will not be ratified until the close of the ILR when all unknown outcomes have been closed.
- Attendance will continue as an area of focus. It is not yet at pre-pandemic levels and still needs to improve across all types of provision.
- Whilst apprenticeship performance is heading in the right direction, the vice principal explained that she would not expect to see improvement in relation to the accountability measures this academic year.
- The college has reviewed its apprenticeship offer and made the following changes:

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- Customer service apprenticeships are only available to those aged 19+ within large and public sector businesses.
- The business administration standard will only be offered to large and public sector businesses but will be available to learners of all ages, provided they have maths and English. Small employers will be judged on a case-by-case basis by the assistant principal, and the college will no longer offer this standard to micro employers.
- In engineering, the lean manufacturing standard has been replaced with the engineering operative; and the maintenance operation standard has been replaced with the mechatronics technician.
- In construction, the plumbing and heating standard has been replaced with the gas operative engineer standard, and the NVQ Diploma in Plumbing and Heating has been added to satisfy the demands of local employers.
- The college is also no longer offering the junior estate agent standard.
- Leaders will continue to review the situation and the offer.
- The college has purchased Century Tech, which uses artificial intelligence to tailor learning to an apprentice's individual needs. Steps have been taken to ensure apprentices are engaging inside and outside of the classroom. The vice principal clarified that this is not an assessment or diagnostic tool, but it is a learning tool which enables engagement to be monitored more robustly.
- The very high majority of apprentices are now taught maths and English by a dedicated specialist, with only a few cases remaining wherein maths and English are delivered by a vocational specialist.
- The vice principal and assistant principals have met with each head of department to ensure their departmental quality improvement plans are robust. Meetings continue prior to each executive monitoring meeting to look at each apprentice who is not in gateway and thereby identify blocks.
- English outcomes were not quite as anticipated, but it is hoped that teaching can be graded as 'good'. This year, the issue in relation to outcomes was caused by Pearson and the increased grade boundary. This has impacted 199 of the college's learners and has been an issue across the country.
- Maths has improved but has a way to go and, therefore, will be graded as 'requires improvement'.
- The college has critical friends in place for both maths and English. The sequencing of maths was reviewed by one of the

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college's feeder schools, and this resulted in change. For English, the college is working with Loughborough College. Again, some changes have been implemented. Furthermore, the college has invested in HOW2, and a sharing practice event took place with Loughborough and Lincolnshire Colleges. The college has trialled Eduqas for GCSE Maths, which has two longer papers instead of three shorter ones. Outcomes were successful, so the college will move to this awarding body for all GCSE Maths students this academic year.

- High grades at Level 3 saw a significant rise, which has seen a greater number of students meet their minimum target grades. Level 2 saw a decline in high grades, but an improvement on learners meeting their minimum target trades even so, suggesting that last year's incoming cohort was weaker and not targeted to achieve high grades. The vice principal expressed certainty that the quality of vocational teaching and learning has improved.

The business support staff governor questioned whether there is the option to change awarding bodies for GCSE English – perhaps to Eduqas, as with maths – to avoid a repeat of the large grade boundary increase. The vice principal indicated that it would be better to remain with Pearson: she explained that engagement with the content is better, and she does not foresee a reoccurrence of the grade boundary issue. She informed the committee that the team is trying different strategies from the collaboration with other colleges, in order to provide more scrutiny and challenge and drill down into schemes of learning. Furthermore, all schemes of learning have been shared with vocational staff so that they can also promote English and maths in vocational lessons.

One governor questioned what it means in practice that the ESFA is looking at the college in terms of the accountability framework, particularly asking what the ESFA expects from the college. The vice principal indicated that this means there will be more discussion of apprenticeships within the termly meetings. The ESFA also asked the college to share its apprenticeship action plan by 4th October – this has been sent but, as yet, no response has been given. A lack of improvement could lead to a number of interventions, and the ESFA will also possibly advise the college on what it should stop delivering. The vice principal assured the committee that she has already put in place external training for apprenticeship staff. However, the worst-case scenario could result in another Ofsted inspection. The vice principal was optimistic that the recent improvements would help to avoid this.

The committee members were informed that it can take a long time to show improvement within apprenticeships, particularly when delivering the longer qualifications. The college is also still carrying legacy data issues following the transfer to JTL and the closure of health and social

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care apprenticeships, decisions which were made for the right reasons. Were these legacy issues no longer in the data, there would be an improvement. The vice principal assured governors that the termly meetings with the ESFA will enable the college to show that this matter is being taken seriously and that actions are in place to drive improvement. She expects that the ESFA will want to see an updated action plan each year.

One governor indicated that it was positive to see peer review work taking place with Tibshelf School and Lincoln and Loughborough Colleges. However, she suggested that the college could also speak to peers that have outstanding provision in the areas in which improvement is needed, such as apprenticeships. The vice principal agreed that she could look at whether this is possible, but she cautioned that it might be difficult unless the college is able to link with a private training provider. The principal advised that colleagues have visited other colleges with some excellent apprenticeship provision, but these do not necessarily offer the same qualifications as the college or have the best quality in the courses which WNC does not offer. He advised that the Department for Education does not take into consideration that the model is fundamentally flawed, and the college has to make the best it can of this. Furthermore, employer engagement creates an additional challenge for the college. The principal feels that the focus needs to be on ensuring that progress is being monitored and tracked, as well as on empowering heads of department to have difficult conversations.

The vice principal indicated that the national rate for high grades in endpoint assessments is still only 44%. There is a lot of variation from standard to standard, both in terms of the grading structure and the tasks required of students. It is difficult to share practice meaningfully unless a provider has the same mix and balance of apprenticeships as the college. The vice principal also indicated that the other colleges within her network are not doing anything different to WNC.

The chair agreed that this is a very challenging environment. English and maths attendance was lower than the ideal in lessons and then higher than expected in exams – this was a national issue and did not secure the desired results. He expressed the expectation that the college will have an even tighter grasp on, and closer monitoring of, attendance this year. The principal agreed, explaining that heads of department are on top of ensuring that students get to their maths and English lessons, albeit these departments have been hampered by high levels of staff illness.

The chair asked what impact the new additional maths requirement has had on students. The vice principal responded that, while it has not been welcomed and is more challenging, Century Tech is being used for the fourth hour of learning, and attendance does not seem to have decreased despite this additional hour. Furthermore, the standards

VP: C&Q

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coach has been very well received. Progress check 1 will soon be due, which will enable the impact on performance to be ascertained. The vice principal indicated that there is now also a maths and English steering group, and this is being extended to include any maths/English or vocational staff member who is not teaching at the time of the meeting, rather than just heads of department. She indicated that there is definitely more synergy in relation to getting students into lessons.

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

Kirsty Walsh left the meeting at 17:40.

7

A LEVELS MONITORING

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

- Some improvements were seen in Year 13 last year, but it would have been desirable for there to have been more.
- The vice principal reminded governors that, last year, ALPS did not show the required rate of progress. To combat this, the A-Level department has been restructured and a new head of sixth form will commence in January to focus purely on A Levels. There will be four curriculum area leads in place, hopefully by October half term, to enable more focus on performance.
- All schemes of learning have been reviewed for the start of the academic year, and there is a bespoke training programme and pairing with critical friends in place for staff.
- There is some sharing practice activity taking place with Loughborough and Lincoln Colleges, and HOW2s are being used.
- The vice principal explained that it is difficult to recruit A-Level teachers due to competition in the sector, and this will only grow more difficult due to the higher pay within schools. Governors were informed that some candidates have chosen not to continue with their interviews when it is made clear that they will not receive the same salary as in a school.
- More is being done in respect of teaching and learning, with individualised coaching in place for staff. The vice principal advised that there are some strong teachers in post who are new to teaching or studying the apprenticeship, and staff are very enthusiastic and eager to drive performance. Teachers are starting to engage with the teaching and learning coaches, and learning walks are taking place.
- A critical friend from Loughborough College will join the deep dive of A Levels and share their expertise.
- Year 12 students are settling in well and showing good levels of commitment. There was a very productive parents' information evening, wherein the expectations for study were clearly outlined. This was attended by senior leasers and the new head of sixth form, and staff did a good job of outlining what it is like

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to study A levels. Attendees asked a lot of questions and parents were very involved. There is a follow-up online option for those who were unable to attend.

One governor raised a question in relation to retention and destinations. The vice principal indicated that the destinations coach will focus on this. Ultimately, the college would like A level students to go to university, but high-level apprenticeships are also an option. The college is introducing work experience opportunities to support A-Level students who are interested in the latter option. The vice principal reminded governors that, in the past, a lot of students left due to mental health issues. Further to this, post-pandemic, a lot of students needed money and so left the college in favour of full-time jobs. Some students struggled with A Levels and moved to vocational provision. The vice principal explained that the Year 12 mocks have now been brought forward, which will enable those who do not get their expected grade time to resit the mock. This will also enable early conversations to take place, if learners might be more suited to vocational provision, while they still have time to move to another course. All learners have 1:1s with their teachers, and progress checks have just been uploaded with the review board meetings to take place thereafter to look at interventions. STAR sessions have been timetabled – this has sometimes impacted on attendance, but this is chased. The vice principal has been to Chesterfield Road a few times already this year, and she feels that staff there are more driven and understand the need for improvement. The assistant principal: academic, creative, community, digital and professional studies indicated that another measure in place that is intended to help with retention is that the current Year 12 cohort went through an interview process before joining. This helped to make them, and their parents, aware of their options, and it has resulted in fewer dropouts at the start of the year. It is hoped that this strong retention will continue.

One governor referred to the part of the report around inclusivity and the fact that the college takes students with lower entry grades than some of its competitors. He questioned whether what the assistant principal has described addresses what may have been a problem in previous years. The assistant principal responded to advise that academic writing sessions have been timetabled for those students who achieved a grade 4 in English and want to do A-Levels, to help them improve their skills. The department also has the 'Pre-3' offer for students with mental health and social anxiety, also referred to as 'anxious and able' learners. This all contributes to ensuring that all students are in the right place and studying the right course which aligns with their aspirations.

Governors were also informed that it is difficult for the college to get into schools, which means that young people do not realise what the college can offer until they actually come in and see for themselves. The assistant

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principal advised that, rather than being identified in advance as was expected, candidates for Pre-3 are actually being identified as the time progresses. It is good that this option is there to give them more time and support to achieve their goals, and it is hoped that it will improve achievement. The principal indicated that the college needs to keep challenging itself to ensure that teachers are informed as to how to help students maximise their marks, and this will remain a focus this year.

One governor raised a challenge in respect of the fact that so much rests on the ability to attract and retain teaching staff, and this has an impact on outcomes. He indicated that the department has a number of new and relatively inexperienced teaching staff and asked what can be offered to help – e.g. mentoring. He questioned whether there is anything that the college can pilot or do differently. The vice principal explained that teachers get a mentor as part of their apprenticeship, and the new teaching and learning coach has immersed himself in A Levels. Overall, staff are very eager and are embracing this work, as well as pairing with teachers from other colleges. Each person has a performance plan in place to indicate what is needed, and these plans are robust and bespoke to the teacher's experience level.

The assistant principal indicated that it is hard to attract and retain teaching staff. She has tried to be flexible and done as much as possible to ensure the department is an appealing place in which to work. Overall, she feels that staff are happy, and it was discussed that some leavers have since returned. However, the issue is really down to government decisions around pay and the fact that pay in schools is higher than in FE. The academic staff governor indicated that some teachers prefer the 16-18 age group, as well as the fact that teachers can teach just their own subject rather than a mix – these facts are likely to bring some individuals into colleges despite lower pay. Furthermore, Chesterfield Road is a nice centre which, again, this can be attractive to prospective staff.

The implementation of four curriculum area leads managing the teachers, instead of only one head of department, will enable there to be more focus on development. The new structure shows that the college is investing in A Levels, and leaders are excited by this. Governors also agreed that these developments are positive.

The academic staff governor made a comment about non-exam assessment and that there is now a good strategy in place following some issues. The vice principal agreed and indicated that there is now an additional responsibility role in place to look at this too. She will also mention this within the QIAP.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

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BALANCED SCORECARD ITEMS AND ANNUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her detailed report, which provided an update on the 2023/24 yearend and proposals for 2024/25. The following points were particularly highlighted and discussed:

- Digital skills attendance was just below vocational attendance. At Levels 2 and 3, digital skills were embedded; at Level 1, however, this was mainly taught as a standalone lesson.
- Attendance in maths and English was lower than the expectation and lower than in vocational, although there was some improvement in comparison to previous years. This issue crosses over with comments raised in the QIAP item in terms of the steering group, standards coach, better synergy, and maths and English staff being encouraged to hot desk in vocational staff rooms at Derby Road. Improvements are ongoing.
- Last year, the college introduced some new programmes as part of its inclusive offer, including Mansfield Education Hub, Boost and Engage. Some of these learners would have had very low attendance at school, and they have some complex issues.
- The Engage programme in art and design was designed for students with social anxiety. The vice principal reminded governors that the impact this inclusivity can have on overall college attendance needs to be considered. It is known that these programmes will never perform well against the college's attendance targets but, nonetheless, these learners have had better attendance than they did at school. The vice principal also pointed out to the committee that all of the Engage students achieved in 2023/24, which is an excellent outcome.
- Some work was carried out on the Mansfield Education Hub provision to ensure that all students have pathways for progression. The college has also removed the online element of this provision.
- Average progress for apprentices was -12.35 against a target of -10. This had improved slightly but was still below target at the end of the year. The vice principal informed governors that the college had a lot of new assessors in engineering, and this caused delays in learners getting to gateway due to the necessity for a higher level of IQA. Furthermore, computer science apprentices work on larger projects, which had an impact, as did annual leave. The tolerance was quite strict when set, in order to raise expectations, but it is monitored closely. The vice principal has asked heads of department to take factors into account when setting the targets for this year to ensure departments are not lagging behind.

The chair raised a question in relation to the amber RAG-rating for the government policy KPI, and the principal explained that this is the

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college's ability to respond to government reforms. Where the college has known what is happening, it has done well; however, there are still too many uncertainties at the moment to say that this can be green.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the report
- to approve the proposed KPIs for 2024/25.

9

2023/24 POSITION STATEMENTS AND SAR TIMELINE

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented her report, informing governors of the following:

- The college has continued with its robust self-assessment process.
- During August, 311 teachers, specialists and managers met in 28 departmental meetings and had some very strong discussions around the quality of education. Colleagues were open and willing to put their opinions forward.
- All heads of department presented very well, and this was positive to see. Leaders and managers clearly understood what their departments were doing well and where they needed to improve.
- Catering and hospitality was judged to be outstanding for the fourth consecutive year, which is an excellent achievement.
- Early years was judged to be outstanding for the second year.
- A lot more areas are now at a more secure 'good'.
- Motor vehicle apprenticeships and classroom-based learning were judged to be good, as was engineering classroom-based learning.
- Plastering was slower to improve but did not have a stable staffing medley until the summer term. There is now a strong team in place.
- Outcomes for construction learners had improved, but a lot of the staff are new out of industry and still need to learn the craft of teaching. A lot of intensive support has been put in place, and there has also been a restructure in this area. The construction crafts area now has site leads in place to strengthen management. The vice principal expects to see strong improvement by Christmas – the desire to improve is clear. The quality of teaching and learning was not consistently good enough last academic year, but it is hoped that this will change.
- English has continued to be graded as 'good', and the critical friend from Loughborough College agreed with this last year – the main problem has been the grade boundaries increase and the impact this had on results.
- Once the ILR has closed, it is expected that the overall quality of teaching and learning will be judged to be 'good'. The college is

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a lot stronger in terms of its vocational offer, and the focus now needs to be on apprenticeships, maths and English, and A Levels.

The business support staff governor asked whether the areas graded as a very strong 'good' might soon move to 'outstanding', and the vice principal indicated that this could be the case. An extra layer of scrutiny has been put in place and there are now two critical friends looking at the SAR, as well as Executive team members.

One governor observed that the 'outstanding' grade for catering and hospitality is well deserved – she recently attended a one-day session within the area and agreed that the teaching was excellent. She suggested highlighting these one-day courses to governors a little more as they are not always aware of them. The clerk will obtain these dates and promote them to governors.

Governors agreed that this was a positive update and that it was good to see the college's strengths.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

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RISK REPORT (RED RAG-RATED ITEMS)

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the report, which provided an update against the red risk which is not covered elsewhere within the reports to this committee.

Hard-to-fill vacancies

The college was in a stronger position at the end of the year than had previously been seen. Vision Talent Solutions is now in place to help with recruitment. There are still some difficulties with maths (both GCSE and A-Level); temporary cover for English; and the air conditioning and refrigeration vacancy, which has apprentices waiting to start. This latter subject area is a national issue in terms of recruitment, and the vacancy remains unfilled despite the superb efforts and support of the HR team.

The committee agreed that technical areas can be a challenge in terms of recruitment, and this is an ongoing risk. One governor indicated that it can only be hoped that this might level out in the future. He advised that the industry itself is struggling to train enough people, which leaves education in an even more difficult position. It was discussed that, at some point, there will need to be some way of coming together, e.g. by bringing experts into teaching on a part-time basis, to provide a way of training up the new workforce. It was suggested that the college could promote its favourable pensions and generous annual leave, as this might win over industry salaries for some people.

Nonetheless, it was agreed the college is doing well and has full staffing cohorts in construction and computer science, despite challenges, and

Clerk

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almost a full cohort in the engineering department. A number of leavers have returned, which is a testament of the college's appeal. The principal indicated that it might become necessary for the college to pay excessively to compete with industry in certain areas – this is a hard thing to consider when considering the impact this will have on other staff, but it may become unavoidable if the alternative is not being able to meet the local need.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 **CURRICULUM UPDATES**

The vice principal: curriculum and quality provided updates on a number of curriculum-related matters.

- The T-Level offer has been expanded for 2024/25. The college now offers T-Level Building Services Engineering for Construction; T-Level Digital Production, Design and Development; T-Level Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing; T-Level Animal Care and Management; and T-Level Health.
- The college has performed really well in comparison to other colleges in terms of T-Level recruitment.
- A pause and review of qualifications has been put in place by the government, which has enabled the college to offer alternative Level 3 courses in plumbing, electrical and joinery. In childcare and education and health and social care, however, the college has decided to only go ahead with the T Level. Reports were good and engagement from students strong in these areas last year.
- T-Level Onsite Construction did not run as it did not attract sufficient numbers.
- There are two new T-Level foundation programmes in place. The health and social care foundation programme has been designed to include GCSE Maths, English and Biology, as well as national technical outcomes. The computer science foundation programme includes a small qualification, GCSE Maths and English, as well study skills.
- The foundation programme in childcare and education has been further revised for 2024/25. The qualification has been removed from this foundation programme, and learners will follow national technical outcomes to enable greater focus on improving study skills and maths and English.
- The Boost programme has been revised to give learners the option to resit up to five GCSEs in maths, English, biology, business and history.
- Some Access to HE pathways have been removed due to lack of interest. Where the college has removed some of the face-to-face teaching, it has been possible to offer the option to study online.

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- The college now offers A-Level Religious Studies but has removed the A-Level Art and Design offer for Year 12.
- Progress to Higher Education for Level 3 classroom-based learners was similar to that seen last year; however, the vice principal explained that the actual destinations trawl will be conducted from October to January, so it will be possible to provide more information at a later meeting in the academic year.
- A greater number of deep dives have met the Aspire curriculum in a greater number of areas, proving that vocational teaching and learning is getting better. A total of 43 deep dives have taken place, plus the cross-college tutorial deep dive. All five subcontractor deep dives were graded 'good', as was the cross-college tutorial. Behind all deep dives is a comprehensive plan linking to QIP, and this is robustly checked in quality meetings.

AGREED: to note the content of the update.

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

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

Education programmes for young people

- There are no current concerns – the data was published before progress score deadline, so these scores will be reported next time.
- Attendance (87.4%) is the same as it was at this point in 2023.
- Retention (97.9%) is 1.3% higher than at the same point in 2023 and 9% above the national average.
- Vocational attendance (89%) is 0.1% above the same point in 2023.
- English attendance (80.4%) is 0.5% above what it was at the same point last year.
- Maths attendance (81%) is 0.5% above what it was at the same point last year.

Adult learning programmes

- Direct delivery attendance (89.2%) is 3.1% above the same point in 2023.
- Direct delivery retention (95.9%) is 0.9% below the same point last year. However, it is above the national average of 92.2%.
- Subcontracted delivery retention (93.1%) is 1.6% above the same point last year and 0.9% above the national average.
- Achievement (88.2%) is 16.8% above the same point last year and 1.4% above the national average.
- Community delivery retention (100%) is 4.2% above the same point in 2023 and 7.8% above the national average. Achievement

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(87.5%) is 1.4% above the same point last year and 0.7% above the national average.

Apprenticeships – direct delivery

- Attendance (88.7%) is 0.2% below the same point last year.
- Retention (81.8%) is 9.4% above the position at the same point last year.
- Achievement (10%) is 10% above the same point last year but is still 44.6% below the national average. This will rise as the academic year progresses.
- Recording of 20% off-the-job training (23.5%) is 1% below the position at the same point last year. This is due to staff focus being on getting learners through EPA.
- Recording of six hours of off-the job training (8.3%) is 1.4% above the position at the same point last year.
- Reviews in the last three months (81.8%) is 2% below the position at the same point last year.

Learners with high needs

- At the point of the meeting, all data was at zero within the dashboard as it had not yet been entered, so this will be reported next time.

Free school meals

- Attendance (88.3%) is 2.6% above the position at the same point last year.
- Retention (97.6%) is 1.5% below the position at the same point last year.

BAME

- Attendance (88%) is 0.8% below the position at the same point last year.
- Retention (98.1%) is 0.8% below the position at the same point last year.

Deep dives meeting expectations (percentage grade 2 or better)

- Deep dives of classroom-based learning show that 66.7% (two out of three) achieved 'good' or better.
- No other deep dives had been carried out at the point of the dashboard being presented.

Governors were pleased to see the new format, which splits college data from data by directorate. This was agreed to be much more accessible for governors and more complementary to the various detailed reports presented within these meetings.

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The chair questioned in relation to the reduction in reviews. The vice principal explained that reviews need to be signed in order to show as complete, and a number had not been signed. A weekly report has now been put in place to review this, so this should improve. She explained that the endpoint assessments have been the focus as people return from the holiday period, which has had a further impact.

The business support staff governor questioned the English and maths attendance in construction. The vice principal indicated that some students are being moved to Functional Skills following exemption boards – this has impacted on attendance, particularly as some learners may still be showing on two registers.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

13 **SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT**

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

Safeguarding 2023/24 – yearend update

- The college has continued to build relationships with the Nottinghamshire Virtual School.
- Team members attended a countywide event in April to hear students speak of their experiences.
- Trauma informed practitioner training is being rolled out and several team members have completed this.
- The college is now looking at how to offer more group-based resilience building.
- A former member of the Welfare team was the first person to complete the peer worker apprenticeship standard. This person has now gone to NTU to study a degree to become a social worker, and the college has not yet managed to fill the resulting vacancy. However, having this person in post had a huge positive impact last year.
- In terms of progress against KPIs, the following updates were provided:
 - Learner survey outcomes – this KPI was not achieved: 96% of students said they felt safe, which was the same percentage as the previous year. This has also been set as a KPI for 2024/25.
 - Retention gaps for care experienced young people – this KPI was achieved.
 - The number of care experienced young people and those on a Child in Need Plan who were NEET at the end of their programme of study was reduced by 1.8% for the former and stayed the same for the latter. Therefore, this KPI – with its target of 10% oval – was not achieved.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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However, it is positive that some of the data showed improvement.

- Attendance for young people closed or open to Child in Need Plans is still below peers, and this KPI was not achieved. However, the gaps have closed slightly.
- The team received 2,683 concerns through CPOMS, which is an increase of 144 compared to the previous year, and contacts with external agencies have more than doubled. Most of these occurred in November 2023, when the college was dealing with a number of interlinked complex cases involving several agencies.
- Student on student concerns increased by 99. Concerns linked to exploitation increased by 42, primarily criminal exploitation and gang-related concerns, an issue which is expected to continue on this trajectory. Child-on-child sexual harassment and violence had been increasing over the previous two years but seems to have levelled out between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- 2023/24 ended with five young people on Child in Need Plans but had worked with a further 36 who underwent Child in Need assessment or whose plan was closed. 2024/25 has commenced with a significant number on plan already.
- 2023/24 ended with three young people on Child Protection Plans, but the college worked with a further 11 who were closed to social care through the year. These figures were in line with the previous year.
- Two students were under social care in relation to their own children, with these children having been placed with relatives.
- Two 18+ students were open to adult social care at the end of the year.
- One young person was open to the Harmful Sexualised Behaviours panel and remained open throughout the year.
- There were nine child criminal exploitation referrals, with all closed to social care by the yearend.
- There were eight child sexual exploitation referrals. All were closed by the yearend, with one student remaining open to a social care child sexual exploitation panel.
- 27 referrals related to an attempt on life, with several students making several attempts on life. This reflected a significant increase from the previous year.
- 457 Smoothwall flags were received. The trend shows that online abuse is on the increase, and the balance has now tipped between online safety concerns and online abuse.
- Seven Prevent concerns were received, which is half of those seen in 2022/23. However, governors were reminded that 2022/23 saw a rise in popularity of Andrew Tate, and this was the main cause of that year's high number of Smoothwall concerns.

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- The vice principal informed governors that she meets with the welfare managers monthly and there is a significant 'at risk' list. 2023/24 ended with ten still open on this list, but a further 58 were monitored through the year.
- Safeguarding reports are coming through from partner providers. Although the reports have halved, this is most likely due to diminishing partner provision. There are very robust processes in place to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding within partner providers.

The committee agreed that this was a very informative update and, although it is positive that some issues seem to be levelling out, there is still a huge amount of work and relation to in some concerns. It was discussed that this continues to be a challenging environment.

The vice principal indicated that college has a very good reputation with the local authority due to its levels of inclusion, but this means that the college now receives referrals for young people with ever more complex needs. The principal indicated that the college is keen to do more and to do it well, but this comes at a cost in terms of staffing. He stressed the importance of governors being aware of the challenges when considering the content of this report alongside the reports relating to data and finances. Governors expressed certainty that the Executive team members are able to continue having these conversations locally, regionally and nationally to raise awareness and challenge government for this resource and support. Governors were supportive of the college's view in terms of inclusivity.

Safeguarding 2024/25 – update

Governors were reminded that the revised safeguarding procedures were published unchanged on 1st September and, along with Keeping Children Safe in Education, were shared with governors via email. The vice principal reminded governors to confirm to the clerk once they have read through the shared documents, if they have not already done so.

The vice principal's report included the first draft of the safeguarding action plan for 2024/25. This has gone through the safeguarding steering group and focuses on the priorities for the forthcoming year. The plan includes the following KPIs:

- The learner survey outcome remains the same: 99% of students to feel safe at college.
- The vice principal has really focused on narrowing the gaps in retention and attendance for care experienced young people and young people in supported housing. The college will continue to work closely with the Virtual School, the local authority team, and supported housing providers to ensure attendance remains strong and to help prevent young people from dropping out of study.

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- Attendance of young people on Child Protection Plans also remains a challenge, with some issues already identified this year. The proposed KPI is to close this attendance gap by 5%.
- The vice principal also proposes to reduce the proportion of care experienced young people and young people on a child in need plan who are NEET at the end of their programme of study by 10%.
- The final KPI is to ensure that attendance data for young people either open or closed to Child in Need Plans is in line with their peers.

Governors were also presented with the first draft of the 2024/25 safeguarding risk register for comment. The vice principal informed the committee that this will next be updated in March 2025.

At the time of writing her report, the vice principal advised that 343 safeguarding incidents had been reported through CPOMs. This was 101 above the same point in 2023 and would have increased further by the date of the committee meeting. The year commenced with 20 young people on Child in Need Plans, which was four above the same point in 2023. One young person had already been closed to social care. There were seven young people on Child Protection Plans. All of these remain on the Safeguarding team's caseload, and governors were informed that some of the necessary meetings for these young people can take staff out of the office and away from other work for hours.

No concerns had been received relating to child-on-child sexual harassment, but one young person was open to social care in relation to child criminal exploitation. One report had been received in relation to child sexual exploitation, but this young person was not open to social care. 31 concerns had been received through Smoothwall, year to date, and 17 students were being monitored by the Welfare team as significantly at risk.

The vice principal indicated that the college had issued revised guidance to staff in response to the Department for Education's recent guidance on gender questioning young people.

In response to a question from the business support staff governor, the vice principal explained that the increased number of concerns may be due to the college's increased number of students. However, it could also be the case that a larger focus on attendance may have generated more safeguarding concerns. There are also more young people open to some form of external agency or service which, in turn, generates more concerns.

One external governor pointed out that, despite the good and intensive work by the teams, some of the 2023/24 KPIs were still missed. She

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challenged how realistic the 2024/25 KPIs are. She questioned whether missing KPIs is demoralising for staff, even if they done the best job they possibly could in the circumstances. The vice principal indicated that these are stretching and aspirational targets, and everyone would like to get to the stage where there are no gaps. She did not feel that missing KPIs was demoralising for staff, but she informed governors that they do take every student lost very personally as they care so much about the young people. The assistant principal: inclusion agreed with the vice principal's points and also felt that the college has to be aspirational in these matters. The principal also agreed and expressed the hope that the college sufficiently celebrates and recognises what staff are doing and their achievements. It was agreed to be very positive that inclusion is now going into the Ofsted inspection framework.

In general discussion, governors agreed that they need to keep in mind the success behind the activity, in these cases, rather than focusing on missed KPIs. Some challenges will continue and others will grow, and it was agreed to be key to understand the impact the team is having even where targets are not met.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided

14 **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (STUDENTS)**

Progress against the 2023/24 action plan

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience indicated that, while this report shows more KPIs that were not met, the data shows that gaps have been closed. Key updates were provided as follows:

- Gaps in progression rates for priority groups have largely narrowed and, in some cases, outcomes exceed peers.
- The college was in the top quartile for responses to the learner exit survey that focused on equality and diversity.
- A care experienced team has been established, and this has continued to develop an exceptional relationship with the local authority.
- The college has continued to develop its inclusive curriculum with Mansfield Education Hub, Engage, the Pre-3 programme for delivery in the 2024/25 academic year. There continues to be a real focus on flexing the curriculum to further improve inclusivity.
- Yearend data shows that reported incidents in relation to bullying and harassment have mostly decreased, but more general online abuse has increased.
- The vice principal asked the committee to consider whether, as there is some crossover in terms of KPIs for this item and the previous, it would be preferable if future reports focused on these under one item to avoid repetition. Governors confirmed

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that they would welcome a single set of data and invited the vice principal and clerk to work together to agree how to cover this within future agendas.

- The vice principal also provided the action plan, informing governors that this is the final year of the plan. As such, the EDI Statement of Intent is to be reviewed, and governors were invited to feed back in relation to the document presented.
- The vice principal put forward the suggested KPIs for the 2024/25, advising that these will be reviewed and possibly expanded when the destinations data is available in January or February 2025.
- The vice principal also presented the Community Engagement Strategy for approval and recommendation to the Corporation Board.

VP: CESE /
Clerk

Nov 2024 /
Ongoing

Governors agreed that the EDI Statement of Intent and the Community Engagement Strategy as presented were solid and relevant.

The principal indicated that other colleges do not offer some of the inclusivity measures which are taken for granted at WNC. This work is all possible thanks to the staff and teams within the college and is something to be proud of. It was agreed that it is important to consider this when looking at the more challenging data, as this level of inclusivity does come with necessary compromises.

AGREED:

- to note the contents of the report and the update provided
- to approve the 2024/25 EDI action plan as presented
- to approve the EDI Statement of Intent for 2024-2028, notwithstanding any suggestions sent to the vice principal following the meeting
- to recommend that the Corporation Board approve the Community Engagement Strategy as presented.

15 **PRIORITY GROUPS DATA REPORT**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report, explaining that the outcomes data may change slightly as it has not yet closed. Other key points highlighted were:

- Outcomes for young people with high needs, on Education Health and Care Plans, in receipt of free school meals, in foster care, and on special guardianship are above their peers.
- There are still gaps in some areas, particularly for learners in supported accommodation, but these are very small numbers.
- There are retention issues for those in residential care and in supported housing, for those open to social care, and young people on Child in Need Plans.

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- Those on Child Protection Plans have lower attendance and retention but higher pass rates, which suggests that the intervention and support they receive makes a difference.
- Attendance for young people in supported housing was already of concern – the college is working closely with external partners to drive improvement. In response to a question from the business support staff governor as to what is being done by the college to improve attendance for these young people, the vice principal explained that college staff sometimes physically visit supported housing settings and collect young people in order to ensure they get to college.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

16 **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report, and key matters highlighted were:

- There are nine employer panels up and running.
- Some have been challenging to organise, but there are some really strong relationships with employers. Time is the main challenge – one committee member, who also chairs an employer panel, suggested that meeting online might be the best way to secure attendance. He is working with the assistant principal: engineering on this.
- Development of the employer engagement strategic relationship with Nottingham Trent University has been quite slow, but this has now started to move forward. The vice principal and senior leaders from NTU are developing a joint employer engagement strategy, targeting specific sectors with this joint offer in order to bring in larger employers which can then bring small and medium-sized employers with them. Key sectors have been pinpointed, such as the motor trade industry, manufacturing, and construction. Employers will be invited to meet with WNC and NTU together.
- The college has purchased the Skills Builder Framework and colleagues have really bought into this. The assistant principal: quality and standards has worked hard on rolling this out to curriculum teams, and they are now embedding it into learning. This work will be built on and expanded into 2025/26.
- In 2023/24, the college took on what is now the Mansfield and Ashfield Business Network (MABN – formerly Mansfield & Ashfield 2020) and is now working with that organisation's board to look at how to capitalise on the value to the college. This has huge potential in terms of employer engagement.
- The Employer Engagement Strategy was attached for discussion – this was described as a work in progress and was not necessarily for approval within the meeting, but the vice

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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principal was hopeful that governors were able to see the outcomes of the strategy day's discussion within this first draft.

- The vice principal also presented employer engagement milestones for this 2024/25.

Governors were happy to see the outcomes of the strategy day translated into this paper, agreeing that leaders have really distilled these conversations and moved them on. As such, although the document was only presented as a draft, the committee was happy to recommend this to the Corporation Board for approval.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update provided
- to approve the employer engagement milestones for 2024/25
- to recommend that the Corporation Board approve the Employer Engagement Strategy as presented.

17 LEARNER VOICE REPORT

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented this report, which included the outcomes from the exit survey.

Governors were informed that 91% of respondents would recommend the college to a friend, and 95% agreed that it is a good college. Overall satisfaction was at 94%.

Students were most satisfied with the fact they are expected to behave in a professional manner; that they know how to keep themselves safe on the internet; and that the college encourages respect for those of different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds.

Students were least satisfied with improvement in English and maths skills, and work placement.

99% agreed that they are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, and 98% agreed that the college encourages equality, diversity and inclusion.

The most satisfied curriculum areas were beauty; electrical; plumbing; catering and hospitality; plastering; early years; and Mansfield Town Football Academy. The least satisfied were A Levels; business; computer science; carpentry and joinery; professional construction trades; public services; and fabrication and welding.

Results of the external survey were shared with heads of department, and improvements against outcomes have been built into quality improvement plans.

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The vice principal also presented the learner voice calendar for 2024/25 – governors were informed that they are very welcome to join the Your Voice sessions and, should they wish to, can ask the clerk to send a Teams link to the meetings.

Governors agreed that there is some work to do in some areas but, overall, felt that this was a very pleasing set of results.

One governor raised a challenge in relation to work placement not having scored well. She expressed that the careers team does some excellent work and gets great feedback, and she questioned whether this could be linked to the separation of work placement from the careers team. The vice principal indicated that she needs to look at the data by area as she believes that some areas will be very high and others lower. For example, the response may be lower in areas such as A Levels, where some learners will not access work placement at all. The vice principal: curriculum and quality agreed with this and informed governors that, in some areas, work placements were arranged later due to staff churn. This caused delays and had an impact on the experience. Health and social care and early years have mandatory work placements as part of their qualifications, and these tend to work very well. For some areas, however, it is challenging to find placements, and it tends to be necessary to rely on internal projects. Lower-level students may not interpret some of their work placement activity as work placement, which will impact responses. Furthermore, some students within the college did not feel able to complete a placement due to mental health and anxiety. The principal and vice principal have met to discuss art and design placement opportunities in the community, and the college is now re-energised to pick up on some of these gaps. In summary, students will be responding to this question from very different perspectives, and this will impact the responses given.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

18 PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN AND POST-SUMMER UPDATE

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience presented her report. Key matters highlighted were as follows:

- At the start of 2024/25, all parents of 16-18 learners were sent a digital welcome pack. This has been downloaded nearly 2,500 times. The college calendar most popular item, which includes the dates of exams and mocks.
- The A-Level team hosted a face-to-face event for parents, and colleagues are now exploring how this could be replicated in all curriculum areas next year.
- Colleagues are currently pulling together the first termly newsletter for parents, which will go out shortly after half term. This will include a round-up of the first term, key dates and other information, and will also be used to promote the adult offer.

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- The Careers team is starting to plan some HE information evenings for parents to attend to discuss university applications, UCAS applications, etcetera.
- The parental engagement action plan has also been given to the Rising Stars as a project to see how they might improve on it, which will hopefully result in further ideas.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

19 **COMMUNITY PLEDGE MONITORING 2024/25**

Governors were provided with an update against the college's Community Pledge aims for 2024/25. Items of particular note were:

- The T Levels have been launched, as listed within the pledge, except for the T-Level Onsite Construction. This is not running in 2024/25 due to low enrolments.
- Rail and welding bootcamps have been approved.
- The customer service and business admin apprenticeships offer has been reviewed to secure better outcomes.
- The flexible offer to meet adult skills needs continues.
- The college has implemented Skills Builder for 2024/25 and ongoing.
- In respect of estates and capital developments, the work on the Future Tech Centre is ongoing; the Old Brewery site is open and operational – this is a very busy site; however, the purchase of the former Wilko's store in Sutton-in-Ashfield has experienced some delays, and this has posed a risk in terms of its opening date.
- In relation to planning of further T Levels, this is taking place for business, but beauty and creative are on hold while the college waits to see what will happen with the government's pause and review on curriculum reform.
- In relation to the college's inclusive offer, student numbers have doubled on Engage; Boost is significantly oversubscribed; Foundation studies is now 'Step Up and Progress'; and the Pre-3 option in A Levels is likely to grow.
- A business development manager has been appointed in the central Employer Engagement team with the intention of linking the curriculum to the employer need, hopefully bringing wider opportunities back into curriculum areas.

The chair challenged leaders to ensure that the community is being informed of the good work the college is doing. The vice principal indicated that LinkedIn is the main way in which this is communicated, and there has been some good traction through this. Furthermore, a possible way to move forward with the website developments has been identified at a more suitable cost, and this may mean there will soon be a much better way to promote all of these things. Very good local media

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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coverage continues, and the ongoing sponsorship of the Mansfield 103.2 Business Hour is beneficial. The college has been shortlisted for the Nottinghamshire Business Awards within the Employer Partnership and Excellence in Collaboration categories. The college has also been given a free table at a Mansfield BID event to recognise what it has done for the town centre. The principal indicated that he is saving one seat for a governor, and his PA will be in touch with the details. The college is less well known nationally, although there have been some national mentions as well (such as within the UK Universities Blueprint), but local renown is the most important thing. The biggest challenge is reaching those employers who would never think to approach their local college to support with their training needs, and it is hoped that the Mansfield and Ashfield Business Network will help with this.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

20

GOVERNANCE

1) Committee Terms of Reference 2024/25

Governors were invited to comment on the second draft of the Terms of Reference for 2024/25. The clerk indicated that, if governors were happy, she would incorporate the noted changes into the document and present this to the board for approval.

2) Committee membership update for 2024/25

Governors were advised that, following this meeting, David Gillies would step away from the committee, retaining membership of the Workforce Development Committee.

Subject to the Corporation Board's approval of his reappointment to the board following the end of his first term of membership, it is proposed that Keith Spiers should join this committee.

Thanks were offered to David for his significant contribution to this committee.

Lastly, governors were invited to put forward nominations for vice chair of the committee. No suggestions were made within the meeting, but governors were invited to submit nominations to the clerk via email should they wish to do so.

AGREED:

- to recommend the committee Terms of Reference to the board for approval
- to approve the appointment of Keith Spiers to this committee, subject to the board approving his reappointment from 15th October 2024.

21

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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There were no items of additional business.

22

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was proposed as Thursday 28th November 2024 at 17:00.

Meeting closed at 19:40.

Signed: _____  _____ Chair

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