MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE
SELF-ASSESSMENT
2022-23

Building Fairer Futures.

This Self-Assessment Report has been compiled by drawing on information from a number of sources including the individual School SARs, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Review activities, Surveys, External Verifier/Standard Verifier Reports, Information Services data, comparisons with National Performance data, where available, and other qualitative evidence identified by staff and learners. The main sections within the report take the form of position statements which set out progress the College has made both since its last inspection and against last year's Quality Improvement Plan.

Milton Keynes College Group SAR 2022-23 is an overall Grade 2 - Good

Contribution to meeting Skills needs	Strong
Quality of Education	Good (Grade 2)
Behaviours and Attitudes	Good (Grade 2)
Personal Development	Good (Grade 2)
Personal Development	Good (Grade 2)
Leadership and Management	Good (Grade 2)
Safeguarding	Effective
Provision Types:	
Education Programmes for Young People	Good (Grade 2)
Adult	Good (Grade 2)
Apprenticeships	Good (Grade 2)
High Needs	Good (Grade 2)
Higher Education	Good
Schools Performance	All Good (Grade 2, or better Grade 1)

Contents

Information about Milton Keynes College in 2022-23

Provider details:

Unique reference number: 130609

Type of provider: General Further Education college

Age range of students: 16–18/19+

Group Principal/CEO: Sally Alexander

Telephone number: 01908 684444

Website: www.mkcollege.ac.uk

Milton Keynes College is a general Further Education College located on two campuses in central Milton Keynes. The College campus is part of the wider MK College Group, the only FE provider with a substantial prison contract alongside an Institute of Technology also situated in Milton Keynes. The College provides a wide range of post-16 education and training.

Foreword by Sally Alexander

CEO and Group Principal

I am proud to present the Milton Keynes College Group 2022-23 Self-Assessment Report. As we move through the post-pandemic period, dominated by the cost-of-living crisis and the explosion of national debate around issues of identity and immigration. I am particularly proud that students at MK College achieve equally well regardless of their background or complex need. We continue to fulfil our essential role in the heart of the community, building fairer futures and instilling our values of inspiration, excellence, innovation, respect, integrity and belonging into all we do.

Whilst we have always been proud to be at the heart of our community with initiatives such as our Friends and Allies' Network, partnerships with MKIAC and SOFEA, this was the year we fully embedded our community intent into our curriculum. College in the Community Day in February was a personal highlight of the academic year and saw over 600 students engage in more that 35 community projects.

Inclusion and our continued commitment to the EDI agenda are integral to our approach to create fairer futures for all. Central to our work in 2022-23 to promote and lead EDI was the continued development of five Employee Networks covering Cultural Diversity, Disability, LGBTQ, Men and Women, these networks help enrich the student experience whilst our flagship 'FE Voices' podcast series has led the national conversation on issues of race. We have also seen a group of senior leaders complete EDI leadership qualifications.

As Milton Keynes College is the only further education provider in the city, we are fully committed to providing an outstanding experience for our learners with LLDD needs and provide an engaging Inclusion provision and have a dedicated team supporting the large number of high needs learners and those in receipt of an EHCP.

We continuously work to meet employer needs. Initiatives such as our partnership with Silverstone are making measurable impacts to our learners' experience and outcomes whilst helping a key local employer be more productive. We have engaged widely with the development of our Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and are leading the regional response as lead college on the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF). The opening of our Bletchley-based, South Central Institute of Technology, saw us welcome 200 businesses who experienced our innovative approach to digital learning.

We are also proud of the growth and vision of the Apprenticeships team as they extend the scope of our provision to support even more local and national employers.

2022/23 sees MK College Group enter the second year of our 'Fairer Futures' strategy. This SAR shows the tangible process we are making towards our strategic aims, all geared at helping us deliver 'exceptional learning experiences.' It shows that we are leading in the growth and quality of our T Level delivery and that we are creating an environment where all students thrive and feel like they belong. It shows what we can do when aligned to the common core purpose of building Fairer Futures.

Milton Keynes Context

Milton Keynes has recently been awarded city status and is situated in the South-East Midlands LEP region. With a population of circa 270,000 people and home to 12,765 businesses. The Milton Keynes economy is now worth £14.03 billion with a GDP per worker of £73,439, which is one of the highest in the country.

In terms of the profile of businesses in Milton Keynes, the city is distinct from other areas within the South-East Midlands region due to the prevalence of micro businesses (with 0 9 staff) which make up 90% of the businesses in Milton Keynes with a much smaller set of SMEs at 9.4%. The city is also notable for the large number of global and national head offices. 75 businesses have more than 250 employees and include global brands such as Red Bull Racing, Network Rail and Santander.

Milton Keynes has a younger population than England, with 27.4% of the population aged 19 and under compared with 23.7% nationally. The city has a racially diverse population with 26.1% BME increasing to 44% BME in the current learner population. 25% of the population has English as a second language and 14% of pupils have special educational needs.

Although as a city, Milton Keynes is ranked 181 out of 326 regions in the deprivation index, this hides the 9 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which are within the 10% most deprived in England.

Milton Keynes College Context

Milton Keynes College is a purpose and values led organisation that understands the importance of ensuring a positive and inclusive culture within our people. Its purpose is to inspire positive social change in the people and communities it serves through delivering exceptional learning experiences to transform lives, achieving its vision of a fairer future for all.

The College works hard to instil its values of inspire, respect, integrity, innovation, excellence and belonging within all learners. This is particularly important as Milton Keynes, as one of the fastest growing and newest cities in the UK, which requires learners' aspiration and skills to realise its ambition of becoming a key hub for productivity, culture and commerce internationally.

The College works closely across the Milton Keynes community to ensure it plays an active role in understanding skills requirements and fulfilling skills needs through community, civic, education and employer focussed activities. The College is not only responsive to the skills landscape in its local area, but it also works in partnership to drive the skills agenda.

The College works closely with a broad range of partners including with the DfE, the ETF, AoC, Awarding Organisations, HMPPS, MK Council, MK and Northamptonshire Chambers of Commerce, SEMLEP, FSB, Cranfield University, MK:U, The Open University, Community Partners, local MPs, as well as local, regional and national employers such as Careys, Anglian Water, Silverstone, Red Bull, Nissan Nifty Lift, MK University Hospital, SMC, Aden Contracting, Mercedes F1 and Trucks, LC Signs, Seckingtons, FCDO and HMGCC.

The College was a key contributor to the MK 2050 future planning strategy and co delivered MK Learning 2050. The College continues to be actively involved with Milton Keynes Secondary Heads network and is the current chair of the Post 16 education steering group which comprises of a mix of schools, FE and HE providers.

At a more regional level, the College is the lead provider for the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) in response to Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities. This sees MK College co ordinate other regional FE providers to deliver projects to meet identified needs. The College is due to take on two of these projects itself, improving communication with employers and increasing digital skills.

Milton Keynes College hosts regular employer forums in over 15 sector areas. These engage a range of employer types and seek to identify a range of skills needs and any barriers to being able to recruit. Each sector has its own sector skills guide informed by external research and validated by employers themselves.

The College uses EMSI and Vector market intelligence software to identify sector trends at both industry and occupational level. This allows it to predict sectors which are growing, declining or remaining stagnant and adjust the curriculum accordingly. A recent example of this has been the College successfully securing post 16 capacity funding to grow its construction facility, and a wider the curriculum offer, as a direct result of data showing anticipated growth in housing and other construction projects locally.

CONTRIBUTION TO MEETING SKILLS NEEDS

Strong

Milton Keynes College makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders align their ambitious skills strategy very closely and highly effectively to local, regional, and national skills priorities, and are responsive to employers' needs and opportunities as they emerge. As a result, leaders are very active in involving stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum. This collaborative work has informed the curriculum well in almost all areas, benefitted learners, and led to the inclusion of new pathways for onward and upward progression. For example,

- Leaders engage very effectively with a wide range of stakeholders such as Careys, Aiimi, Marshall Amplification, WD40, SMC and Niftylift to understand current employment and sector skills needs.

- They work closely with local authorities (Milton Keynes City Council), chambers of commerce (Milton Keynes Chamber and Northampton and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce) and local enterprise partnerships (South-East Midlands LEP and Buckinghamshire LEP) to ensure that their priorities are integral to the College's short, medium and long-term plans.

- Leaders have positioned the College as the lead organisation for the regional Local Skills Improvement Plan and Fund, coordinating responses to skills needs in the South-East Midlands region. They have a focused and clear curriculum response based on LSIP feedback, including the creation of a skills academy, with a drive towards developing baseline skills required by employers.

- Leaders contribute significantly to the digital sector in the region as the lead provider for the South Central Institute of Technology, working with other colleges, employers and universities to deliver Higher Technical Education.

- Leaders have developed highly effective links with prestigious national organisations such as Red Bull, Silverstone and Microsoft which enthuse staff and learners and inform the intent of curriculum well.

Leaders have created a culture of continuous and highly effective engagement with industry experts and community organisations. This enables leaders and managers to understand well the needs of external stakeholders and adapt the curriculum effectively to meet these needs. Leaders use their positions of influence to ensure that learners access up to date and highly relevant curriculum content that supports them well to develop relevant industry skills. This provides learners across all provision types with exposure to the 'real world' of work through events such as live employer-sponsored briefs, guest speakers and work experience placements. For example,

- Leaders sit on (and/ or chair) a range of civic, community, education and employer responsive forums to ensure that they are fully aware of local skills needs.

- Leaders support the MKSH (Milton Keynes Secondary Heads) activity and specifically chair the Milton Keynes Sixth Form Heads group. Senior leaders support the development of the four (North, East, South and West) Milton Keynes Schools' Quadrant meetings to ensure sharing of best practice.

- Cross-sector employer forums have been established to enable staff to understand the professional and employability skills required to build the necessary essential skills for onward and upward progression in education, employment and/ or training in the South-East Midlands region.

- Every college School and subject hosts termly employer forums to consult with employers on curriculum content, and ensure it is regularly updated.

- A recent development includes a rapid response to provide courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in their region in response to the city council's support of refugee settlement.

Staff at all levels work highly collaboratively with key stakeholders to inform the content of the curriculum and ensure teaching and learning is effective, so that learners make sustained and substantial progress towards skills they need. Close involvement with stakeholders assists with effective education and training programmes that meet employers needs. Furthermore, these relationships are utilised to give learners exposure to community action projects to support wider skills and character development. For example,

• Courses and pathways at the College have a curriculum that is skillfully co designed, co developed and co delivered with industry experts. The best examples of these partnerships include hospitality and catering and motor vehicle working with Silverstone, construction with Careys, digital with Microsoft, active industries with MK Dons football club, creative industries with MK Gallery, engineering with ABB Robotics and care and health with Milton Keynes University Hospital.

• In addition to the highly relevant curriculum, learners engage in skills competitions to demonstrate and hone their new knowledge, skills, and behaviors. For example, hospitality and catering learners competing in and being runners up in the AA College Restaurant of the Year and hair and beauty learners competing in multiple competitions resulting in the College being awarded the VTCT College of the Year 2022/23 at the Excellence Awards.

• Learners participate in a range of social and community actions projects including, for example, College in the Community Day. Further subject specific examples include: performing arts learners' performance of 'Broken' tackling knife crime; arts learners' 'Difference Makers' graffiti cover-up; digital learners have developed new website content for local charities; hospitality and catering learners delivering a pop-up restaurant for the British grand prix; construction learners supporting MK museum with site and artefact maintenance; sports therapy learners offering sports massage after the MK half marathon; barbering learners cutting hair at the YMCA.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Rated Good

Intent: Strengths

Leaders have a very clear rationale for the courses they offer. Leaders use a wide range of information about local and regional priorities to plan their course offer effectively. They have planned courses and pathways which provide a wide variety of vocational, academic, and technical subjects which meet the needs of their region. Leaders ensure that the courses they offer enable learners to develop the skills that local, regional and national employers require. As a result of leader's efforts, learners benefit from highly relevant courses that equip them with the knowledge, skills and behaviours which prepare them well for their next steps and enable them to move onto positive destinations. For example,

- The College plays a significant role in the development of the South-East Midlands and Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plans.

- Both Labour Market Intelligence research and relations with local and regional industry connections inform learners' pathways and individual courses provided by the College.

- Employer Forums support with refining content on specific courses, ensuring that learners are developing skills, knowledge and behaviours that are up to date and in-demand in the regional and national economy.

- Pathways commence at entry and pre-entry and move through each of Intermediate, Advanced and Higher levels to enable learners to achieve their personal aspirations and support the local economy with a supply of well skilled talent in broad and diverse subject areas.

- As a result of the poor performance of secondary schools locally the College is predominantly working with learners at Intermediate (Entry Level to Level 2) levels. This is also why the Ccollege has taken steps to reform the curriculum at Level 1 to provide strong foundations for learners and learning to build upon.

Leaders and managers ensure that teachers sequence curriculum content logically and sensibly to enable learners to build their knowledge well, and quickly understand new concepts and topics. This supports learners effectively to move onwards and upwards through career pathways and into regionally in-demand sectors and occupations. As a result of leaders' and teachers' logical planning, almost all learners acquire substantial new knowledge and skills they need to be successful in in-demand sectors and occupations in the regional economy. For example,

- Digital leaners will learn about databases and data analytics prior to advancing into 'Big Data' and artificial intelligence. Business learners understand business principles such as accounting and marketing prior to launching into projects of starting new business ventures. Sports learners learn about anatomy and physiology before undertaking sports massage techniques for injury rehabilitation and rehabilitation. Inclusive learning high needs learners undertake confidence building activities prior to undertaking more complex and independent tasks of running their own business functions. Electrical installation apprentices study engineering maths and work on boards prior to wiring and testing live rigs.

- Thirteen Internal Quality Reviews were carried out on 22/23 and of these, eleven explicitly discuss sequencing of the curriculum as a strength and none as an area for improvement.

Leaders, managers and teachers ensure that courses are ambitious and meet the needs of their learners, including disadvantaged learners, well. The provision for learners with high needs is especially ambitious and meets the needs of these learners studying across the College campuses exceptionally well. Education and training opportunities support learners' interests and local and national priorities highly effectively. For example,

- EPYP courses enable young learners to progress into competitive sectors such as engineering, creative industries, business, computer sciences, hospitality, hair, and beauty.

- ESOL courses are designed well to reintroduce learners to education. The courses help them integrate into their new communities very well.

- Access to higher education courses enable older learners to progress quickly and successfully on to university, including to competitive courses within in-demand occupations in healthcare such as nursing, paramedic science, and midwifery.

- Apprenticeships support innovative industries in the region well. The skills that apprentices develop in their courses are highly in demand, and almost all apprentices progress swiftly, making significant positive contributions to their respective workplaces.

- Leaders and teachers ensure that learners with high needs develop the skills they need to gain independence in their everyday lives, move on to their desired next steps and make progress at least in line with their peers.

Intent: Areas for Improvement

In a very small minority of courses, planning of the curriculum does not effectively support learners to achieve in externally assessed exams. Some curriculum planning does not offer sufficient opportunity for learners to revisit and embed knowledge to allow them to perform well in exams that encompass a range of units. This includes some electrical and motor vehicle qualification.

Implementation: Strengths

Almost all teachers plan, sequence, and teach courses successfully so that learners continuously build on prior learning. Teachers carefully teach the knowledge and skills learners need to learn first to help almost all learners grasp new concepts quickly, remember prior learning well and understand how to apply theory in practice. Teachers ensure that learners practice skills until they are deeply embedded and readily recalled. Teachers also teach and use technical language across vocational areas to ensure learners are well equipped to use this fluently. This enables almost all learners to maximise their potential, achieve their qualifications and progress into further learning and/or employment. As a result of teachers' careful planning, sequencing and teaching of the curriculum, almost all learners develop and improve their skills, knowledge, and professional behaviours well over time. This prepares them well for their next steps. For example,

- Teachers in engineering and motor vehicle initially teach a combination of course fundamentals (which include sessions on how to work safely) before progressing on to more complex learning activities which build on the core learning well. Patisserie and confectionary learners develop skills in isolation prior to combining them to develop items for sale both in and out of college.

- Apprenticeship trainers work closely with apprentices and their employers to understand learners' individual starting points through skills scans. They use this information carefully to develop an effective and personalised plan for onward progression.

- Teachers measure and check starting points of learners with high needs carefully and measure their progress in areas such as development of confidence and resilience, working towards independence and preparation for individualised positive next steps.

- Access to Higher Education learners are in receipt of Higher Education Careers Fair CEIAG to help raise aspirations and focus attentions on medium-term next steps (e.g., Progression into HE).

Most teachers are highly experienced classroom practitioners and well qualified in their subjects. They use their expertise to present information clearly and effectively, engage learners fully and demonstrate practical skills well. This ensures that most learners and apprentices' benefit from strong education and training. For example,

- Many teachers have professional, commercial and/ or industrial experience prior to joining the College. In addition to professional and subject expertise, new teaching staff are appropriately supported to work towards qualified teacher status. Existing staff engage in industry updating through CPD training and return to work days.

- Teachers and trainers in apprenticeship provision all have recent industry experience and training that they use well to enrich apprentices' learning.

- On adult and professional pathways, many staff teach alongside working in their respective occupations. This ensures that their knowledge and skills are continuously up to date.

- New staff benefit from robust onboarding and effective initial teacher training activities to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to support the diverse learners they teach.

- A dedicated quality team identify well areas for subject and pedagogic expertise to be honed and/ or improved using a variety of measures including IQRs, school level QIP and SARs and themes from walkthroughs and formal observations. They ensure that staff quickly receive training that helps them become more effective classroom practitioners. Recent examples of staff upskilling include learning about the Inclusive Classroom to fully meet learners needs and the Pedagogy in Practice action research projects which promote the craft of expert teaching and learning. Support is planned effectively based on school QIPs, individual outcomes from teaching observations, themes in walkthrough sessions. This allows for Quality support and CPD to be targeted to ensure teachers are well supported to make progress.

Most teachers use highly effective teaching techniques to enthuse and interest learners. They present information clearly, correct any misconceptions quickly and question learners carefully to help them build knowledge well. Teachers structure lessons carefully, building in frequent time within sessions to recap, revisit and build upon prior learning. Most teachers use discussions effectively to deepen learners' and apprentices' understanding. Most teachers identify learners who struggle quickly and support these learners well to catch up. As a result, most learners and apprentices learn what they need quickly. They develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that they need to pass their examinations, achieve their qualifications and progress to their next steps. Most teachers use a range of assessment strategies effectively to check what learners and apprentices have learned. They question learners carefully to assess their understanding. Teachers provide useful feedback that helps most learners and apprentices to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. This ensures that learners' and apprentices' skills, knowledge, and behaviours develop well over time. As a result, most learners and apprentices make positive progress towards their goals and aspirations. For example:

- Most lesson observations show that "planning and preparation meets the needs of the learning programme and the needs of individual learners" is effective.

- A very large majority of learners that participated in the Induction & on programme surveys agreed with the statement "I have been set targets that will help me improve my skills and knowledge whilst at Milton Keynes College."

- A large majority of observations showed that "Learners are making effective progress towards challenging targets".

Most teachers, trainers and assessors use effective and engaging teaching and training strategies that successfully incorporate the use of technology in their lessons. This enhances learners' and apprentices' learning, helps them retain key information well, develops their subject knowledge and skills quickly and improves their understanding of digital technology. Leaders and managers have continued to invest in and develop industry-standard and excellent facilities and resources. Teachers use these effectively to enthuse and inspire learners. Furthermore, most teachers, trainers and assessors use effective and engaging teaching and training strategies that successfully incorporate the use of technology in their lessons which enhance learners' and apprentices' learning. For example,

- Engineering learners have developed resources around design paradigms, error and judgement by recording and creating podcasts in OneNote. These are published to a webpage using Sway and shared with the course group via QR codes. This activity enabled learners to develop key digital skills as well as developing multi modal resources to aid knowledge construction and to revisit for revision. Furthermore, learners have access to industry standard technology such as robots and robotic arms, manufacturing automation equipment as well as 3D printers and are encouraged to utilise these in their projects and for competitions.

- T-Level construction learners use 360 views and virtual reality to explore building models which allows them to understand spatial and dimensions of plans and drawings.

- Adult ESOL learners benefit from teacher-set online reading activities which use artificial intelligence to highlight, and focus follow up work around words and phrases which learners struggle with. This enables learners to practice reading and speaking independently, gain immediate feedback and see progress over time. Staff use virtual reality to enable learners to practice face-to-face interviews to develop familiarity with the vocabulary and questions that they might be asked.

- Care and health learners use virtual and augmented reality effectively to experience and visualise concepts which cannot be easily seen such as the human skeleton, blood cells moving through veins or to anxiety, dementia or the first years of life through the eyes of someone else.

- Milton Keynes College has retained its Microsoft Showcase College status for the fifth year and continues to build and grow on this digital learning specialism. The College is the lead provider of the South Central Institute of Technology and has invested £18m into the Bletchley campus to deliver this new facility and digital upskilling (including higher education) for the region.

- Through capital transformation and decarbonisation efforts, the College will invest £8m into the estate to support its Sustainability commitments. An investment of £3.6m has resulted in brand new and purpose-built engineering and construction facilities. The College invested Strategic Development funds (£2m) to develop curriculum such as: artificial intelligence, leadership and management and green skills.

Implementation:
Areas for Improvement

A few teachers, trainers and assessors are not yet sufficiently skilled to enable their learners to quickly gain the new knowledge, skills, and behaviours that they need. These teachers do not check learning sufficiently well to enable them to fully understand how well learners and apprentices have understood prior learning.

A few teachers, trainers and assessors do not assess learners' progress effectively enough to enable them to build and develop the skills that they need to be successful in their examinations and end-point assessments.

The College has high annual staff turnover, which means that around 25% of staff are new each year. New teachers are prioritised for support from the quality team, with this adapted depending on level of need. There is also an additional induction session for new teachers to support them with the expectations of this role.

Impact: Strengths

Almost all learners and apprentices enjoy their learning. Staff motivate them well which helps them make good progress with their learning and achieve their qualifications. Almost all learners work hard, listen to their teachers attentively and readily take part in classroom and workshop activities. For example,

- Feedback from learner surveys overwhelmingly confirms that learners' motivation towards their studies, and onward progress, is high. They welcome the opportunities available to them within the curriculum and also more broadly across the College through enrichment activities.

- In the vast majority of courses and programmes, learners achieve in-line with or better than their peers nationally.

Most learners and apprentices quickly develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and behaviours that help them succeed in their courses. The standard of work for most learners and apprentices is high. Learners in courses such as catering & hospitality, sport and music produce particularly high-quality work. Learners studying T levels achieve very well. Apprentices produce work of a particularly good standard in engineering, business and customer service, leadership and management, hairdressing, commis chef and carpentry. Adults studying distance learning courses gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications that enhance their job roles.

Learners with high needs benefit from highly personalised and tailored courses which enable them to gain the knowledge and skills they need to gain independence and succeed in life. They take pride in their work, improving skills such as communication and team building very effectively. Teachers inspire learners with high needs to raise their aspirations around their next steps and progress into higher-level study, voluntary or paid work. Learners become more resilient and independent in their everyday lives.

Most learners and apprentices, including those who have high needs, make good and sustained progress from their starting points. A substantial proportion of these learners make very good progress. They gain good subject knowledge and many useful additional skills and complementary qualifications relevant to their specialist industries that stand them in good stead to move on to their intended next steps. For example,

- Apprentices studying engineering standards participate in courses that enable them to gain hand skills. Apprentices studying accountancy take an additional AAT qualification. Apprentices studying digital skills take Google Analytics and Microsoft qualifications.

- The first year of T level outcomes were strong with 100% pass rate for learners who finished their programmes in 2022/23. Furthermore, of those who passed, 93% achieved a high grade (54% of learners achieving a distinction, 39% a merit and 7% a pass)

Most learners achieve well. EPYP learners studying, for example, sports leaders, aeronautical engineering, professional cookery, and music courses achieve particularly well. They gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need for their next steps. Apprentices on hairdressing, business and customer services, engineering and carpentry apprenticeships achieve particularly well. A large proportion of adult learners studying access to HE courses progress to university courses of their first choice. Adult ESOL learners move on to further education courses at the College or move successfully to employment. Most learners progress successfully to the next steps that they choose. A very high proportion of apprentices stay with their employers and receive promotion/higher salaries and more responsibility.

Impact: Areas for Improvement

Although in line with national averages, too few learners retaking GCSE mathematics achieve a grade 4 or above during their first year studying the subject.

During the 2022/23 academic year, a small minority of apprentices are not achieving in a timely manner.

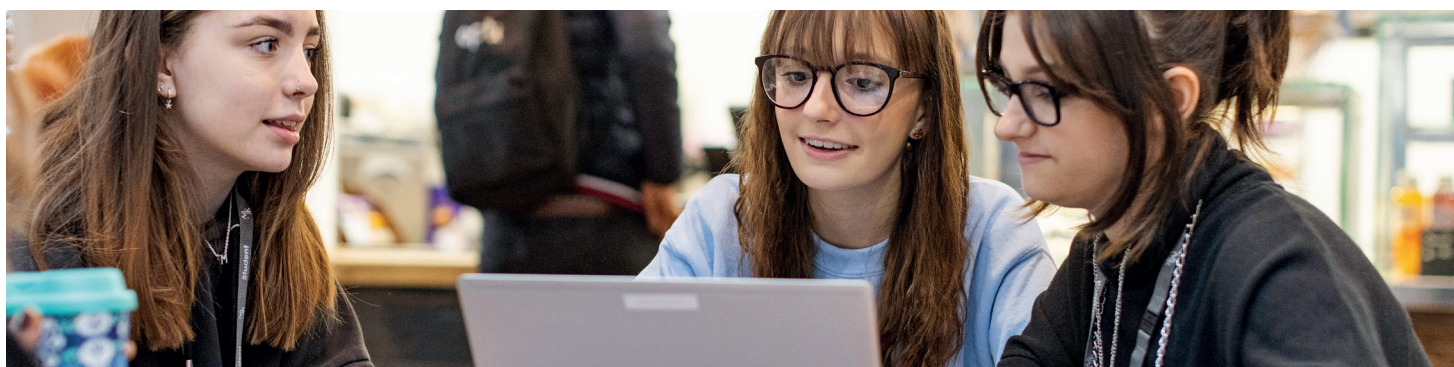Achievement and high grades on a small number of EPYP courses are too low.

Although still high, achievement in subcontracted provision declined slightly in 22/23.

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

Rated Good

Strengths

Learners benefit from calm, positive and inclusive learning environments. Almost all learners arrive at lessons punctually and ready to learn. They develop professional behaviours that support them well with their next steps. They live up to the high behaviour expectations that college staff have of them. The vast majority of learners and apprentices conduct themselves well in lessons, in communal areas, in the workplace and in all aspects of college life. Those who are new to the College quickly learn and model the polite and respectful behaviour that other learners and apprentices show towards staff and each other. Learners who progress internally at college model the high standards of behaviour expected of all learners at college. As a result of effective modelling of positive behaviours and attitudes to learning by staff, almost all learners demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Apprentices uphold the standards of behaviour expected of them at college in their workplaces. For example,

- The vast majority of learners that participated in the Induction and On Programme surveys agreed with the statement "I know what behaviours are expected of me at Milton Keynes College." A large majority strongly agreed.

- Learners listen well in lessons, improving their skills to prepare them for the world of work or further learning.

- Learners make positive contributions to classroom discussion and demonstrate mutual respect and tolerance for one another when discussing specific topics.

- During the small number of online sessions, staff ensure that learners have their cameras on and make positive contributions to classroom activities.

Staff help learners build and develop their confidence well. Learners, and particularly those with a negative view towards education because of having a difficult time at school and/or COVID, quickly become more confident when at college. They gain the self-assurance to understand that they can succeed and re-engage with education well. For example,

- Learner X (SEN) joined the College in 2019/2020. Educational background at secondary was highly traumatic and included long bouts of school refusal based on social anxiety associated with ASD needs. The learner's family had very negative experiences of educational settings understanding the needs of their child and felt let down by a lack of integration with a mainstream environment; faith had been lost. Through a combination of effective initial careers advice (through MK College Open events) and early involvement from the student development and support teams, learner X enrolled onto a newly formed PreNEET programme (named Project One by the learners making up this first cohort). The programme's intent is based on transformational experiences; with early input around group identity, strong pastoral support and project links with Young Creatives, Parks Trust and the YOT Speech & Language Therapy Pilot scheme. This certainly showed in learner X's end of year self-evaluation, developing high levels of confidence and independence.

Learners benefit from good individual support when coping with external pressures that may cause them anxiety. Teachers, progress mentors and support staff help learners get back on track swiftly if they have fallen behind with their work. Learners who may be struggling in their personal lives are carefully supported by staff to return to learning and improve their attendance. Learners feel safe in the College and its surrounding areas. They participate in interesting and useful personal development tutorial sessions which help them improve their understanding about topics such as sexual health, consent and how to keep themselves safe against local threats. Learners know how to report any safeguarding concerns and have confidence that staff will challenge any cases of bullying, harassment, and any other forms of discrimination. Learners know that if they report concerns they will be taken seriously. For example,

- Although there have been some incidents in the vicinity of Milton Keynes college a very large majority of learners agreed with this statement "I feel safe when at Milton Keynes College."

Areas for Improvement

Although most learners and apprentices attend well in many courses, overall attendance last year was still too low at 83% overall.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rated Good

Strengths

Learners benefit from stimulating environments that replicate workplace cultures well. Staff help learners successfully develop their professional confidence and resilience as well as professional skills and behaviours through carefully planned theoretical and practical activities. For example,

- In addition to taught vocational and English and maths curriculum, learners gain additional digital skills through a bespoke digital skills programme, leading to learners achieving digital badges. Learners also take part in a 'Digital Skills Ambassador' programme where they study topics such as digital inclusion, cyber security, big data, digital wellbeing and emerging technologies.

Leaders, managers and staff promote equality of opportunity well. They help learners and apprentices understand about living in a diverse society. They prepare learners well for life in modern Britain. For example,

- The personal development curriculum includes topics such as individual liberty and discrimination, monogamy, polygamy and heterosexual marriage and bias and stereotypes.

- Learners from across the College were instrumental in the launch of the sector-wide Student Commission on Racial Justice.

- Most learners agreed with the survey statement "I am treated equally and fairly when at Milton Keynes College." A large majority strongly agreed.

- Learners learn about British values during their time at college through discussion, debate, tutorial activities and extra-curriculum activities. Learners and staff exemplify British values during their time at college well. The student council promotes democracy and individual liberty effectively.

- College policies, procedure and rules are respected and upheld by almost all learners.

Learners and apprentices receive effective careers education, information, advice and guidance from teachers and impartial, well qualified specialist staff that enables them to understand the range of options for their next steps well. As a result, learners understand the options open to them when they finish their courses and almost all progress into positive destinations, including higher education and further training. Staff prepare learners who are first generation higher education applicants well for progression to higher-level study. For example,

- Careers staff run useful careers events throughout the year and across provision. These are skilfully targeted towards progression at timely points (e.g., at induction, for higher education and UCAS application and when learners are considering their next steps). The careers team work closely - and have effective progression agreements in place with a range of local universities to support progression. University staff attend college and provide useful 1:1 support to support HE progression.

- A dedicated careers advisor supports learners with SEND and who have been Looked After.

- A dedicated Microsoft Teams channel is available to all learners that promotes a range of opportunities from part time work to degree apprenticeships.

- Careers leaders and careers advisors deliver useful 1:1 appointments to help learners explore a wide range of broad and impartial options, skills, attributes and create career plans for learners and apprentices. These are offered across locations, at sites that work best for individuals.

- Learners access effective individual careers advice, alongside attending a range of employment and higher education fairs to explore careers that are available to them.

- A large majority of learners stay at college and move onto higher level courses.

- Leaders have prioritised Gatsby benchmarks, Matrix accreditation and during 2022/23 undertook the careers and enterprise company s 'Careers Impact Reviews System' (CIRS) pilot. This pilot is targeted towards continuing to champion Careers and Skills opportunities for the College and our learners.

Staff provide good pastoral and academic support for learners which helps them thrive and achieve well. Learners highly value and respect the support that they receive. Most can achieve additional qualification(s) beyond their main programmes and gain valuable experience competing in skills competitions which helps them with their next steps. For example,

- The College has a dedicated well-being and resilience team who support learners well, alongside targeted interventions for those most in need.

- A bespoke and carefully planned personal development curriculum runs alongside learners' vocational curriculum that prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

- When learners start at college they benefit from a useful and well devised induction which helps them quickly understand how to stay safe and report concerns, recognise signs of radicalisation and extremism, understand local threats, apply and model British values and understand racial justice. This curriculum is then tailored to support individual groups and learners' requirements.

- Learners benefit from a range of personal and self-help support linked to (for example) mental health, staying positive and resolving conflict.

- Staff raise learners' awareness of a variety of topics through national events and campaigns that are run across the College environments. For example, the College runs whole campus events that promote topics such as suicide prevention, mental health awareness, disability history and awareness, sexual abuse and sexual violence and sustainability.

Most learners and apprentices participate in a wide range of additional activities that enrich their learning and allow them to broaden their horizons and discover new interests and hobbies. Through these, learners and apprentices establish new friendship groups, learn about diversity, develop empathy with others and expand their knowledge of how to keep physically and mentally healthy. For example,

- Clubs and societies available to learners include: 'All Things English: Books, Poetry and More'; Debating; LGBTQIA+ Community; Movie Club; STEM Club; Volunteers Club; Table Top Gaming and Music Society

- Sports and Wellness activities include Gym, Netball, Football, Badminton, Volleyball, Bastbella and Table Tennis.

Staff prepare learners well for the world of work. They ensure that EPYP learners benefit from plentiful encounters with the world of work to help prepare them for their next steps. This readiness, preparedness and confidence building commences upon enrolment and is a constant throughout programmes. For example,

- Level 3 health and social care learners find out about future career options from visits from staff at the University of Bedfordshire and from nursery employers. Army careers and the Royal Navy staff visit the College to talk with L2 and L3 uniformed public services learners about the progression opportunities available after college and the behaviours required within their area of the armed services. L2 and L3 motor vehicle learners receive useful presentations from staff at Auto Tech and Mercedes academy to support their work readiness. Staff from Aqua Sauna and Bodylite help level 3 beauty learners understand employers' expectations prior to starting work experience. Level 2 and level 3 catering learners work closely with staff at Silverstone racecourse during the British Grand Prix to help them learn in a professional environment.

Areas for Improvement

While EPYP learners benefit from a wide programme of work-related activities, in 2022 23 too few learners on education programmes for young people benefitted from external work experience placements.

A few teachers do not have the skills and confidence to enable learners that they teach to quickly improve their knowledge about challenging topics such as sexual orientation, gender reassignment and individual characteristics.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Rated Good

Leadership and Management Strengths

Leaders and governors are passionate about tackling social inequality through education and training. They understand the needs of the local community very well. They pride themselves in offering a range of inclusive, accessible, and challenging learning opportunities which suit the communities in Milton Keynes and the surrounding South-East Midlands area very well. Leaders have carefully positioned the College as an ambitious organisation among the range of civic and community stakeholders it works with to support. As a result, the College makes a very positive impact to the local communities it serves. For example, Increases Governors' understanding of the College and the way in which Board strategic decisions influence provision at an operational level.

- Milton Keynes is a new city adjusting to the challenges of its continued growth. The nature of the city means that areas of aspirational and genuine prosperity are coupled with some of the most economically deprived estates in the country. Within the deprivation arc that exists across the city there are issues with school attainment at GCSE and Milton Keynes is bucking the national positive trend for GCSE performance as a whole.

- The College are proud that over 50% of learners from these most deprived areas choose to study at the College upon completion of their GCSEs and staff work hard with them to increase opportunity and build fairer futures.

- The College's 'Fairer Futures' strategy is used as a guiding principle to all strategic decisions across the organisation.

Leaders have high expectations of learners throughout all aspects of life at college. They communicate these expectations well to both staff and learners. This spans beyond the classroom and individual campuses. As a result, most learners uphold standards required for positive citizenship and make positive contribution to their communities. For example,

- Learners took part in 'College In The Community Day' to support with the development of civic pride throughout the city. This included, for example, litter picking, public place/space restoration and supporting local citizens and businesses.

- Performing arts learners have contributed significantly to raising awareness of knife crime, and the associated impacts. They have been commissioned by Thames Valley Police to showcase their 'Broken' performance at local, regional and national policing events.

Leaders support and develop teachers and staff well to improve both their teaching skills and their professional and subject knowledge. They ensure that staff are professionally qualified and help those that start without appropriate teaching qualifications gain these qualifications quickly and become effective classroom teachers. They help almost all teachers develop the skills they need to teach their subjects very effectively. As a result, almost all teachers use their expert and current knowledge and skills well to enhance the curriculum content for learners. For example,

- Staff benefit from 'Pedagogy in Practice' action research projects/CPD to raise the profile of expert teaching and learning in the College.

- Whole college LGBTQIA+ CPD - in response to direct staff feedback - helped teaching staff feel comfortable teaching specific topics.

- 'Develop Together' is a termly cross-college development platform to champion personal and professional development. Group services and teaching and learning staff benefit from role-specific training and development, alongside themes and days such as 'sustainability' and 'well-being'.

- The College group has a strong track record of utilising digital technologies to support teaching and learning. It is proud to be a Microsoft Showcase college and develops its staff to enable them to effectively use and teach using technology where appropriate.

- Staff are supported to develop their teaching craft underpinned by '21st Century Learning Design', a framework for developing wider skills while delivering vocational sessions. A further programme of CPD has been delivered to targeted schools with teachers trying new aspects of the framework and new digital tools with learning walks and sharing practice sessions used for teachers to reflect on and increase the impact on learning.

Leaders, managers and governors know the strengths and areas for improvement of their provision well. Leaders and managers take swift and effective action to improve weaker areas of provision. For example,

- The previous quality improvement plan detailed two priority subject areas requiring swift improvement. These subjects (care and construction) have made swift in-year progress and achieved ~4 percentage points improvement in 2022/23, when compared with 2021/22.

- Leaders and managers intervened quickly in the few instances where employers do not fully meet the apprenticeship commitment statements. Senior staff report actions to governors so that they are fully aware of the action that is taken.

- Those areas of the College and EPYP provision requiring improvement in 2022/23 were in receipt of additional scrutiny and support to improve outcomes. For example, greater emphasis on building relationship with learners and supporting and managing challenging behaviour.

Well qualified, highly experienced and specialist governors understand their roles very well. They support leaders closely and shape the strategic direction of the College very effectively. They ensure that the College meets its statutory responsibilities. Governors understand the College s place in the community well. They know the strengths and areas for improvement of the College well and challenge leaders robustly to improve weaknesses quickly. Specialist governors focus very well on key areas such as safeguarding, curriculum and quality, careers and finance. For example,

- Governors challenged leaders on which Schools were working most effectively with employers to meet local skills needs and how employers support the curriculum (Board minutes 23.3.23)

- Governors expressed concern at the low number of work placements and challenged leaders on how the College was responding (Board minutes 3.5.23 / CQG Minutes 26.6.23). This became a quality improvement priority for 2023/24.

- Governors also challenged leaders on keeping learners safe, misogyny and proposals to screen for weapons (CQG Minutes 6.3.23 / Board minutes 12.7.23 / draft Board minutes 4.10.23)

Leaders and managers have carefully considered the provision of subcontracted education to complement their own curriculum offer. They use specialist subcontractors effectively to offer education in niche areas. They monitor the quality of subcontracted provision carefully and effectively to ensure that it is of high quality and leads to effective progression opportunities for learners in the careers of their choice. Most learners in subcontracted provision achieve well.

Leaders and managers have carefully considered the reward, workload and wellbeing challenges facing the College, the education sector and more broadly the public sector. They work proactively with colleagues (including through industrial relations) to mitigate impacts on individuals and teams. As a result, staff work hard and feel well supported by leaders and managers. For example,

- Workload and well-being sub committees have been set up to address challenges swiftly.

- The College will be making a 6.5% pay award in 2022/23. This is on the back of pay awards also developed and delivered in 2021/22.

- There are five (LGBTQ, Cultural Diversity, Disability, Women s and Men s Network,) dedicated employee network groups that are targeted towards supporting individuals and team members.

- The College has developed and published both gender and ethnicity pay gap reports.

- A dedicated workload and well-being 'Develop Together' all staff conference has been prioritised for 2023/24.

Areas for Improvement

- Leaders and managers do not have sufficiently robust in year reports to enable them to intervene and respond swiftly to concerns about learners not consistently accessing external work experience. Consequently, too many learners accessed work related activity as opposed to external work experience.

- Leaders and managers do not have close oversight of the progress and status of apprentices, leading to a decline in achievement rates by July 31st hybrid end year.

SAFEGUARDING

Rated Effective

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. They have carefully considered policies and procedures in place to ensure that staff and learners know how to report concerns, including those around sexual harassment and abuse and bullying.

Well qualified and highly experienced safeguarding staff use their experience and a wide range of external contacts to deal with safeguarding concerns very effectively. Leaders ensure that new staff are recruited safely.

Leaders have invested in effective IT systems that quickly flag up any concerns when learners are online. Staff ensure that learners improve their knowledge of how to stay safe when working online. Leaders and staff know about the local threats that learners face in Milton Keynes and ensure that learners on the College campus are safe. Staff ensure that almost all learners understand how to keep themselves safe from local threats.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Rated Good

Education Programmes for Young People

Level	Provision Type
E1-3	Inclusive Learning ESOL
L1	Inclusive Learning ESOL Skills Academy
L2 & 3	Creative Arts & Media Digital Technologies Business Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy Catering and Hospitality Motor Vehicle Engineering Construction Care Professions Sports Uniformed Public Services Science
L3	T levels

Level 2 45.7%
Level 3 21.6%
Level 1 18.7%
Entry Level 10.6%
T Level
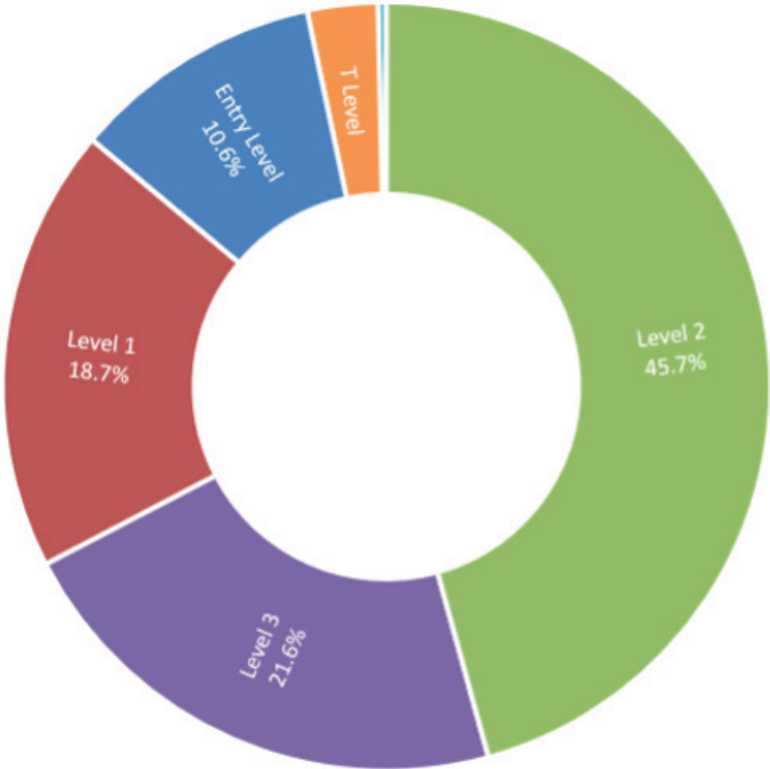
The quality of education programmes for young people is GOOD.

Strengths

Leaders have a very clear rationale for the EPYP courses they offer. Leaders use a wide range of information about local and regional priorities to plan their course offer effectively. They ensure that courses and pathways provide a wide variety of suitably challenging vocational, academic and technical subjects to meet the needs of their region and enable learners to progress to higher levels of learning.

Staff plan the content of courses logically and carefully. Most staff plan the content of EPYP courses closely with employers. They ensure that learners at all levels, including those with SEND, understand the core concepts of the subject initially and can then apply these concepts to increasingly challenging work.

Most leaders and managers have created strong links with external stakeholders which they use to inform and influence the curriculum effectively. They use frequent employer forum meetings to engage well with local and regional employers. Most staff have formed strong links with other stakeholders such as HEI, community organisations, primary, secondary and special schools, PRUs and the local authority which they use to plan and enhance the curriculum and ensure that it is relevant for current and future learners. For example, leaders substantially adapted the curriculum for level 1 learners to support learners to progress through levels, help them understand their areas of interest and expertise and gain the skills that employers specifically require. Leaders and managers work closely with organisations such as Action for Youth to inspire and enthuse lower-level learners, supporting young people to be better equipped for working life, have a greater understanding of their role in society, and their future potential. Leaders have used the tuition fund successfully to support learners to access further help with English and mathematics.

Leaders and managers have successfully introduced T level provision and learners following these programmes achieve particularly well. Leaders and managers have ensured that all T level learners benefit from high quality industry placements that give learners a really clear insight into the world of work and support progression to employment or further learning very well.

Most teachers are experienced, well qualified and skilled classroom practitioners. They use frequent training to keep up to date with both pedagogy and their vocational skills and knowledge. Leaders and managers support staff who are new to the profession well, helping most to quickly gain the skills that they need to be effective teachers. Most teachers enthuse and inspire EPYP learners. They carefully plan lesson content and teach interesting and informative sessions which enable most learners to grasp new concepts quickly and learn in a logical manner. Most teachers check learners understanding carefully. They give learners useful feedback that helps them improve their work. They identify learners who fall behind quickly and support them well to catch up. The standard of most learners' work is good. Learners studying, for example, catering & hospitality, sport, music and T levels produce work of particularly high quality.

Most EPYP learners, including those with SEND/ALS make good progress with their learning. They quickly learn how to apply theory to practice effectively. Most learners, and particularly the large numbers of learners who have not had a positive experience in school, develop good study habits, enjoy their learning and participate actively in lessons. They gain confidence and develop a new found belief in their ability to succeed. A high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications. Learners studying, for example, Sports Leaders, Aeronautical Engineering, Professional Cookery, Music, achieve particularly well. They gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need for their next steps.

Teachers, managers and leaders have high expectations for learners' professional behaviours and model these well. As a result, the vast majority of learners conduct themselves well both in and out of lessons. Those who are new to the College quickly learn and model the polite and respectful behaviour that other learners show towards staff and each other. Learners who progress internally at college model the high standards of behaviour expected of all learners. Most EPYP learners attend well. They arrive at lessons punctually and are well prepared for learning.

Leaders and managers have carefully devised age- and community-appropriate content to help EPYP learners understand about topics such as local threats, sexual harassment, staying safe online, money management and mental health and wellbeing. This prepares learners well for life in modern Britain. Leaders and managers ensure that learners benefit from high quality impartial careers information, advice and guidance which helps learners understand the career paths open to them in the future. Most teachers use their up to date vocational knowledge to inspire and guide learners to achieve their full potential. Leaders and managers ensure that EPYP learners benefit from plentiful encounters with the world of work to help prepare them for their next steps.

Areas for Improvement

Although most EPYP learners attend well, overall attendance, and particularly attendance at English and mathematics lessons last year was too low.

In a few subjects, and particularly in GCSE mathematics, achievement was too low.

In 2022-23, too few EPYP learners benefitted from external work experience placements.

Although a strength in some areas, uptake of social action projects and skills competitions for EPYP learners was not consistently high last year.

ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Rated Good

ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES

The quality of adult learning programmes is GOOD.

Strengths

Leaders, managers and staff have developed strong links with local employers, the community, local universities and other stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum that leaders offer in adult education is highly relevant to the needs of the local community and employers. These links inform the curriculum well, enable them to understand well local and regional skills needs and improve access to education for local residents. For example, staff teach ESOL and Multiply in employers' premises, adult mathematics in a women's refuge and ESOL in hotels for refugees to improve accessibility to education and employment. Leaders work closely with organisations such as DWP, local councils and Milton Keynes general hospital to deliver relevant courses to help learners gain qualifications in subjects such as ESOL, mathematics and English. Leaders ensure that they use public funding effectively to support people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in education and training.

Leaders work closely with local employers and stakeholders to ensure that learners can benefit from flexible learning opportunities to meet the needs of their individual lifestyles and work patterns. They understand the needs of learners well, ensuring that learners can learn flexibly at times that are most suitable to meet their individual needs. For example, staff have developed effective hybrid learning for adults who are not able to physically attend college. Staff deliver learning at employers' premises to help learners who need to learn during the working day. Staff plan courses that fit in well with the requirements of learners who have children.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently strong across all areas of adult provision. Almost all teachers enthuse learners well. They contextualise learning effectively and ensure that teaching and learning is highly relevant to the needs of adult learners. Most teachers explain challenging new concepts successfully and revisit learning frequently. They assess learners carefully to find out what they know. They check that learners understand learning carefully, identify quickly any learners who struggle and support these learners successfully to catch up. As a result, most adults complete their courses, achieve well, and gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for their next steps. A large proportion of learners studying access to HE courses progress to university courses of their first choice. ESOL learners move on to further education courses at the College or move successfully to employment. Learners studying English and mathematics qualifications improve their life chances and progress to higher level qualifications and/or apprenticeships. Distance learners gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications that enhance their job roles.

Leaders, managers and staff have high aspirations for what adult learners can achieve. They work professionally and model workplace behaviours well. They ensure that learners learn in a stimulating and appropriate environment. As a result, attitudes to learning for almost all adult learners are excellent. Learners are polite, behave well and are well mannered when undertaking learning. They quickly form strong relationships with their peers and their tutors. Most adults attend well. They arrive punctually and ready to work.

Staff provide effective opportunities for enrichment activities for adult learners to help develop learners' confidence, improve their knowledge of life in modern Britain and to extend their knowledge within their subject areas. Most learners value these opportunities. Most staff take naturally occurring opportunities to promote equality of opportunity in the classroom well. Tutors encourage learners to discuss and debate topics that are relevant to living in modern Britain successfully. Most tutors signpost adult learners to subsequent college courses to help them continue their learning. Staff ensure that adult learners are safe at college and that they know how to report any safeguarding concerns.

Areas for Improvement

In a few courses, attendance is too low.

A few staff need further training to enable them to fully understand and develop the specific skills and knowledge they need to support the needs of adult learners.

Leaders need to strengthen and make more flexible the onboarding process for adult learners to cater for their diverse needs.

Leaders need to develop further the quality of information and guidance given to some adult learners in order to support them in deciding their next steps.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Rated Good

The quality of apprenticeships is GOOD.

Strengths

Leaders and managers have developed very strong links with employers. They use frequent employer forums to enable employers to contribute to and inform the curriculum effectively. For example, college staff worked with 10 small and medium engineering employers to re sequence learning in the metal fabricator standard to ensure that learners could understand practical elements of the subject in the initial stages of the apprenticeship. Almost all employers are highly positive about the quality and content of apprenticeship programmes at the College and are fully committed to supporting their apprentices. Employers continue to work with the College because of the high quality of learning and support that apprentices receive. Leaders and managers ensure that employers understand their responsibilities and hold them to account well to ensure the quality of on-the-job training. Leaders part company quickly with the very small number of employers who are not able to support apprentices effectively.

Leaders, managers and staff ensure that apprentices benefit from robust initial assessment to check that that apprentices are on the correct courses and with the most suitable employers. Almost all apprentices quickly develop the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable them to be effective in the workplace. The small number of apprentices who need to take English examinations archive well.

Staff prepare apprentices well for their final assessments. A sizeable minority of staff have become independent end point assessors which ensures that they understand the requirements of assessment well. Apprentices on hairdressing, business and customer services, engineering and carpentry apprenticeships achieve particularly well. A very high proportion of apprentices stay with their employers and receive promotion/higher salaries and more responsibility.

Leaders and managers ensure that trainers are up to date, experienced and have current industry experience. Trainers benefit from supportive and developmental training which helps them stay up to date. For example, construction trainers work with Taylor Wimpey to learn about current techniques when building new properties. Groundwork trainers learn about 'no dig' construction and the use of drones when site planning through their links with Anglian Water.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive high quality teaching and training. Trainers check apprentices work carefully and give them useful feedback which helps them improve their work. Most trainers check carefully that apprentices understand new concepts and knowledge. They identify quickly any apprentices falling behind and support them well to catch up. Trainers use scorecards and progress reviews well to check the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop and apply in the workplace during their programmes. Apprentices produce particularly high-quality work in engineering, business and customer service, leadership and management, hairdressing, commis chef and carpentry.

Many apprentices benefit from extra qualifications and courses which help them gain additional skills that employers value highly. For example, apprentices studying engineering standards participate in courses that enable them to gain hand skills. Apprentices studying accountancy take an additional AAT qualification. Apprentices studying digital skills take useful Google Analytics and Microsoft qualifications.

Staff identify and support apprentices with SEND/ALS particularly well. They assess apprentices' additional needs carefully and plan the support required in college and in the workplace sensibly to ensure that it is bespoke and effective. Staff work closely with employers to ensure that they understand apprentices' additional needs.

Apprentices attend training sessions well. They are punctual and ready to learn. Trainers create professional environments within the classroom which replicate industry and the workplace well. They use effective resources to inspire and enthuse apprentices. As a result, almost all apprentices quickly develop professional attitudes to learning. Staff ensure that apprentices develop themselves beyond the apprenticeship requirements. For example, apprentices learn about local threats such as knife crime and county lines. Apprentices learn about their corporate and social responsibilities and most apply this knowledge well at college and in work. Staff ensure that apprentices are safe when in college and in the workplace. They make sure that apprentices know how to report any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders and managers ensure that they satisfy the requirements of an apprenticeship programme. Staff carefully track the quality and quantity of apprentices' off the-job training. Leaders challenge trainers effectively to ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to off the-job training.

Areas for Improvement

A small number of apprentices have not been able to achieve in a timely fashion.

Achievement for a few apprentices on longer courses continues to be affected by the legacy of COVID.

Achievement for the small number of apprentices who need to take mathematics examinations is too low.

A small number of trainers need further support to enable them to be fully effective and consistent in the classroom.

PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH HIGH NEEDS

Rated Good

The quality of programmes for learners who have high needs is GOOD.

Strengths

Leaders and managers have carefully designed a range of effective pathways for learners in discrete high needs provision. The intent of these courses for learners with high needs is clear and ambitious and aligns well to the SEND Code of Practice. Leaders, managers and teachers have high expectations for what learners on these programmes can achieve. They check learners' progress carefully and frequently and know the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision well.

The discrete provision for high needs learners is highly effective. Learners achieve very well. Retention is high and learners benefit from highly effective initial advice and guidance to ensure that they are on the correct programmes. Leaders and managers liaise closely with relevant Local Authorities, secondary schools, special schools and other specialist services to ensure appropriate funding is secured and used effectively to plan, manage and develop the provision for each individual learner across the mainstream and discrete provisions. Staff assess learners' starting points carefully and effectively. They use these starting points well to set learners challenging goal.

Leaders and managers have developed highly effective programmes that challenge learners well to develop their independence, improve their communication skills and make relevant personal choices and decisions. As a result, learners are well prepared for their next steps, adult life and living independently in line with expectations set out in the SEND code of practice. Learners participate in good-quality and individually tailored learning programmes that lead to paid or voluntary employment where appropriate (including to supported internships, traineeships, and apprenticeships) and to greater independence in their everyday lives. The overwhelming majority of learners with high needs on mainstream programmes achieve as well as (or better than) their peers.

Managers continually evaluate and improve the provision for high needs funded learners. Staff review education, health and care plans effectively and ensure that they are in line with statutory requirements with robust procedures in place to ensure meaningful progression towards outcomes. Leaders use subcontracted provision well to meet the needs of learners that the College would otherwise not be able to support. Leaders and managers know the strengths and weaknesses of specialist subcontracted provision well. They work closely with managers of subcontracted provision to ensure that almost all learners in these provisions benefit from effective provision.

Learners have access to, and engage effectively with, a rich set of opportunities to develop themselves beyond the vocational curriculum. Their learning prepares them well for life in modern Britain. The learn about topics such as staying safe (including when online), keeping healthy and forming positive relationships. Highly positive relationships between staff and learners reflect a respectful culture where the principles of equality and diversity are nurtured. High needs learners attend well.

Staff have the appropriate expertise to support learners effectively across both the discrete and mainstream provisions. Staff understand well how to assess and defuse any instances of challenging behaviour and are skilled in doing so. Staff use specific behavioural strategies such as social stories, comic strips and visual behaviour plans to give learners clear and accessible rules and boundaries to follow. As a result, learners understand their responsibilities well and are committed to learning.

Safeguarding for learners with high needs is appropriate and effective. Staff ensure that learners are safe in college and understand how to report concerns.

Areas for Improvement

A few teachers in the mainstream have not yet developed the skills to enable them to challenge and stretch learners with high needs consistently.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Rated Good

The quality of Higher Education programmes is GOOD.

Strengths

Leaders have created a sensible programme of higher education courses to support learners in Milton Keynes and beyond. They use a good range of information from external stakeholders to inform both the content and range of these programmes. Frequent employer forums help leaders and managers develop the higher education curriculum effectively so that it aligns well with local and regional priorities and needs.

Staff help most higher education learners to quickly develop effective independent learning and study skills. Excellent facilities and resources help learners thrive in a professional environment. For example, higher education learners have access to HE-specific study rooms as well as access to specialist areas outside of lesson times. Learners benefit from a wide range of effective online and physical resources that help most make quick progress with their studies and support those moving from further to higher education well.

Teachers of higher education learners are experienced, well qualified and effective classroom practitioners. Most present information clearly and enthuse learners. They check what learners are learning carefully and support any learners who fall behind well. Most teachers communicate complex concepts clearly so that learners quickly understand and remember new knowledge and can apply this knowledge to future learning. They give learners useful feedback which enables most learners to improve their work quickly.

Most higher education learners attend well. They enjoy their learning and a very high proportion of those who complete their courses achieve their qualifications. Staff help higher education learners gain useful and work-relevant skills thorough trips and visits. For example, public services learners visit local prisons and receive riot training to help them understand fully the occupations where many will work. Staff help most higher education learners engage with industry-standard projects and work, which helps them develop useful employability skills. For example, learners studying digital skills contribute to the production of well-known children's television shows.

Areas for Improvement

Retention of higher education learners is too low.

A few higher education learners with specific learning needs do not receive funding that helps them gain the support that they need to be successful.

A constrained higher education offer means that high proportions of learners will seek further study elsewhere.

Income breakdown by Provision Type

Legend:
- **EPYP** (65%)
- **Adult** (10%)
- **Apprenticeship** (11%)
- **High Needs** (11%)
- **Higher Education** (3%)
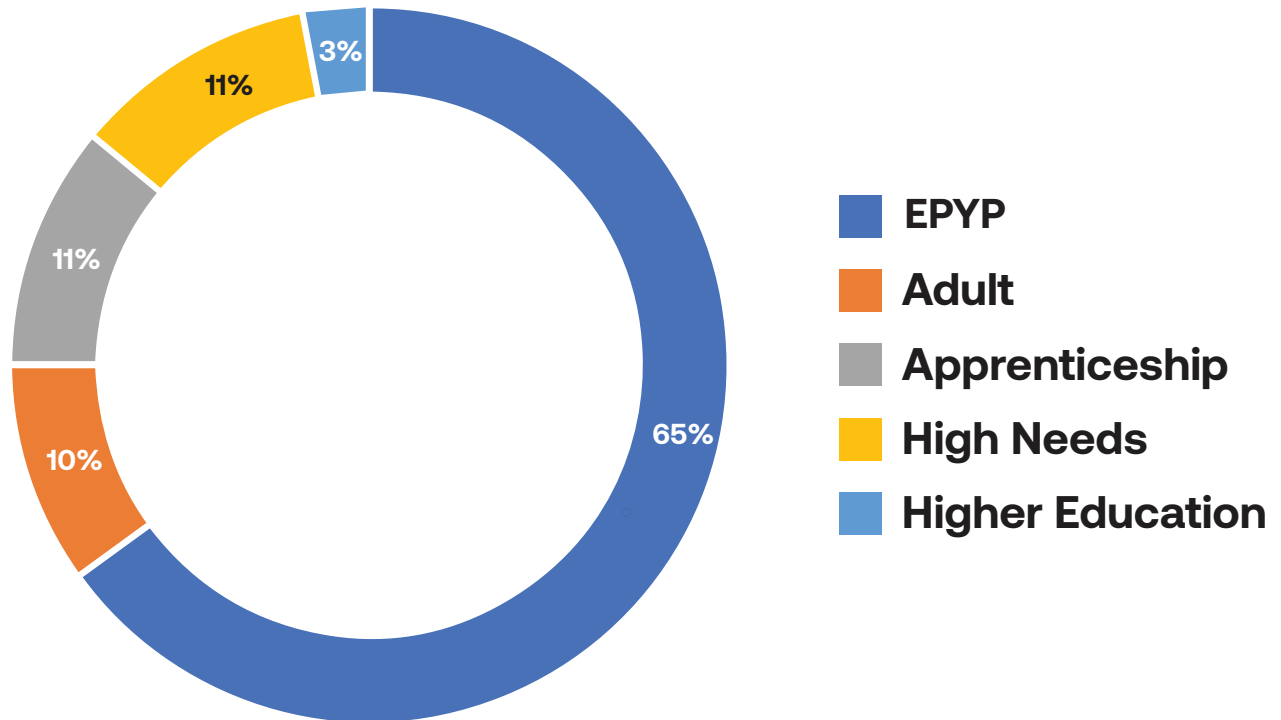
Appendix 2

Grade Profile of School self-assessment reports

	Overall Effectiveness 2021/22	Overall Effectiveness 2022/23	Change	Quality of Education	Behaviours & Attitudes	Personal Development	Leadership & Management
Active	2	2	→	2	2	2	2
Adult	2	2	→	2	2	2	2
Apprenticeships	2	2	→	2	2	2	2
Care (and Access)	3	2	↑	2	2	2	2
Construction and Built Environment	3	2	↑	2	3	3	2
Creative	2	2	→	2	2	2	2
ESOL	2	2	→	2	1	2	2
Digital and Business	2	2	→	2	2	2	2
Engineering	2	2	→	2	2	2	2
HBH&MV	2	2	→	2	2	1	2
Inclusive (and ESOL)	1	1	→	1	1	1	1
Institute of Technology	Ungraded	2	→	2	2	3	2
Project One	Ungraded	2	→	2	2	2	2

Appendix 3

Appendix A: Overall achievements of learners

Overall Achievement including English & Maths	20/21 Ach	Difference	21/22 Ach	Difference	22/23 Ach	Difference
All Students	79.8%	↓	83.1%	↑	84.5%	↑
Female	85.1%	↓	84.7%	↓	85.2%	↓
Male	71.8%	↓	81.2%	↑	83.6%	↑
16 - 18	86.3%	↓	85.6%	↓	81.9%	↓
19+	93.4%	↓	89.4%	↓	85.5%	↓
Entry Level	72.5%	↓	86.6%	↑	84.3%	↓
Level 1	61.9%	↓	65.8%	↑	75.2%	↑
Level 2	83.0%	↓	86.4%	↑	83.5%	↓
Level 3	86.1%	↓	84.4%	↓	87.6%	↑

Appendix B: Vocational Achievement

Voicational Achievement	20/21		21/22		22/23	
All Students	79.8%		83.1%		86.0%	
Female	92.8%	↓	88.5%	↓	87.1%	↓
Male	84.8%	↓	85.6%	↑	84.3%	↓
16 - 18	86.3%	↓	85.6%	↓	84.2%	↓
19+	93.4%	↓	89.4%	↓	87.7%	↓
Entry Level	87.8%	↓	89.4%	↑	86.6%	↓
Level 1	84.7%	↓	84.8%	→	84.4%	→
Level 2	93.4%	↓	89.5%	↓	85.3%	↓
Level 3	86.1%	↓	84.4%	↓	87.6%	↑

Appendix C: English and maths achievement

English & Maths Achievement	20/21 Starts	Ach	High Grades	21/22 Starts	Ach	High Grades	22/23 Starts	Ach	High Grades	Difference from Last Year Starts	Ach	High Grades
Basic Skills Maths and English	1395	28.5%		664	50.0%		2911	64.0%		63	↑	n/a
English	413	51.1%		257	60.7%		1164	76.0%		33	↑	n/a
Maths	982	18.9%		407	43.2%		1747	55.4%		30	↑	n/a
GCSE Maths and English	1292	82.7%	36.8%	1572	83.7%	26.3%	6827	83.2%	21.1%	134	↓	↓
English	772	79.0%	35.6%	713	83.7%	30.9%	3135	84.9%	28.5%	70	↑	↓
Maths	520	88.1%	38.7%	859	83.7%	22.5%	3692	81.7%	14.8%	64	↓	↓

Appendix D

Retention and achievement by ethnicity group

Retention & Achievement by Ethnic group (Vocational)	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last Year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Any Other	150	84.7%	90.0%	166	91.0%	94.0%	304	78.9%	87.8%	138	↓	↓
Bangladeshi	64	95.3%	98.4%	84	88.1%	91.7%	84	94.0%	96.4%	0	↑	↑
Black African	462	85.3%	90.5%	489	86.1%	93.3%	533	89.7%	94.2%	44	↑	↑
Black Caribbean	69	91.3%	91.3%	35	88.6%	91.4%	49	85.7%	87.8%	14	↓	↓
Black Other	94	86.2%	92.6%	104	86.5%	90.4%	125	84.8%	91.2%	21	↓	↑
Chinese	29	96.6%	100.0%	22	100.0%	100.0%	29	79.3%	79.3%	7	↓	↓
Indian	104	95.2%	99.0%	75	90.7%	92.0%	78	88.5%	92.3%	3	↓	→
Mixed	307	88.6%	91.9%	264	86.4%	91.3%	320	80.6%	85.9%	56	↓	↓
Other Asian	150	84.0%	89.3%	194	84.0%	91.8%	335	86.5%	95.5%	141	↑	↑
Pakistani	118	91.5%	95.8%	109	94.5%	96.3%	123	88.5%	92.6%	14	↓	↓
Unknown	3	66.7%	66.7%	9	88.9%	88.9%	5	80.0%	100.0%	-4	↓	↑
White	5005	90.9%	93.4%	3455	87.1%	91.1%	4140	86.3%	90.4%	685	↓	↓

Appendix E: Retention and achievement of high needs learners

High needs Students Achievement & Retention	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
High Needs Student	303	67.3%	92.1%	284	82.7%	92.6%	430	87.2%	92.8%	146	4.5%	0.2%

Appendix F: Retention and achievement by declared learning difficulty or disability

	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Has difficulty/disability/ health problem	1317	89.2%	92.2%	1209	86.5%	90.0%	1502	85.5%	90.1%	Starts	Ach	Ret
Asperger's syndrome	41	97.6%	100.0%	40	97.5%	97.5%	38	81.6%	89.5%	-2	↓	↓
Autism spectrum disorder	121	89.3%	90.9%	123	91.9%	92.7%	201	89.5%	94.0%	78	↓	↑
Disability affecting mobility	42	85.7%	90.5%	35	88.6%	94.3%	55	92.7%	94.5%	20	↑	→
Dyscalculia	11	81.8%	81.8%	4	75.0%	100.0%	16	87.5%	87.5%	12	↑	↓
Dyslexia	289	91.3%	94.1%	250	87.2%	92.0%	265	86.0%	89.4%	15	↓	↓
Hearing impairment	36	91.7%	97.2%	49	81.6%	87.8%	33	87.9%	90.9%	-16	↑	↑
Mental health difficulty	163	86.5%	89.6%	127	75.6%	79.5%	209	81.2%	87.9%	82	↑	↑
Moderate learning difficulty	102	90.2%	90.2%	96	87.5%	90.6%	76	89.5%	90.8%	-20	↑	→
Other disability	83	85.5%	90.4%	90	87.8%	87.8%	92	85.7%	87.9%	2	↓	→
Other learning difficulty	44	81.8%	90.9%	53	84.9%	92.5%	73	89.0%	94.5%	20	↑	↑
Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	181	90.1%	92.3%	163	89.0%	91.4%	182	91.2%	95.6%	19	↑	↑
Other physical disability	30	90.0%	90.0%	25	92.0%	92.0%	25	76.0%	84.0%	0	↓	↓
Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. Dyspraxia)	23	100.0%	100.0%	14	85.7%	85.7%	19	100.0%	100.0%	5	↑	↑
Profound complex disabilities	2	100.0%	100.0%	3	66.7%	100.0%	1	100.0%	100.0%	-2	↑	→
Severe learning difficulty	14	92.9%	100.0%	14	100.0%	100.0%	28	85.7%	89.3%	14	↓	↓
Social and emotional difficulties	76	80.3%	86.8%	83	83.1%	86.7%	129	73.4%	79.7%	46	↓	↓
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	8	87.5%	87.5%	18	83.3%	94.4%	25	84.0%	88.0%	7	↑	↓
Temporary disability after illness (for example post-viral) or accident	8	100.0%	100.0%	1	100.0%	100.0%	5	60.0%	80.0%	4	↓	↓
Vision Impairment	43	95.3%	97.7%	21	81.0%	85.7%	30	73.3%	86.7%	9	↓	↑
No Learning Difficulty	5228	90.4%	93.4%	3786	87.6%	92.2%	4611	86.2%	91.0%	825	↓	↓
None Disclosed	10	80.0%	90.0%	11	54.5%	72.7%	12	75.0%	75.0%	1	↑	↑

Appendix G

Overall Apprenticeship achievement

Overall Apprenticeship Achievement	20/21			21/22			22/23		
	Ach	Difference	Starts	Ach	Difference	Starts	Ach	Difference	
All Apprentices	62.9%	↑	187	68.8%	↑	447	53.6%	↓	
Male	61.8%	↓	112	65.2%	↑	284	45.2%	↓	
Female	64.6%	↑	75	74.3%	↑	163	65.5%	↓	
16–18	66.1%	↑	84	67.5%	↑	212	53.2%	↓	
Adult	59.7%	↓	103	69.0%	↑	235	54.0%	↓	

Appendix H: Headline learner numbers

Age	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
16 – 18	5097	73.3%	89.0%	4558	81.7%	88.9%	4737	81.9%	88.7%	179	→	→
19+	4145	87.8%	94.2%	2684	85.4%	90.5%	3822	85.5%	90.0%	1138	→	→

Sex	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Female	5563	85.1%	94.0%	3926	84.7%	89.9%	4908	84.3%	89.2%	982	→	↓
Male	3679	71.8%	87.4%	3316	81.2%	89.1%	3651	82.4%	89.3%	335	↑	→

Level	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Entry Level	858	72.5%	90.0%	1043	86.6%	93.3%	1777	84.3%	92.8%	734	↓	→
Level 1	1190	61.9%	88.5%	1013	65.8%	88.7%	888	75.2%	88.7%	–125	↑	→
Level 2	5548	83.0%	92.5%	3576	86.4%	88.4%	4358	83.5%	87.0%	782	↓	↓
Level 3	1619	86.1%	90.2%	1599	84.4%	90.1%	1532	87.6%	92.2%	–67	↑	↑
Level 4	17	76.5%	94.1%	8	75.0%	75.0%	4	0.0%	0.0%	–4	↓	↓
Level 5	10	60.0%	60.0%	3	66.7%	66.7%						

Learning Difficulties or Disability	20/21			21/22			22/23			Difference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Has difficulty/ disability/health problem	2194	73.2%	90.5%	1971	78.6%	87.1%	2427	82.2%	88.8%	456	↑	↑
No Learning Difficulty	7025	81.9%	91.6%	5249	84.9%	90.4%	6109	84.1%	89.5%	860	↓	↓
None Disclosed	23	65.2%	95.7%	22	63.6%	81.8%	23	73.9%	73.9%	1	↑	↓

Ethnicity	20/21			21/22			22/23			ifference from Last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Other Enthic Group	3241	77.3%	91.1%	3062	84.1%	91.1%	3828	83.9%	90.6%	766	→	→
White British	5994	81.2%	91.5%	4169	82.3%	88.3%	4731	83.2%	88.2%	562	↑	→
Not Provided	7	42.9%	57.1%	11	90.9%	90.9%				–11	↓	↓

Appendix 4

Quality Improvement Plan Headlines

QIP (quality improvement plan) themes emerging from individual School SAR (self-assessment report) review:

- Attendance across provision (especially true for lower levels and English and mathematics)
- Mathematics outcomes (both GCSE and functional skills)
- Apprenticeship timely achievement. (Compliance)
- Consistent (and multiple) uptake of work experience and access to work-related activity and careers encounters
- Consistent (and multiple) access to skills competitions and social action projects
- [For a minority:] Target setting, stretch and challenge and progress from starting points.
- [For a minority] Exam performance for externally set and moderated exams

Contextual QIP Themes:

- Staff turnover and continuous onboarding and inducting of new starters.

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