



# MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

### 2024/25

Building Fairer Futures.

The 2024-25 Self-Assessment Report has been compiled through the use of 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 students. The report gives oversight of the College's overall performance and highlights progress against the College Quality Improvement Plan.

## **Milton Keynes College Group Self-Assessment for 2024/25 is overall Good (Grade 2)**

Contribution to meeting skills need	Strong
Quality of Education	Grade 2 (Good)
Behaviours and Attitudes	Grade 2 (Good)
Personal Development	Grade 2 (Good)
Leadership and Management	Grade 1 (Outstanding)
Safeguarding	Effective
<b>Provision Types:</b>	
Education Programmes for Young People	Grade 2 (Good)
Adult	Grade 1 (Outstanding)
Apprenticeships	Grade 2 (Good)
High Needs	Grade 1 (Outstanding)
Higher Education	Grade 2 (Good)

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# Information about Milton Keynes College

## in 2024-25

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](http://www.mkcollege.ac.uk)

Milton Keynes College is a general Further Education College located across two campuses in central Milton Keynes. The College campus is part of the wider Milton Keynes College Group, the only Further Education 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 2024-25 Self-Assessment Report. As we navigate through ever changing times, I am immensely proud of the achievements of both students and staff at Milton Keynes College Group.

The College continues to operate at the heart of its communities, building Fairer Futures and instilling our values of inspire, excellence, innovation, respect, integrity and belonging into all we do. Our work with local, regional, and national partners continues to help shape our curriculum for the people of the City and those within our many communities, creating opportunities through meeting skills need.

Over the last year, the College has developed its curriculum to support the diverse needs of our community here in the City with, for example, the introduction of A Level provision, so that young people can now access a range of routes as they choose a career path for them.

As Milton Keynes College Group is the only further education provider in the City, we are fully committed to providing an outstanding experience for our learners with LLDD needs. We 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 work closely with the City Council to ensure we are approaching the next steps in a young person's life collaboratively, ensuring the correct decisions are made to ensure the best academic setting for each individual.

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 2024-25 to promote and lead EDI was our continued support for students participating in the Student Commission on Racial Justice, becoming a White Ribbon accredited organisation, signing the AoC EDI Charter and achieving our Investors in Diversity (Gold) accreditation.

Employers are at the heart of what we do, whether it be co-constructing curriculum, creating meaningful work placements for students, or working together to educate apprentices, our work with employers continues to grow and strengthen every year. Initiatives such as our partnership with Red Bull Racing through the STEMx programme are making measurable impacts on young people's lives in Milton Keynes, whilst driving aspiration in STEM subjects and employment for young people. 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). Our Bletchley-based, South Central Institute of Technology, continues to deliver high level digital skills to students at levels 3, 4 and 5, as well as supporting the development of basic digital skills the community through our 'Tech Park' initiative with the City Council.

The College launched its first Climate Action Plan and we are working to ensure all aspects of our organisation, and particularly our curriculum across the board, supports the development of skills in sustainability.

We were successful in securing £6.1 million in Tariff Funding from the Council to enable us to build over 350 new classroom spaces, to support the increase in the numbers of students now attending the College, and so ensuring our Estate is of the highest quality.

2024/25 saw MK College Group enter the penultimate year of our 'Fairer Futures' strategy. This SAR shows the tangible process we are making towards our strategic aims, all geared towards helping us deliver 'exceptional learning experiences.' It gives a strong lead in to 2025/26 academic year where we will deliver our 'Curriculum and Skills' and 'Quality' strategies and focus of delivering exceptional learning experiences for all.



**Sally Alexander**  
CEO & Group Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Alexander".

# Milton Keynes Context

Milton Keynes, situated within the South-East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) region, continues to experience steady growth and urban development. As of early 2025, the city's population is estimated at 288,200. It hosts over 12,675 businesses and is widely recognised for its innovation, connectivity, and economic dynamism. The local economy is now valued at £16.7 billion, with a Gross Value Added (GVA) per filled job of £85,050, well above the UK average of £66,402. This positions Milton Keynes among the most productive urban economies in the country.

The business landscape in Milton Keynes is characterised by a high proportion of micro-businesses, which account for 89% of all enterprises. Small businesses make up 8.6%, medium-sized businesses represent 1.9%, and large businesses – those with 250 or more employees, comprise 0.6%, equating to approximately 76 companies.

The city is home to several major national and international headquarters, including Red Bull Racing, Network Rail, and Santander, reinforcing its reputation as a hub for high-value industries and innovation.

Demographically, Milton Keynes has a younger and more diverse population than the national average. Around 27.6% of residents are aged 19 and under, compared to 23.5% across the UK. Ethnic diversity is notable, with 28% of residents identifying as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), rising to 45% among current learners. Additionally, 26% of residents speak English as a second language, and 1.9% report limited or no English proficiency. Among school-aged children, 15% have identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Despite its overall prosperity, Milton Keynes faces challenges related to deprivation and inequality. It ranks 182 out of 317 local authorities in England on the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), placing it in the national mid-range. However, this ranking masks significant disparities, with nine Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the city falling among the 10% most deprived areas in England, highlighting pockets of acute need.

# 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. The College strategy outlines its commitment to delivering 'Fairer Futures' for its students and the wider local community.**

The College works hard to instil its values of inspire, respect, integrity, innovation, excellence and belonging within all students. 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 delivers education programmes for a wide range of Students, including, T-Levels, A-Levels, Vocational Qualifications such as BTECs, Professional Awards, Apprenticeships, Higher Education Awards, Short qualifications and Professional Development Qualifications. The College Group also incorporates the South-Central Institute for Technology, with a bespoke site at our Bletchley Campus.

The College works closely with the Milton Keynes City Council (the College was a key contributor to the MK 2050 future planning strategy) and the wider 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, The AoC, Awarding Organisations, HMPPS, MK and Northamptonshire Chambers of Commerce, SEMLEP, FSB, Cranfield University, The Open University, Community Partners, local MPs, as well as local, regional and national employers such as Santander, Red Bull Racing, Careys, Silverstone, Nissan, Nifty Lift, Aden Contracting, Aston Martin F1, Marshalls, Seckingtons, FCDO and HMGCC.

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.

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 works closely with employers and stakeholders and our aim is to contribute positively to the demands of services and industry. We involve employers in the development of courses and support professional sectors with learning, development and training through our range of full time, apprenticeship and adult courses.

The College uses 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 SKILLS NEEDS

Strong



# Milton Keynes College makes a strong contribution to meeting the 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, Aimi, Marshall Amplification, WD40, Redbull, SMC and Niftylift to understand current employment and sector skills needs.
- They work closely with civic and public authorities (Milton Keynes City Council) and DWP, chambers of commerce (Milton Keynes Chamber and Northampton and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce) to ensure that their priorities are integral to the College's short, medium and long-term plans.
- Leaders 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 collaborated to develop programmes that define educational pathways and inspire young people and adults to engage with skills learning, particularly in skills gap sectors, for example STEMX and Skill Up: MK.

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 learner's 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 and drive the skills agenda.
- 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.
- Every college School and subject hosts bi-annual employer forums to consult with employers on curriculum content and ensure it is regularly updated.
- Leaders have developed clear curriculum pathways to enable students to progress with their learning.

at all levels work 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 skilfully 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.
- 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; ; barbering learners cutting hair at the hospital.





# QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Good



# Strengths

Learners across the College achieve well, with outcomes that are consistently above national benchmarks. The overall achievement rate stands at 86%, with particularly strong performance in curriculum areas such as Care (95%), Business (93%), Science (90%), Distance Learning (90%) & Adult ESOL (90%). Learners with High Needs achieve vocational qualifications at or above the rate of other learners, reflecting the effectiveness of teaching, assessment, and learner support.

The College's curriculum intent is ambitious, inclusive, and clearly aligned with both learner aspirations and the demands of the regional and national labour market. Leaders and curriculum teams work collaboratively with employers, industry, and awarding bodies to ensure that programmes are designed to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for success in their chosen fields.

Curriculum planning is informed by strong employer links. For example, in Catering, collaboration with Silverstone creates opportunities for sequencing of learning to align with industry requirements. In Health & Social Care, close work with MK University Hospital helps forge a curriculum focussed on key industry requirements. The close collaboration with sector specialists across each department ensures that learners are prepared for progression into high-demand sectors. The curriculum is structured to provide clear progression routes from entry level through to higher level qualifications, with a strong focus on developing transferable skills, technical competence, and professional behaviours.

Teaching, learning and assessment across the College are consistently strong, with 87% of observed practice rated as effective practice. Teachers demonstrate a deep understanding of their subject areas and use a wide range of pedagogical strategies to support learners in building secure and lasting knowledge. Observation data highlights effective behaviour management, adaptive teaching and development of skills for employment as key themes.

Assessment is purposeful and well-integrated into the learning process. Teachers use a variety of formative and summative approaches to monitor progress and inform planning. Learners receive high-quality feedback that helps them understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Assessment plans are reviewed regularly through robust quality assurance processes, including work scrutiny panels, learning walks, student forums, and audits as part of Curriculum Performance Reviews, ensuring consistency and alignment with curriculum intent.

The use of digital tools and industry-standard resources enhances the learning experience across vocational and academic programmes. Learners benefit from access to full Microsoft Office365 packages as part of the colleges Microsoft Showcase College accreditation, along with industry leading technology, such as VR lessons, Emerging Technologies workshops, and sector specific equipment, which support the development of practical skills and reinforce learning in real-world contexts.

Apprenticeship provision is well-integrated with workplace practice. Apprentices use structured tools such as job cards to record their learning and reflect on how new knowledge and skills are applied in their roles. Teachers and assessors work closely with employers to ensure that training complements the taught curriculum and supports meaningful progress.

Learners make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points, acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in further study, employment, or apprenticeships. They are confident, articulate, and able to reflect on their learning, demonstrating a clear understanding of how their education prepares them for future success. As a result, progression into positive destinations is a key strength of the College. 89% of learners move on to further study, employment, or apprenticeships, with many entering roles in regionally significant sectors such as construction and digital. This reflects the strength of the curriculum intent and the effectiveness of its implementation.

Quality improvement systems are well-established and robust. Leaders use a comprehensive framework of quality assurance activities including Curriculum Performance Reviews, learning walks, audits, data reviews, and deep dives, to monitor and enhance the quality of education. These activities are used to identify strengths and areas for development, and to inform targeted CPD for teaching staff.

# Areas for Development

While GCSE and Functional Skills Maths outcomes are above national benchmarks, they remain below internal aspirational expectations. Learners are not consistently making strong progress, and further work is needed drive learner confidence.

High grade attainment is below the college average in the minority of curriculum schools, often linked to high resubmission rates. This is particularly relevant to Digital, Media & Games, and Public Services.

Vocational exam performance is weaker than coursework outcomes in some areas. This disparity may be contributing to lower high-grade rates overall and indicates a need to strengthen exam preparation and curriculum alignment.

T Level Engineering outcomes were significantly below expectations.



# BEHAVIOURS & ATTITUDES

Good





## Strengths

Learners benefit from calm, inclusive, and respectful learning environments across the College. The vast majority arrive punctually, prepared to learn, and demonstrate professional behaviours that support their progression into further study or employment.

Expectations around conduct are consistently high, and learners respond positively to these standards. New learners quickly adopt the respectful and courteous behaviours modelled by their peers, contributing to a culture of mutual respect and tolerance.

Survey feedback reflects this positive culture, with almost all learners agreeing that they understand the behaviour expectations at the College. Learners listen attentively in lessons, engage constructively in discussions, and show respect for differing views and backgrounds. This supports the development of workplace-ready behaviours and contributes to a safe and inclusive college community.

Staff play a key role in helping learners build confidence and resilience, particularly those who may have had negative prior experiences in education. Learners quickly re-engage with learning and begin to believe in their ability to succeed. For example, learners in A-Levels describe the immense progress they have made in a tailored environment, helping them build confidence and resilience. Further to this, students in Arts comment on how the professional environment in which they learn help them to stay focussed and develop their skills.

Support for learners facing personal challenges is strong. Teachers, progress mentors, and support staff work together to help learners stay on track, offering timely interventions when attendance or engagement dips. Learners feel safe on campus and in the surrounding areas, and they know how to report concerns. Almost all learners agreed with the statement “I feel safe at Milton Keynes College,” despite isolated incidents in the local area.

Personal development tutorials are well-received and cover a broad range of relevant topics, including consent, sexual health, and local safeguarding risks. Learners understand how to keep themselves safe and are confident that staff will respond appropriately to any reports of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

The introduction of Campus Managers, supported by the Positive Behaviour Team, and centralised disciplinary tracking has strengthened the College's approach to behaviour management. These systems enable early intervention and support learners in aligning with college values. As a result, learners are increasingly reflective about their conduct and demonstrate improved behaviours in both academic and social settings, shown by exceptional feedback on learner conduct at a range of external engagements including the British Grand Prix, the MK Marathon, and 'MK Can' world record event.

## Areas for Development

Attendance remains below the expected level across several curriculum areas. Overall attendance was 84%, with English and Maths attendance at 81% and 78% respectively. While learners generally demonstrate positive behaviours when present, inconsistent attendance limits their ability to fully engage with learning and make sustained progress.

Low-level disruption is evident in a small number of lessons, particularly where learners are less engaged or where expectations are not consistently reinforced. This can affect the learning experience for others and reduce the overall effectiveness of teaching, as seen particularly in engineering.



# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Good





## Strengths

Learners benefit from a well-structured and coherent personal development programme that runs alongside their academic and vocational studies. The curriculum is designed to prepare learners for life in modern Britain, with a strong focus on equality, diversity, British values, and safeguarding. Topics such as consent, mental health, digital safety, and local risks are delivered through tutorials, campaigns, and enrichment activities, helping learners to make informed choices and stay safe. Key projects including Sustainability challenges resulted in MK College students winning a national competition, highlighting the importance of wider development opportunities in establishing skills for enterprise.

Work experience is a particular strength across the College. 98% of learners engage in high-quality, meaningful placements that reflect real-world industry expectations and help them develop the professional behaviours, confidence, and skills needed for their next steps. These experiences are carefully planned and embedded throughout programmes, with strong employer partnerships supporting delivery. Placements at employers across the region saw learners working alongside industry specialists in sectors including Care, Sports, Cyber Security, and Creative industries, amongst others.

Enrichment opportunities are extensive and inclusive, enabling learners to broaden their horizons, discover new interests, and develop personally and socially. Activities include clubs, societies, and sports programmes that promote physical and mental wellbeing, teamwork, and creativity. Learners regularly participate in events that celebrate diversity, raise awareness of social issues, and promote positive values. Enrichment opportunities include:

- Annual College in the Community Day where all learners engage with local community projects, this year including an MK University Hospital takeover, renovating local community spaces, and visits to elderly members of the community.
- Organisation and participation in the 'MK Can' Guinness World Record attempt which saw Public Service students, amongst others, working with the community to support the local food bank.
- Digital 'Hackathon' saw key stakeholders in the cyber world attend out Institute of Technology to support students to engage in an event to upskill and raise awareness of internet security.

Careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is readily available across the College. Learners receive impartial and timely support from qualified careers staff, helping them to understand their options and plan for progression. This includes targeted support for learners with SEND. Learners are supported through the UCAS process to aid the construction of personal statements and ready them for higher education.

Pastoral support is a significant strength and a key contributor to learners' personal development and success. Staff provide a highly responsive and compassionate support system that enables learners to thrive both academically and personally. The College's wellbeing and resilience team offers targeted interventions for learners experiencing personal, emotional, or mental health difficulties. Progress mentors, tutors, and support staff work collaboratively to identify early signs of disengagement, ensuring learners receive timely help.

Learners also benefit from a wide range of self-help resources and personal development sessions that promote emotional resilience, conflict resolution, and positive mental health. These are delivered through tutorials and enrichment activities and are well-received by learners.

In addition to their main programmes, many learners gain additional qualifications and participate in competitions that enhance their employability and confidence. These experiences help learners to stand out in competitive progression routes and develop a sense of pride in their achievements. For example:

- The Sports Development department provide participation and competitive teams in a range of sports, highlighted by the College football team winning the ECFA National Plate.
- Learners in Public Services are exposed to additional training on first aid, delivered by alumni now working in the Ambulance Service.
- Learners in Music utilise skills developed on the course to participate in Battle of the Bands competitions along with wider performances.

## Areas for Development

The delivery of the personal development curriculum varies across the provision. A small number of teachers lack the necessary confidence and expertise to effectively support learners in deepening their understanding of sensitive topics such as sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and individual characteristics. Additionally, the overall breadth of the curriculum is affected by inconsistent approaches to its delivery across different schools, resulting in inconsistent coverage and learner experience.

Wider skill development is inconsistent across the different provisions. The personal development curriculum provides appropriate links to skill development, entwined into the delivery, however the implementation of the personal development curriculum has meant that some schools are not fully exposed to the entire offer, or that insufficient attention is paid to wider skill enhancement. Further to this, the tracking and assessment of skill development is not consistently built into the delivery offer.

Careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG), is not yet consistently embedded across all areas of provision. In some curriculum schools, learners do not receive timely or sufficiently personalised careers support to help them make informed decisions about their next steps. In addition, consistency of career plans and exposure to bespoke guidance for all sectors is not consistent, shown by careers support being rated as the lowest satisfaction level on the student survey.

A small number of programmes lack structured employer engagement or sufficient opportunities for learning to be enriched.



# LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Good



# Strengths

The College's strategic vision, underpinned by the 'Fairer Futures' strategy and core values, informs decision-making at all levels. Leaders and governors model these values effectively, fostering a culture of high expectations, inclusivity, and continuous improvement for both staff and learners.

Senior leaders and governors are well-connected across local, regional, and national networks, enabling them to influence policy and respond proactively to emerging priorities. Their involvement in forums such as Local Employment Boards, Chambers of Commerce and local school forums ensures the College remains responsive to community needs and economic developments.

Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the local context and use this insight to tackle social inequality through education and training. The College offers inclusive and accessible programmes that reflect the diverse needs of Milton Keynes and the wider South-East Midlands region. Initiatives such as bespoke outreach programmes, ESOL provisions for refugees, and our widely-recognised Skills Academy provision providing extensive opportunity for learners who may otherwise be considered as NEET, exemplify the College's commitment to civic responsibility and social cohesion.

Employer engagement is a key strength. Leaders and curriculum teams work closely with industry partners to co-design programmes that reflect current and future skills needs. Regular employer forums, newsletters, and live projects ensure that learners benefit from relevant, work-focused learning experiences.

Leaders ensure that staff are well-qualified and supported through a robust professional development programme. CPD is aligned with both subject expertise and pedagogical development, with initiatives such as Industry Connect and regular Inset Days helping staff stay current and confident in their delivery. Centrally devised CPD days provided extensive choice of development for staff, whilst unpicking key areas of focus, including challenging behaviours and building confidence in addressing concerns.

Quality assurance processes are rigorous and well-embedded. Leaders and managers use tools such as Curriculum Performance Reviews, deep dives, and data scrutiny to monitor performance and drive improvement. Where issues are identified, leaders respond swiftly and proportionately with bespoke interventions, ensuring learners continue to benefit from high-quality teaching and support.

Staff wellbeing is a priority for leaders. The College has taken proactive steps to address workload and reward, including:

- Employee networks aimed at celebrating and supporting different staffing groups, whilst holding leaders accountable and influencing practice.
- Industry Connect Days allowing designated time for staff to return to their industry and upskill.
- Well-being events and sessions are regularly utilised with activities like Pilates and gym access.
- The College has developed and published both gender and ethnicity pay gap reports, these are reviewed regularly at both ELT meetings and Board.
- Workload and well-being sub-committees have been set up to address challenges swiftly.
- The College made a 3% pay award in 2024/25. This is on the back of pay awards also developed and delivered in 2023/24.

As a result, staff feel well supported, reflected in improved staff retention rates of 12.35%.

Governors bring a wealth of experience from education, business, and community sectors. They provide effective oversight and strategic challenge, ensuring the College remains ambitious and focused on delivering high-quality outcomes for learners. Their commitment to continuous improvement and civic engagement positions the College as a key contributor to regional development.

# Areas for Development

In apprenticeship provision, particularly within engineering and electrical programmes, too many learners remain on programme beyond their planned end dates. Although mitigated by external factors, this impacts timely achievement and progression.

Recruitment to higher education programmes remains below target in several curriculum areas. Despite strong progression support and links with local universities, leaders need to drive a more ambitious and coordinated approach to HE recruitment. This includes reviewing marketing, outreach, and internal progression pathways to ensure learners are fully aware of the opportunities available.

Staff utilisation and deployment require closer attention in light of ongoing sector wide staffing challenges. In some areas, provision has been affected by vacancies or capacity constraints, which can impact consistency of delivery and learner experience. Leaders must ensure that staffing models are responsive, sustainable, and aligned with curriculum demand.



# SAFEGUARDING

Effective



# Safeguarding

## The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective, dynamic and responsive through a range of measures and interventions. Leaders have developed and maintain a strong culture of safeguarding. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly in line with statutory guidance to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that staff and learners know how to report any and all concerns. Annual update training and ad hoc needs-led training is delivered to staff.

There is a dedicated, well qualified and highly experienced team of safeguarding staff in place led by a Head of Safeguarding. The safeguarding team engage with a wide range of external contacts to manage safeguarding concerns effectively. Safeguarding staff liaise closely with external agencies to ensure that they are best able to manage isolated and more widespread concerns. The College is represented on a range of boards and working groups to ensure that the Further Education sector is represented and reflected.

Leaders ensure that new staff are recruited safely and trained appropriately. Any low-level concerns relating to staff are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Leaders have invested in effective filtering and monitoring systems that quickly flag up any concerns when learners are online, and these are addressed by the safeguarding team. Staff also ensure that learners improve their knowledge of how to stay safe when working online. Leaders and staff know about the local risks in Milton Keynes and ensure that learners on campus are safe. Staff adopt an approach of “it could happen here” in line with statutory guidance and are equipped to manage any concerns that arise. The Safeguarding Strategy Group meets termly to review the Strategy, report on compliance and share best practice.



# PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH HIGH NEEDS

Outstanding



# 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. The pathways are communicated with partner agencies to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that they meet local needs. 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 and their families 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 goals and review these throughout the year.

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. Trained staff review Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) effectively and ensure that they are in line with statutory requirements with robust procedures in place to ensure meaningful progression towards outcomes. Arrangements are in place to ensure that relevant and effective provision in place to secure progress towards outcomes.

Leaders use subcontracted provision well to meet the needs of learners for whom campus-based provision is not the appropriate next step. This is assessed through initial IAG and liaison with specialist services. 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. They 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 manage 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. There is effective provision in place to assess and manage learner wellbeing, with referrals made and active liaison between agencies.

Safeguarding for learners with high needs is appropriate and effective. Staff ensure that learners feel and are safe in college and understand how to report concerns. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that they are best placed to support with any emerging or anticipated concerns.

# Areas for Development

Maths outcomes for learners in the discrete provision are an area of focus as results were impacted by a small cohort of learners.

# HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Good



# Strengths

Leaders have created a programme of higher education courses to support learners in the Milton Keynes region and beyond with programmes designed to meet demand from learners progressing from L3 courses at MK College or linked to regional skills development needs. In most cases, external stakeholder input is used to inform the content and range of programmes, and provide significant additional enrichment for HE students, linking classroom-based learning into practice. Recruitment remains a challenge for HE provision, with below target recruitment across all curriculum areas in 2024-25. This is in line with national trends of reductions in HE learners.

Higher education learners are supported well by staff to develop effective independent academic skills relevant to their level of study, and those moving from further to higher education within the College are supported well in this transition. Excellent facilities and resources help learners thrive in a professional environment, with the Institute for Technology, offering a state-of-the-art environment for teaching and learning in digital technologies, and the Engineering school providing workshops for practical application of learning. Students benefit from a wide range of effective online and physical resources that help most to make measurable and sustained progress with their studies. Student Voice feedback confirms that students value these resources highly, and student behaviours demonstrate that they strongly respect their learning environments.

Lecturers on higher education courses are experienced, well qualified and effective practitioners who demonstrate passion for their subject and enthuse students. In most cases learners make good progress, and any learners who fall behind are well supported by academic staff. Most lecturers communicate complex concepts clearly so that students demonstrate effective knowledge acquisition and can apply this knowledge to future learning. They give learners timely and focused feedback which enables most learners to improve their work and develop their skills. Some curriculum areas demonstrate outstanding learner retention and achievement; however this is not in all departments. In one area of provision, recruiting and retaining high quality staff has been problematic, and despite significant interventions, this has impacted on quality of teaching and learning.

Most higher education learners attend well, however some departments fall below college target attendance. In Digital there is exemplary overall attendance. Students enjoy their learning and a very high proportion of those who complete their courses achieve their qualifications.

The College HE courses demonstrate very high levels of stakeholder partnership engagement, which significantly enhances the student experience and ensures that students gain valuable work-related knowledge and skills. Digital students have completed additional industry-specific courses to enhance their employability, including IoT partner KPMG delivering an Ethics in Ai course, they also engaged in the MK festival of Code and Light, working on a large City-wide light installation. Public Service students have received career development guidance from the British Transport Police, and a trip to a Crown Court which is linked to a specific unit outcome.

All courses have specific assessment tasks co-created with external companies, and have engaged with industry staff who have been involved in judging of students showcase material. These projects help students develop employability skills, ensures that the curriculum remains future focused, and has also led to volunteering and career development opportunities for students.

# Areas for Development

Retention and achievement of higher education learners is inconsistent, and needs to improve in some curriculum areas. While academic staff provide effective academic support, higher education staff and students do not consistently make use of the available pastoral support mechanisms. In addition, there is limited support for personal or career development for learners. Student voice mechanisms for higher education students are not fully implemented, with opportunities for student feedback being missed.

Higher education at the college is embedded within mixed-economy FE/HE schools, leading to limited collaboration between HE lecturing staff, and a limited HE eco-system within the college.

The college does not have a mature higher education quality review cycle, supported by HE specific policies and a differentiated approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

A constrained higher education offer means that high proportions of learners seek further study elsewhere. In particular, no options for study at level 6, especially within the IoT, leads learners to look at other options. Similarly, there are limited options available to part time and / or distance learners at level 4 and beyond.

# Provision Types Summary

## Education Programmes for Young People

Key Strengths	Key Areas for Development
Student achievement rates are very high compared to national averages	Attendance at Maths & English Sessions
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Achievement in Maths
Work experience engagement	Student exam preparation

## Adult Learners

Key Strengths	Key Areas for Development
Employer engagement and links with local stakeholders	Consistency of planning curriculum to meet government allocation
Excellent adult attendance	Adult onboarding process to enable seamless enrolment/course bookings and the online payment of fees
Quality of teaching & learning	

## Apprenticeships

Key Strengths	Key Areas for Development
Employer engagement and collaboration	Timeliness of achievement in electrical & engineering
Effective initial assessment	Areas with high withdrawal rates need analysing and improvements identified
Recruitment and onboarding processes	Further career development and exposure to enrichment

# Appendix 1

## Individual School Self-Assessment Grades 2024/25

Department	2023/24	2024-25	Trend
A Levels	N/A	2	N/A
Access	2	1	↑
Adult English & Maths	3	2	↑
Apprenticeships	2	2	=
Business & Computing	2	2	=
Care	2	1	↑
Construction	3	3	=
Creative & Media	1	2	↓
Distance Learning	1	1	=
Engineering	3	4	↓
English	2	2	=
ESOL U19's	N/A	2	N/A
ESOL Adult	N/A	2	N/A
Hair, Beauty, Hospitality	2	2	=
Inclusive Learning	1	1	=
Maths	4	3	↑
Motor Vehicle	2	2	=
Professional	3	3	=
Public Service	2	1	↑
Science	1	2	↓
Skills Academy	3	2	↑
Sport	1	1	=

## Overall Achievement of Students 2024/25

Overall Achievement Including English & Maths	22/23		23/24		24/25	
	Ach		Ach		Ach	
All Students	83.5%	↑	82.9%	↓	86.0%	↑
Female	84.3%	↓	84.0%	↓	88.1%	↑
Male	82.4%	↑	81.7%	↓	83.5%	↑
16 - 18	81.9%	↑	80.5%	↓	85.5%	↑
19+	85.5%	↑	87.1%	↑	87.0%	↓
Entry Level	84.3%	↓	88.6%	↑	85.7%	↓
Level 1	75.2%	↑	60.6%	↓	79.0%	↑
Level 2	83.5%	↓	86.0%	↑	88.4%	↑
Level 3	87.6%	↑	88.2%	↑	87.6%	↓
Level 4	0.0%	↓	61.5%	↑	50.0%	↓
Level 5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

## Overall Vocational Achievement of Student 2024/25

Vocational Achievement	22/23		23/24		24/25	
	Ach		Ach		Ach	
All Students	86.0%	↓	88.3%	↑	88.6%	↑
Female	87.1%	↓	88.9%	↑	90.4%	↑
Male	84.3%	↓	87.5%	↑	86.1%	↓
16 - 18	84.1%	↓	86.8%	↑	88.0%	↑
19+	87.7%	↓	90.2%	↑	89.2%	↓
Entry Level	86.6%	↓	92.7%	↑	87.9%	↓
Level 1	84.4%	↓	77.0%	↓	89.0%	↑
Level 2	85.2%	↓	89.4%	↑	89.6%	↑
Level 3	87.6%	↑	88.2%	↑	87.6%	↓
Level 4	0.0%	↓	61.5%	↑	50.0%	↓
Level 5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

## English & Maths Achievement 2024/25

English & Maths Achievement	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	High Grades	Starts	Ach	High Grades	Starts	Ach	High Grades	Starts	Ach	High Grades
<b>Basic Skills Maths and English</b>	728	63.2%		1,360	54.4%		1,282	67.5%		-78	↑	
English	291	75.6%		569	69.8%		615	75.3%		46	↑	
Maths	437	54.9%		791	43.4%		667	60.4%		-124	↑	
<b>GCSE Maths and English</b>	1,706	83.2%	21.2%	1,607	88.4%	23.5%	1,948	90.6%	26.6%	341	↑	↑
English	783	84.9%	28.5%	792	89.0%	27.8%	930	90.1%	35.5%	138	↑	↑
Maths	923	81.7%	15.0%	815	87.7%	19.3%	1,018	91.1%	18.6%	203	↑	↓

# Retention & Achievement by Ethnic Group

## 2024/25 (Not including English & Maths)

Retention & Achievement by Ethnic Group	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Any Other	304	78.9%	87.8%	272	91.9%	96.7%	201	85.3%	91.6%	-71	↓	↓
Bangladeshi	84	94.0%	96.4%	77	93.5%	96.1%	77	84.4%	94.8%	0	↓	↓
Black African	533	89.7%	94.2%	502	92.4%	94.8%	584	90.2%	95.1%	82	↓	↑
Black Caribbean	49	85.7%	87.8%	35	88.6%	97.1%	52	84.6%	94.2%	17	↓	↑
Black Other	125	84.8%	91.2%	111	88.3%	93.7%	147	91.8%	95.2%	36	↑	↑
Chinese	29	79.3%	79.3%	36	97.2%	97.2%	42	100.0%	100.0%	6	↑	↑
Indian	78	88.5%	92.3%	72	91.7%	91.7%	91	89.0%	92.3%	19	↓	↓
Mixed	319	80.6%	85.9%	338	87.6%	90.2%	363	88.4%	93.1%	25	↑	↑
Other Asian	334	86.5%	95.5%	265	88.3%	92.8%	270	89.6%	94.6%	5	↑	↑
Pakistani	122	88.5%	92.6%	105	85.7%	92.4%	150	88.0%	93.3%	45	↑	↑
Unknown	5	80.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	13	69.2%	76.9%	3	↓	↓
White	4,125	86.2%	90.4%	3,720	87.4%	91.0%	3,760	88.4%	92.6%	40	↑	↑

# Retention & Achievement of High Needs Students

Retention & Achievement by High Needs Students	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
High Needs Students	430	87.2%	92.8%	520	81.0%	91.2%	601	84.7%	96.5%	81	↑	↑

\*Not including English & Maths

Retention & Achievement by High Needs Students	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
High Needs Students	223	90.1%	94.2%	248	89.1%	92.7%	259	91.9%	96.5%	11	↑	↑

# Retention & Achievement by declared learning difficulty or disability

Retention & Achievement by declared learning Difficulty or disability	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Asperger's syndrome	38	81.6%	89.5%	30	93.3%	96.7%	32	96.9%	100.0%	2	↑	↑
Autism spectrum disorder	200	89.5%	94.0%	240	90.8%	93.8%	261	80.5%	86.6%	21	↓	↓
Disability affecting mobility	55	92.7%	94.5%	38	76.3%	78.9%	28	75.0%	78.6%	-10	↓	↓
Down Syndrome		n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	1	n/a	100.0%	1	↑	↑
Dyscalculia	16	87.5%	87.5%	13	84.6%	92.3%	12	91.7%	100.0%	-1	↑	↑
Dyslexia	265	86.0%	89.4%	257	87.5%	89.9%	296	89.5%	93.9%	39	↑	↑
Hearing impairment	33	87.9%	90.9%	26	88.5%	88.5%	26	92.3%	96.2%	0	↑	↑
Mental health difficulty	207	81.2%	87.9%	162	74.1%	79.0%	151	81.5%	89.4%	-11	↑	↑
Moderate learning difficulty	76	89.5%	90.8%	58	91.4%	93.1%	63	77.4%	87.1%	5	↓	↓
Other disability	91	85.7%	87.9%	117	86.3%	92.3%	120	89.1%	91.6%	3	↑	↓
Other learning difficulty	73	89.0%	94.5%	73	84.9%	91.8%	74	83.3%	94.4%	1	↓	↑
Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)	181	91.2%	95.6%	174	91.4%	95.4%	144	89.6%	95.8%	-30	↓	↑
Other physical disability	25	76.0%	84.0%	28	89.3%	92.9%	38	94.7%	97.4%	10	↑	↑
Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. Dyspraxia)	19	100.0%	100.0%	21	90.5%	100.0%	27	92.6%	92.6%	6	↑	↓
Profound complex disabilities	1	100.0%	100.0%	2	100.0%	100.0%	1	100.0%	100.0%	-1	→	→
Severe learning difficulty	28	85.7%	89.3%	16	81.3%	87.5%	13	84.6%	92.3%	-3	↑	↑
Social and emotional difficulties	128	73.4%	79.7%	146	85.6%	89.0%	158	86.7%	91.8%	12	↑	↑
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	25	84.0%	88.0%	18	94.4%	94.4%	23	78.3%	91.3%	5	↓	↓
Temporary disability after illness (for example post-viral) or accident	5	60.0%	80.0%	2	100.0%	100.0%	2	50.0%	50.0%	0	↓	↓
Vision Impairment	30	73.3%	86.7%	35	80.0%	88.6%	38	92.1%	97.4%	3	↑	↑
<b>Not provided</b>	4,599	86.2%	91.0%	4,076	89.0%	92.5%	4,228	89.5%	93.6%	152	↑	↑
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	12	75.0%	75.0%	11	81.8%	81.8%	14	100.0%	100.0%	3	↑	↑

# Overall Apprenticeship Achievement

	22/23		23/24		24/25		Difference from last year	
	Starts	Ach	Starts	Ach	Starts	Ach	Starts	Ach
<b>Overall Apprenticeship Achievement</b>								
All Apprentices	262	53.3%	436	65.8%	347	62.4%	-89	↓
Male	153	44.4%	296	63.1%	269	61.6%	-27	↓
Female	109	65.7%	140	70.3%	78	64.8%	-62	↓
16 - 18	126	52.8%	216	63.4%	167	57.1%	-49	↓
19+	136	53.7%	220	68.2%	180	66.9%	-40	↓

# Headline Student Numbers

Age	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
16 - 18	4,738	81.9%	88.7%	5,419	80.5%	89.3%	5,833	85.5%	92.2%	414	↑	↑
19+	3,803	85.5%	90.0%	3,091	87.1%	90.6%	3,147	87.0%	92.9%	56	↓	↑

Sex	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Female	4,889	84.3%	89.2%	4,655	84.0%	90.0%	4,823	88.1%	93.2%	168	↑	↑
Male	3,652	82.4%	89.3%	3,855	81.7%	89.5%	4,157	83.5%	91.6%	302	↑	↑

Level	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Entry Level	1,777	84.3%	92.8%	1,654	88.6%	93.9%	1,585	85.7%	93.9%	-69	↓	→
Level 1	888	75.2%	88.7%	1,329	60.6%	84.0%	1,685	79.0%	93.4%	356	↑	↑
Level 2	4,342	83.5%	87.0%	3,987	86.0%	89.1%	4,218	88.4%	91.7%	231	↑	↑
Level 3	1,530	87.6%	92.2%	1,527	88.2%	92.1%	1,488	87.6%	92.0%	-39	↓	↓
Level 4	4	0.0%	0.0%	13	61.5%	69.2%	4	50.0%	75.0%	-9	↓	↑

Learning Difficulties or Disability	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Has difficulty/disability/health problem	2,421	82.2%	88.8%	2,621	78.6%	87.6%	2,762	83.3%	91.7%	141	↑	↑
No Learning difficulties	6,097	84.0%	89.5%	5,872	84.9%	90.8%	6,194	87.3%	92.8%	322	↑	↑
None disclosed	23	73.9%	73.9%	17	70.6%	76.5%	24	79.2%	95.8%	7	↑	↑

Ethnic Group	22/23			23/24			24/25			Difference from last year		
	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret	Starts	Ach	Ret
Other Ethnic group	3,819	83.9%	90.6%	3,767	84.9%	92.2%	4,030	86.5%	93.6%	263	↑	↑
White British	4,717	83.2%	88.2%	4,721	81.3%	87.8%	4,931	85.7%	91.6%	210	↑	↑
Not Provided	5	80.0%	100.0%	22	100.0%	100.0%	19	63.2%	73.7%	-3	↓	↓

# Quality Improvement Plan Headlines

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

- Attendance across provision (especially true for English and mathematics)
- Mathematics outcomes (both GCSE and functional skills)
- The Personal Development Curriculum
- Vocational Exam Performance
- High Grades
- Careers support across all provisions
- HE recruitment & student experience







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