

Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty 2024/25

Statement of Purpose

The College was founded in 1984 and in 1992 was incorporated as an independent body. On 1st April 2019 the College achieved 16-19 academy status and joined the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust.

The College has 1750 students who are almost exclusively full-time. The College offers thirty-four A Level subjects along with Applied programmes in Business, Criminology, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Law, IT, Sport & Exercise Science, and Travel, T Levels in Education and Health and we will introduce a Business & Administration T Level and Medical Science Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) in September 2025. Of our current cohort, approximately 47% are enrolled on an A Level programme, 34% on a Mixed programme, 16% on an Applied programme and 3% on Level 2 courses.

The College's priority is to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment in which our students achieve outstanding academic outcomes and personal development to equip them to progress to university, employment or an apprenticeship of their choice.

Context and Place

Worcester Sixth Form College is located in the city of Worcester and around 50% of our intake each year is drawn from partner schools with other students deciding to attend College rather than stay at a school sixth form in the county or adjacent areas. We liaise with local bus providers to ensure provision is aligned with student applications and also subsidise connecting bus travel for students who travel by train.

The College recruit from the Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest areas which are all in the bottom quintile (20%) for social mobility. Worcester average earnings of £33,891 (September 2024 ONS data) compare unfavourably to the UK average of £38,600. There are, however, lower levels of unemployment (3.4% compared to 3.7% nationally – May 2024 ONS data). Worcestershire has, however, improved its representation in the higher skilled occupations – 35% compared with 32% nationally.

Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability

The Worcestershire Local Skills Report identified the following priorities for employers in the county:

- Creating a skilled workforce with IT, job specific and technical skills
- Increasing demand for health and care skills to meet the needs of an ageing population
- Increasing levels of employment in the digital sector
- Developing individuals with leadership and management skills
- Filling significant existing vacancies in engineering, manufacturing and adult social care

Worcestershire's Skills Action Plan identified priorities of which the below are relevant to the College:

- To aim for all educational establishments to annually meet all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks with a particular focus on the Worcestershire economy
- To create an education and training provision eco-system that meets local needs and the future trend's of Worcestershire's economy
- To increase the number of graduates and skilled young people who spend a significant part of their economic life in Worcestershire

The College has used these findings as a basis to review our current provision and engagement with a view to identifying actions that ensure that we contribute to national, regional and local priorities.

Contribution to National, Regional, Local Priorities

With a range of A level, Applied and T Level qualifications alongside a small number of GCSEs, the College’s curriculum is strong and there is an extensive programme of study, which further supports the skills development of our students so that they are successful academically and also have the skills to make them ready for the workplace and assets to local employers. An outline of how the College’s curriculum aligns to local, regional and national priorities is shown below:

Skills Area	Local Priority	West Midlands Priority	National Priority	Emergent Priority	Worcester Sixth Form College Offer	Related Subjects or Enrichment
Aerospace		✓				Physics A Level Engineering Applied L3 Physics & Engineering Academy
Advanced manufacturing/ Engineering	✓		✓		✓	Engineering Applied L3
Agritech	✓					
Business Services	✓				✓	Accounting A Level Business A Level Business Applied L3 Business & Marketing L2 Economics A level
Construction	✓		✓		✓	Business A Level Maths A Level Maths GCSE
Creative content production and gaming		✓			✓	Computer Science A Level IT Applied L3 Media Studies A Level Graphic Design A Level Computer Games Design
Digital & technology			✓		✓	Computer Science A Level IT Applied L3 Media Studies A Level Graphic Design A Level Computer Games Design
Health and social care	✓		✓		✓	Health & Social Care Applied L3 & L2 Health T Level
Health tech and med tech		✓			✓	Health & Social Care Applied L3 & L2 Health T Level
Leisure, travel and tourism				✓	✓	Travel & Tourism Applied L3 Food Science & Nutrition Applied L3
Logistics and distribution/haulage		✓	✓		✓	Maths A Level Maths GCSE
Manufacturing			✓			

Manufacturing of future housing		✓				
Manufacture of electric light vehicles and associated battery devices		✓			✓	Engineering Applied L3 Physics A Level Maths A Level
Modern and low carbon utilities		✓			✓	Environmental Science A Level
Professional and financial services and supply		✓			✓	Accounting A Level Business A Level Business Applied L3 Business & Marketing L2 Economics A level Maths A Level Further Maths A Level Maths GCSE Core Maths
Public services				✓	✓	Economics A Level Geography A Level History A Level Law A Level PE A Level Politics A Level Psychology A Level Sociology A Level
Science and Maths			✓		✓	Biology A Level Chemistry A Level Engineering Applied L3 Maths A Level Further Maths A Level Maths GCSE Physics A Level Core Maths Geology A Level Environmental Science A Level Psychology A Level

The College's investment in STEM subjects is notable with a £3.1 million investment in phase 2 of the Science Centre creating four industry standard laboratories and specialist preparatory room and classroom space in addition to the four laboratories created as part of phase 1. Each year the College has success in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths Olympiads/Challenges indicating the emphasis the College places on real world application of science and maths problems. With 253 students studying Core Maths, the College is better preparing students to enter the workplace through enhancing their mathematical skills beyond what is expected in the curriculum. The College is also highly successful in supporting students to gain their Maths GCSE where they did not pass in the first instance (40.1% achieved grade 4 or above compared to 18.6% nationally). This along with similar success in English GCSE resits (52% achieved grade 4 or above compared to 22.9% nationally) helps create a cohort of young people suitably qualified to enter the workforce in the areas identified.

Through extensive participation in additional qualifications (e.g. EPQ, Core Maths) and enrichment such (e.g. Ambition Programme, Student Union), the College also develops students skills to enable them to become more rounded individuals prepared for higher education or to enter the workplace and these skills (e.g. presentation, communication, organisation and community centred) are valued by employers. In any given week, 50% of students take part in some form of enrichment. The skills and qualities developed as part of these additional programmes are inherent of those identified in the Local Skills Report.

The College has a Foundation Year programme enables learners studying below level 3 to make sufficient progress. Students are able to complete Level 2 courses with the aim that they are qualified for progression at College on Level 3 courses or elsewhere. The progress of these students is monitored in the same way as those on level 3 programmes with the same high expectations around attendance and attitudes to study.

The College is taking measures to ensure learners are well prepared to seek and be suitable for employment. The College addresses this through encouraging all students to participate in enrichment to develop social skills and through supporting students to be successful in their outcomes and aspirational about their progression options. Subject related and other enrichment also develop work ready skills, in particular the Professional Programmes in Law, Teaching, Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery and Paramedic Science and Real Estate. The College has introduced Microsoft accredited Certificates to respond directly to skills identified as lacking in the Local Skills Report. These are focused, in the first instance, on students who have identified apprenticeships or employment as their progression route as they will be entering the workforce more imminently.

The College supports the Local Authority in meeting its duty in relation to young people at risk of becoming NEET. The College's Foundation Year programme for those learners not qualified for Level 3 programmes clearly prevents some young people becoming NEET as does the introduction of a T Level which will suit some learners who otherwise might not continue in education. The Foundation curriculum is carefully designed to indicate progression pathways either in the areas of Business, Health and Social Care and Sport, supported by a small number of GCSEs (Citizenship, Film and Photography) alongside Maths and English GCSE resits. The aim is to ensure that students enrol with a clear three year programme and identified progression aims during their time at College.

The College is effective in meeting the needs of learners with special educational needs and disabilities. The College has a large Learning Support team to meet the needs of students with more complex learning needs providing in class support, one to one support, help with exam access arrangements. To provide an example, of the six students completing their studies at the College last year with an EHCP, five of these students achieved results that enabled them to progress to Higher Education.

In relation to the College, a high proportion of students progress to higher education and apprenticeships demonstrating the impact of the curriculum and success in ensuring students leave College with strong outcomes. In 2024, 56% of students in year 2 progressed onto full-time education at university with an additional 13% who intend to apply to university after a gap year. 10% of the cohort secured apprenticeships, however, only 10% of these were at higher or degree level, reflecting the lack of opportunity for this age group with higher/degree apprenticeships in Worcester. In the current academic year, the College has taken steps to identify students who have indicated that they wish to secure an apprenticeship after they complete their studies, and this group of students will attend bespoke sessions aimed at supporting them both to secure an apprenticeship and to be aspirational in the type of apprenticeship they are seeking.

Through its curriculum, the College prepares learners to seek employment in 4 of the 6 key sectors of employment identified. Many of our students have local part-time employment and are prepared through academic study and personal development to be well equipped to seek future local employment.

The Heart of Worcestershire College and other FE providers in the county deliver qualifications in agriculture and construction addressing those areas of local need that the College is unable to respond to.

The introduction of the Health T Level is an excellent example of how the College is responding to a local priority. There are approximately 40,000 nursing vacancies in the UK (RCN) and many of these will be in the West Midlands. Applications for nursing degree courses are down with places not all filled this year. The pressures on the NHS are growing and yet the workforce is diminishing. By offering the Health T Level we are supporting hospitals with students undertaking placements and supporting HCAs carrying out simple tasks and supporting patients. The course inspires students whilst providing them with a taste of what a career in nursing is like and enables direct progression onto nursing degree courses. The placement of students itself is supporting the NHS.

In addition, the Medical Science AAQ which will be delivered in 2025 allows students who would not otherwise qualify for A level Biology to access a similar programme opening up career progression opportunities in other medical professions that they may have missed out on due to the lack of a biological science. The investment in the Clinical Skills enrichment is a further enhancement of the strength of offering in this area.

The College introduced its first T Level in Education and Early Years in 2023 with significantly better retention and results after the first year than is typical nationally. Many of these students will enter employment after completion, where they do not progress onto high education degrees in teaching or similar, usually in work settings they have been placed with during the course.

Through strengthening the College's collaboration with local employers, it is anticipated that this will create more work experience and volunteering opportunities for its students. This in turn, will engage students in the key sectors of employment identified locally and consequently respond to the skills need. The College would willingly promote any incentives offered by local employers aimed at encouraging well-qualified young people to seek employment locally after securing higher level qualifications or training e.g. sponsorship, internships.

Through the introduction of the Impact programme and plans for Impact Week in June as well as through other means, every student will have the opportunity to access and experience one week of work experience, or attend workshops aimed at increasing their awareness of the post-18 options available to them as well as providing them with opportunities to develop different skills.

Engagement with employers is critical to ensure that the College is responding to local need. The College continues to build relationships with employers in a diverse range of sectors, e.g. residential student placements with the Army at Crickhowell in Wales, computer science placements at Qinetiq in Malvern where students worked on a mock project for the MOD. The College secured over 500 work placements for its students last academic year in a variety of industries and over a large geographical area including Birmingham.

The College has further developed its relationships with local employers to increase awareness of the potential our students can offer to the local economy. For example, staff from Qinetiq visited the College to see our new STEM building and a group of students took part in 'Sparks Live' at DRP Group to experience creative professionals in action. In addition to this, ten local employers joined us for Mock Interview Week to interview and give feedback to students who looking to enter the job market after College and eleven local employers also joined us for our College Careers Fair to showcase the opportunities and roles in a variety of local industries.

The College also works collaboratively with other local providers both in Worcestershire and Herefordshire and across the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust. We continue to participate in meetings with the Local Enterprise Partnership and work with employers across the county both to meet requirements in terms of industry placements and to ensure that students have access to a wide range of employers in terms of work placements and subject specific knowledge.

Progress against the aims for the 2023/24 academic year

Aim/Target Outcome	Comment
Develop strategies aimed at making student progression aims more aspirational to increase the numbers applying to university, in particular, Russell/Sutton universities and those securing degree level apprenticeships.	56% of all year 2 students progressed to university. 13% intend to apply to HE in 2025. 29% of those students who progressed to university, progressed to a Russell Group establishment (compared to 23% in the previous year).
Increase the number of students participating in organised work experience/volunteering.	608 placements were organised for students in 2023-24.
Continue to review the level 2 curriculum to ensure appropriate progression routes.	Introduced Citizenship and Photography GCSE courses to support students in being qualified to progress onto Level 3 courses.
Consider whether there is scope to develop student proficiency in Office 365.	This was offered to students (70 students enrolled, 36 completed).
Monitor and review other suitable qualifications to respond to the defunding of applied courses to ensure there are no gaps in the curriculum and that there are suitable progression routes for students who would otherwise have studied applied courses.	Introduction of Health T Level 2024 Business (Management & Administration) to be delivered in 2025 along with Medical Science AAQ
Ensure that the College is represented on the LSIP and engages with any recommendations or initiatives.	Attendance at LSIP meetings.
Further engage with T Levels as a sustainable element in the College's curriculum	Introduction of Health T Level 2024. Business (Management & Administration) to be delivered in 2025

Plan for 2024/25

Aims/target outcomes for the 2024/25 academic year
Further increase the proportion of students progressing to more aspirational universities, in particular, Russell/Sutton universities and those securing degree level apprenticeships.
Further increase the number of students participating in organised work experience/volunteering
Implement and review Impact sessions aimed at supporting progression
Deliver an Impact Week in the summer term
Continue to review the level 2 curriculum to ensure appropriate progression routes.
Monitor and review suitable and available applied and AAQ qualifications to ensure there are no gaps in the curriculum and that there are suitable progression routes for students who would otherwise have studied applied courses.
Further engage with T Levels as a sustainable element in the College's curriculum

Corporation Statement

On behalf of Worcester Sixth Form College, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Local Governing Body at their meeting on 25th November 2024.

The plan will be published on the College's website and can be accessed here: [Governance and the Multi-Academy Trust - Worcester Sixth Form College \(wsfc.ac.uk\)](https://www.wsfc.ac.uk)



Chair of the Local Governing Body

Date: 27.11.24



Principal