

WQE Accountability Statement 2026/27

Statement of Purpose

WQE is a large sixth form college with a clear strategic focus on enabling Level 3 success and supporting progression to higher education and professional careers. Our mission to prepare young professionals underpins all aspects of curriculum design, student development and partnership working.

The College plays a key role within the local skills system by supporting progression to Level 4+ study at scale, particularly in areas aligned to national skills priority sectors and local economic need. This is reflected in consistently high rates of progression to higher education and positive destinations.

Our strategic priorities and curriculum planning are informed by our review of local needs, engagement with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), and national policy direction, ensuring that the College continues to contribute effectively to local, regional and national skills priorities.

Our mission and vision at WQE is summarised below:

To inspire, prepare and develop young professionals, through the provision of appropriate, responsive and excellent post-16 educational opportunities.			
Qualifications & Academic Success	Personal Development	Experiences & Skills	Support for Progression to HE &/or Professional Careers
Responding to the ambitious young people, communities, schools, universities and employers of Leicester and Leicestershire			
Sharing and living by our values of Community, Challenge, Commitment, Curiosity and Consideration			

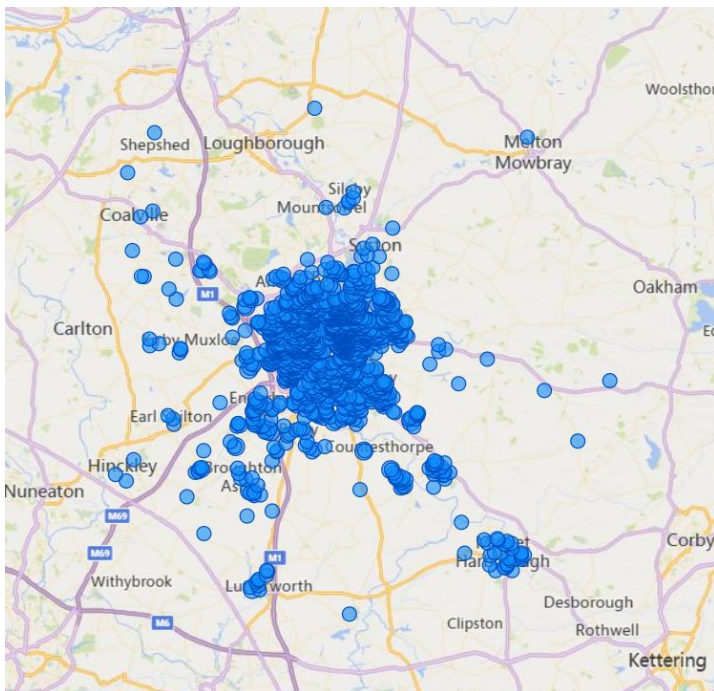
A more detailed statement of this mission and vision informs our strategic and operational planning. The [mission and vision statement](#) is published to our website and is regularly reviewed by the Corporation.

Context and Place

WQE operates within a diverse and growing urban context with significant demand for Level 3 provision and progression to higher-level study. We are a large twin-site sixth form college, centrally located in the city of Leicester, which is a city served primarily by 11-16 secondary schools.

- Within the city, WQE operates alongside a large Further Education College and two 16-19 academies, collectively providing a broad range of academic, vocational and technical education in the local area.
- Across the two main campuses there is a student body of around 4,000 students, making the College one of the largest sixth form providers in England.

- The college recruits from both the city of Leicester and the wider county of Leicestershire (see below).



- The college's annual income from all sources is over £26 million and we have improving student outcomes.
- The college's most recent Ofsted inspection was in April 2024 where we received a Grade 2 for Overall Effectiveness.

Curriculum development is focused on responding to the local demographic and educational needs, within the College's mission to prepare young professionals. The offer is planned in order to ensure a coherent range of mainly classroom-based pathways, offering extensive choice and flexibility to access appropriately personalised programmes for mainly full-time 16-18 year olds. Effective initial information, advice and guidance, allied to a highly effective provision of careers advice, supports students in planning for and achieving successful progression beyond the College. As part of our vision to prepare young professionals, lessons increasingly see a focus upon relevant knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills, including reference to the world of work, that will be important in preparing students both for HE and/or their future careers as young professionals in the workplace. This curriculum structure supports progression into sectors identified through local labour market intelligence and the draft 2026-29 LSIP.

For qualification delivery the College is split in to nine curriculum areas, in addition we work with two external partners to provide specialist Dance and Musical Theatre provision. The proportional spread of provision in terms of the time spent by students studying subjects in the curriculum area is outlined in the table below.

Curriculum Area	Percentage Spread of Provision
Biology, Chemistry and Applied Science	11%
Business, Economics and Accounting	16%
English and Languages	10%
Health and Sport	10%
Humanities	9%
Mathematics	8%
Media, Visual and Performing Arts	8%
Physics, Computing and ICT	12%
Social Science	16%

We have a small number of students with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) and/or High Needs, and a significant number of students with Exam Access Arrangements and/or Additional Learning Support. Our welfare

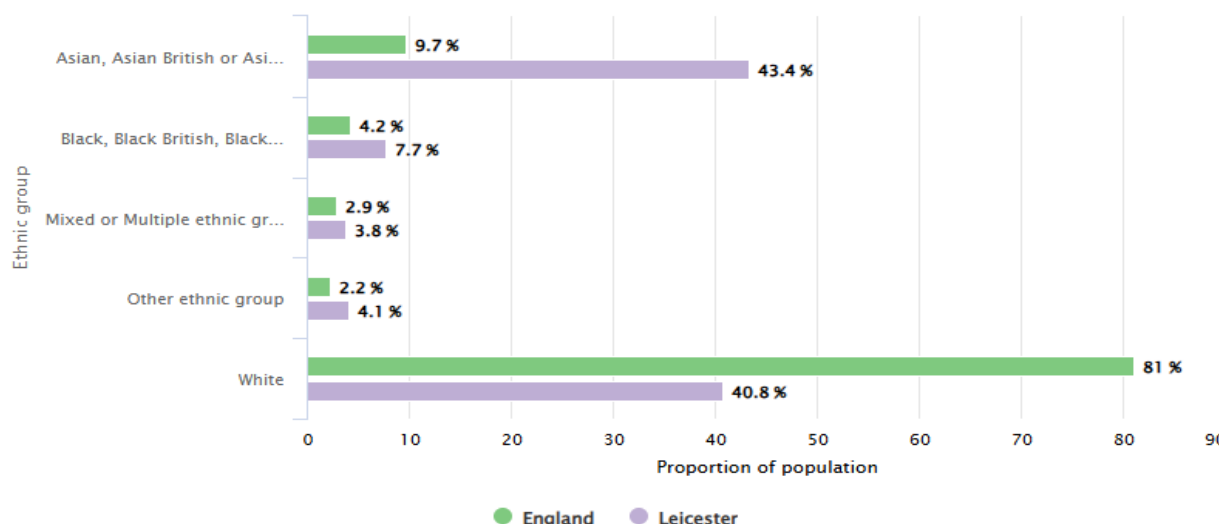
and skills team works closely with our curriculum and support teams to help students achieve their full potential academically and their subsequent progression.

Local Context and Socio-Economic Characteristics

The college enjoys an enviable position as one of the most diverse Sixth Form Colleges, including in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, prior achievement profiles, ethnicities, cultures and faiths.

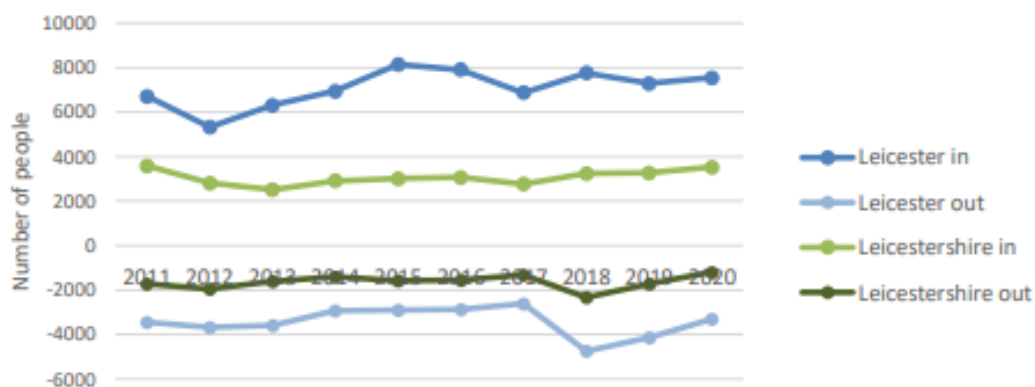
The city of Leicester reached a population of 368,600 (an 11.7% increase since 2011), while the wider county population grew to 712,300, bringing the combined area total to nearly 1.1 million residents (census 2021). Leicester city has a population of 368,600. Ethnic background in the city is highly diverse with a c59% population from non-white or other ethnic backgrounds and 71% of school pupils are from non-White British backgrounds.

Ethnic group by proportion of population based on 2021 census



Furthermore, the proportion of Leicester residents with English spoken as the main language/proficiency in English is 70%, relative to 90.8%, making language development and communication a key educational need and priority. This is connected to the high levels of inward and positive net migration with a high proportion of local population born outside the UK, which is one of the highest outside London at 42.1% (census 2021). The Future of the Workforce in Leicester and Leicestershire report (LLEP/De-Montfort University) also highlighted that significant inward international migration has been a key feature since 2011 in the City and County, as outlined in the chart below.

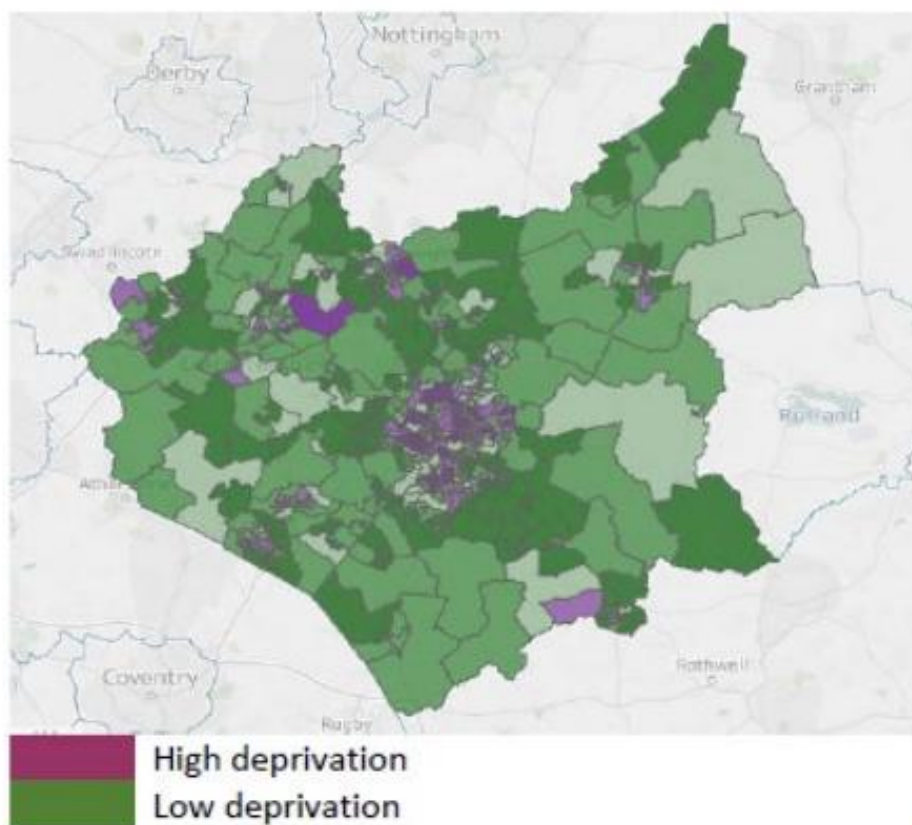
Figure 7: Long term international migration into and out of Leicester and Leicestershire since 2011 (all people over 16).



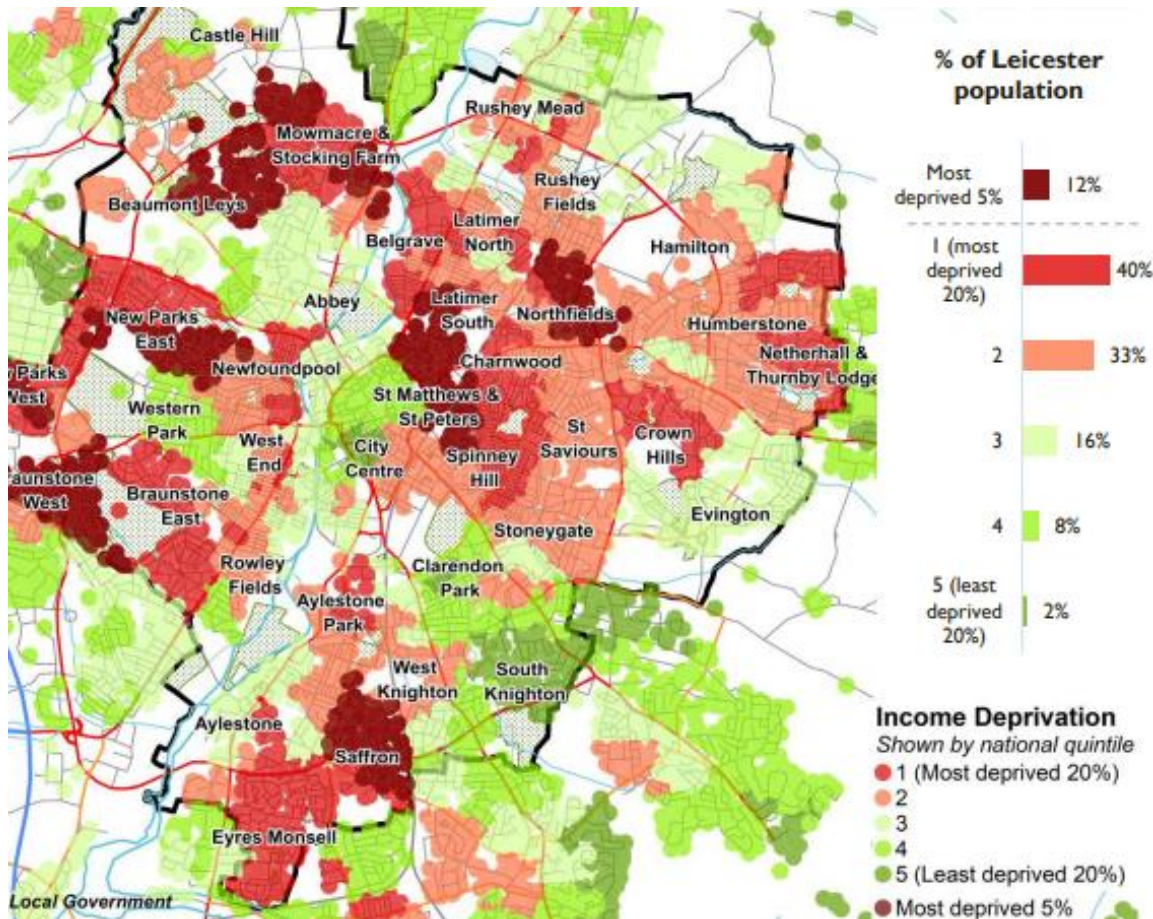
Our responsiveness to the diverse needs of our student population and the pathways WQE provides are important in continuing to enable level three success for young people and narrowing the gaps that exists

between local and national educational outcomes after key stage 4, as well as supporting progression to Higher Education and/or professional careers. This has an important role to play in raising local aspirations, enabling social mobility and helping young people to break cycles of deprivation.

The LLEP Skills Evidence Base Summary 2020 highlights that there is a stark contrast between city and county deprivation levels, with 20.3% of city neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% nationally. This is highlighted in the image below with the highest concentration of deprived neighbourhoods in the city and the central areas closest to the College.



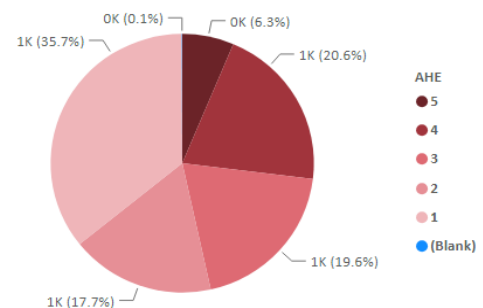
When focussing in on the city area, from which the greatest proportions of students travel to learn, see the image overleaf, this map highlights that in terms of Income Deprivation 12% of students reside in areas representing the highest Income Deprivation category nationally and 40% are in the most deprived quintile nationally ([Source: IMD 2019 Map Pack for Leicester](#)). This ranks Leicester as the 18th most deprived region nationally, with some specific hotspots of extreme deprivation served by the College within this. Income deprivation in households with children in Leicester is even greater with 16% living in an area in one of the most deprived 5% nationally.



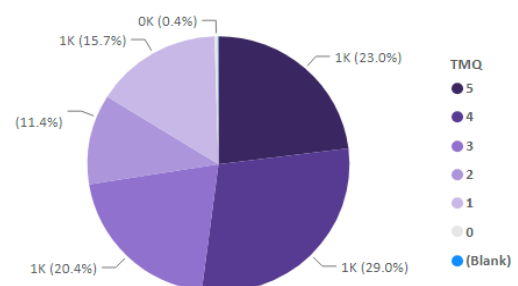
Analysis of the level 3 student cohort demonstrates the continuing importance of our work and mission to enable level 3 success and higher education progression. Based on Adult HE data from the Office for Students (OfS) 53% of subject level enrolments to Level 3 courses in 2024/25 were for students whose area of residence was in the lowest ranked areas for adults having HE qualifications (Adult HE 2011 Quintiles 1 and 2).

By way of contrast, the OfS data for the area participation rates of young people in higher education show that the proportion of enrolments at subject level for students whose area of residence is in the top two quintiles is 52%. These contrasting data indicate the positive contribution that WQE is making to increasing the number of people in Leicester and Leicestershire with degree level qualifications, this aligns well with the local skills need including the need to increase participation in higher-level education and skills across disadvantaged communities, as identified in national and local policy.

Adult HE Quintile (MSOA)

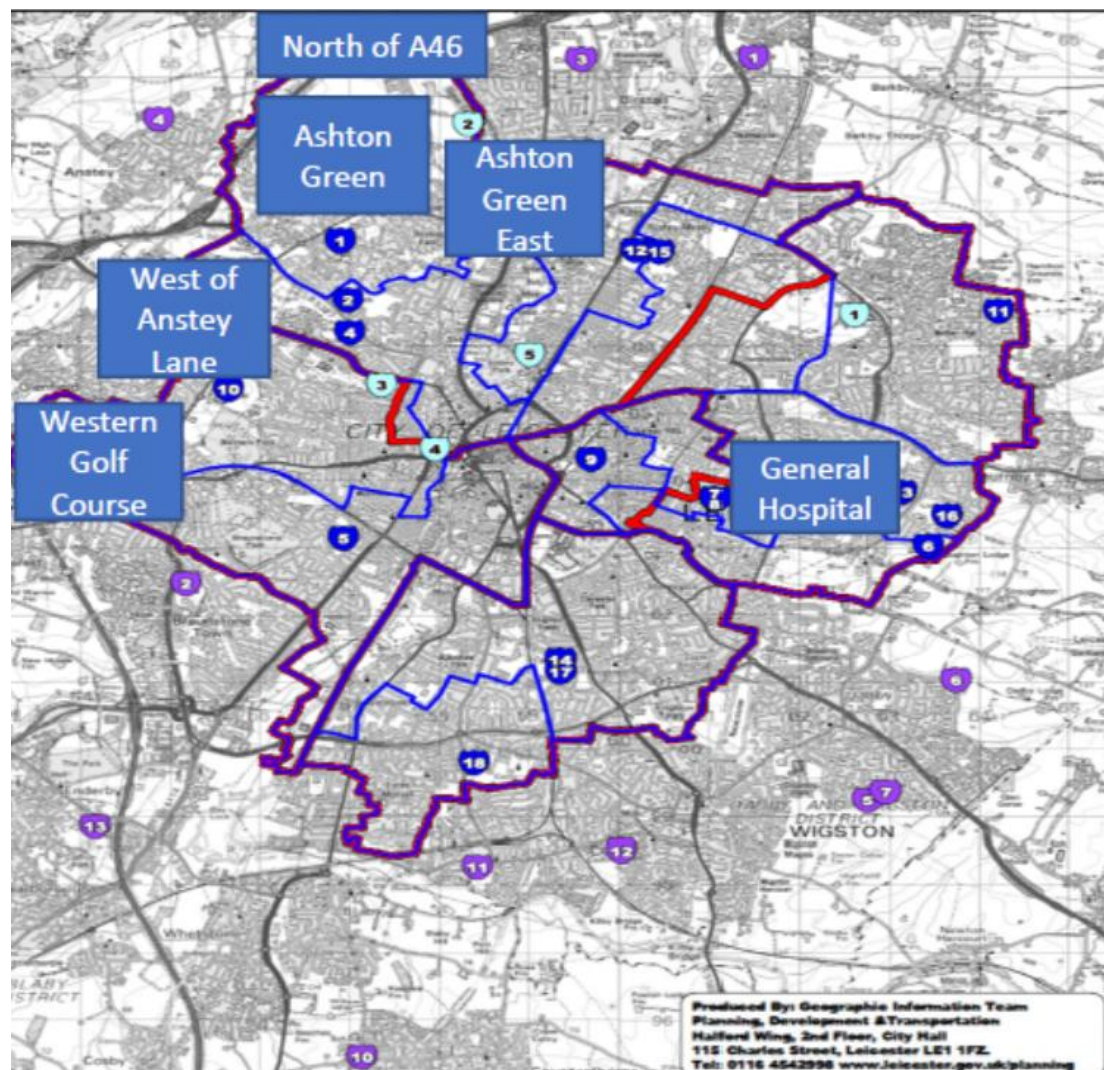


TUNDRA Middle Super Output Areas



The city of Leicester and the wider county continue to grow in terms of population and ONS data projects that this growth will accelerate over the next five years and beyond. There are substantial housing developments

planned within the City of Leicester in coming years, all of which will potentially further increase demand for the core provision of the College. The map below outlines the expected areas of strategic housing development with the Local Plan. WQE is well positioned at the heart of the City within easy travel to learn distances of these developments, outlined in the map below.



Economic and Skills Needs

The emerging Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 2026–2029 provides the primary employer-led framework for identifying current and future skills needs within the local economy. Although currently in draft form, the College has actively engaged with its development and reflects its emerging priorities, including demand across sectors such as advanced manufacturing, digital technologies, life sciences, health and construction, alongside a consistent emphasis on employability skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Alongside this, previous LLEP skills evidence and sector reports provide important supporting context, highlighting long-term trends in workforce demand, including the need to increase higher-level skills, respond to technological change, and support growth across key sectors such as professional and financial services, health, digital and creative industries.

The LLEP Skills Plan 2022–24 highlights the need to respond to workforce trends and future-proof the local workforce. This includes an emphasis on replacement demand arising from an ageing population, attracting workers into growth sectors, increasing the proportion of higher-skilled roles, and developing the Level 4+ workforce. It also identifies the growing importance of digital skills and core life skills and behaviours in meeting future workplace needs.

Employers consistently highlight that knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) are critical to workforce readiness. The LSIP further reinforces this, identifying a system-wide need to strengthen employability, workplace behaviours and the transition from education into employment.

The LSIP also identifies as a key priority the need for continued collaboration between further education colleges, higher education providers and employers to develop a coherent and responsive education and skills offer. This includes improving alignment to labour market demand, strengthening progression pathways and ensuring provision reflects the evolving needs of local businesses.

The information available via the Local Chamber of Commerce Insight Unlocked website and Leicester and Leicestershire Collective Intelligence Skills Observatory identifies that, alongside occupation-specific knowledge, employers place the greatest emphasis on transferable skills and behaviours.

The most important knowledge area for future workforce needs continues to include advanced literacy, reflecting the high value placed on communication and the ability to process and articulate complex information.

Alongside occupation-specific skills, the most in-demand transferable skills identified by employers are:

Team working (24%), identified as the most important skill across all sectors, Occupation-specific skills (17%), highlighting the importance of strong subject knowledge, Critical thinking (16%) and written communication (16%), reflecting the growing importance of analytical and communication skills, General employability (11%) and project planning and management (11%), indicating the need for adaptability and organisational capability, Time management (10%) and management and leadership (8%), which support progression into professional roles.

This demonstrates that, while technical knowledge remains important, employers place a particularly strong emphasis on transferable skills and behaviours which enable individuals to operate effectively in the workplace. The key behaviour areas identified include: collaborative working, resilience and adaptability, reliability, flexibility, self-motivation, ethical conduct, curiosity, and a commitment to quality and continuous improvement. This aligns closely with the College's approach to developing 'young professionals', where the embedding of knowledge, skills and behaviours is central to curriculum design and student progression.

The culture and ethos of WQE, and its commitment to developing students as young professionals who contribute to the local, regional and national economy, ensures that students develop high levels of literacy, oracy and employability skills through a planned and holistic approach to student development.

The Leicester Cultural and Creative Strategy highlights the importance of workforce and skills development to support the growth of creative and cultural industries, including the need for stronger pathways into employment and the development of convergent creative and technical skills. WQE contributes strongly to this through its Media and Creative Arts curriculum and partnership provision, alongside recent capital investment to ensure students are developing industry-relevant skills.

The LLEP Skills Evidence Base highlights key business growth sectors within Leicester and Leicestershire, many of which align closely to the College's curriculum offer. In particular, the Professional and Financial Services sector is identified as a major and growing contributor to the local economy, with strong demand for higher-level skills.

The College's curriculum, in preparing young people to progress to Level 4+ study and professional careers, contributes significantly to these sectors, including STEM, creative and cultural industries, sport and physical activity, health and social care, and business and finance.

Health and Social Care remains the largest employment sector locally, with sustained growth driven by demographic change and increasing demand for services. The sector requires both highly technical STEM-based skills and broader interpersonal and care-related capabilities. The College's provision, particularly in sciences and health-related subjects, supports progression into both employment and higher education pathways aligned to this sector.

Leicester and Leicestershire also has recognised strengths in science and technology, including research and innovation activity such as Space Park Leicester. A strong skills pipeline is required to support continued growth in these areas, and the College is committed to preparing students with the technical, professional and transferable skills required for these industries.

With ongoing national reforms to Level 3 qualifications, the College will continue to offer pathways that support progression into priority sectors, including health and social care, ensuring alignment with both national and local skills priorities and supporting progression into Level 4+ study and professional careers.

The College currently makes a significant contribution to national, regional and local skills priorities through its curriculum offer. As a predominantly academic sixth form college, this contribution is primarily through enabling progression to Level 4+ study in priority sectors, rather than through direct technical delivery.

Nationally, the government has identified the following as priority skills sectors: advanced manufacturing, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, financial services, life sciences, professional and business services, clean energy industries, construction and health.

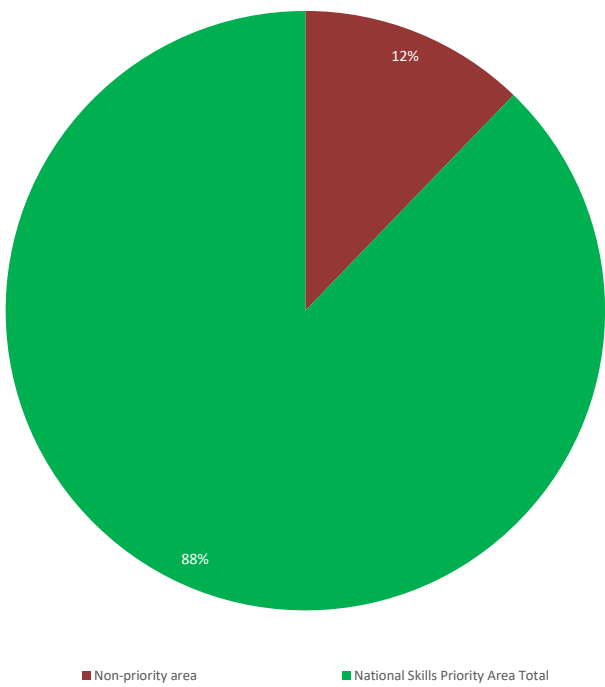
The table below outlines the scale of provision at WQE aligned to these priority areas. Given the College's predominantly academic curriculum, sectors such as construction are not directly delivered, but progression into these areas is supported through higher education pathways.

Priority Sector Area	Number of WQE two-year course level enrolments
Advanced Manufacturing + Defence+ clean energy	Physical Science, Mathematics and Computer Science: 1455
Digital and Technologies	IT and Computer Science: 1296
Financial Services	Accounting and Economics: 729
Prof and Business Services	Business Studies: 1051
Life Sciences	Biology, Chemistry and App. Science: 1189
Health	Health & Social Care: 482
Creative Industries	Visual & Performing Arts and Media: 966

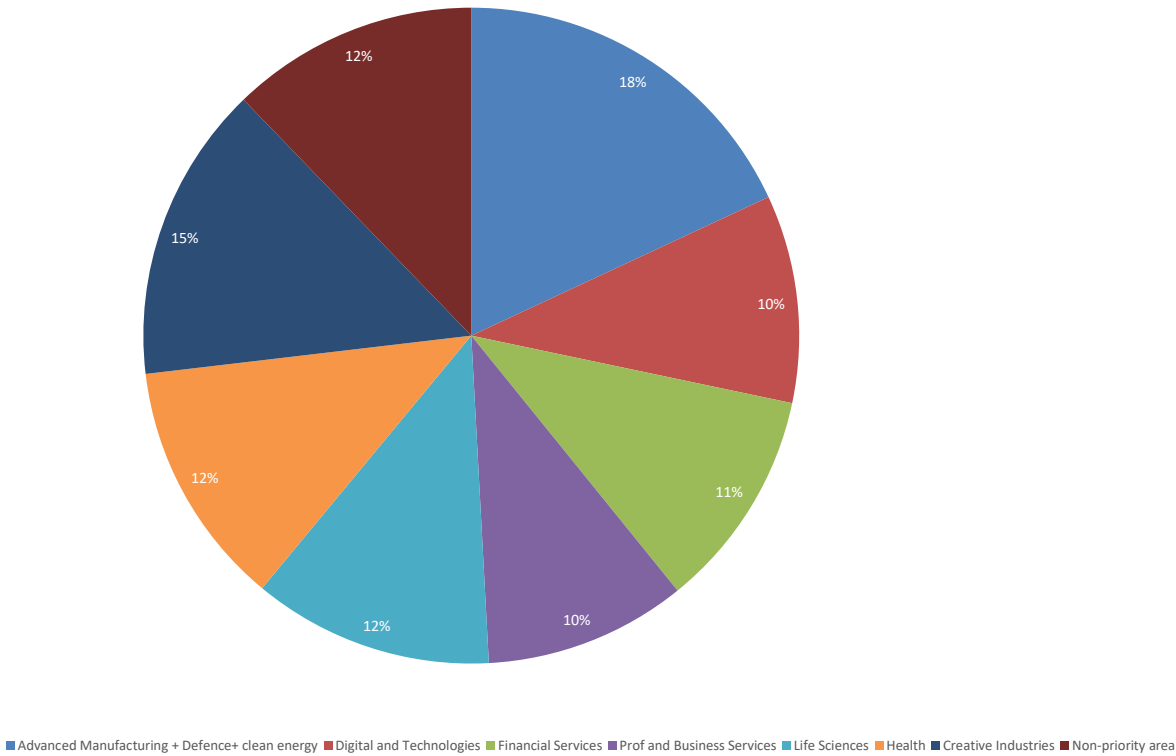
The College's strong contribution to national skills priorities is also reflected in national performance measures. The FE Provider Dashboard places WQE in the top 5% of colleges nationally for progression and the top 10% for contribution to national skills priorities, with a skills measure in the 'above expected' category.

The charts below show the proportions of students who in 2025 progressed to HE courses or higher- level apprenticeships linked to these priority sector areas.

HE Progression to Skills Priority Areas: Overview



HE Progression to Skills Priority Areas: Details



Higher Education Progression

Higher Education remains the primary progression route for the majority of Level 3 students. For the 2024/25 cohort, 78.8% of students progressed to Higher Education, with overall positive progression outcomes at 94%, reflecting the strong effectiveness of the College's provision in supporting progression beyond Level 3.

The College also makes a significant contribution to the local graduate pipeline, with a substantial majority of students progressing to higher education institutions within commuting distance of Leicester, supporting local graduate retention and the development of the regional workforce. This aligns with internal analysis showing that approximately three quarters of Level 3 students progress to local destinations.

Students progress to a broad range of higher education courses, including areas aligned to national, regional and local skills priorities such as business and management, computing and digital technologies, health and social care, engineering and social sciences. This demonstrates the College's strong contribution to developing a highly skilled workforce and supporting priority sectors identified through national policy and the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

The College also supports progression to high-tariff universities and competitive courses, alongside its core mission to enable high levels of participation and inclusive progression to Level 4+ study, contributing to the wider ambition to increase participation in higher-level education and skills.

Approach to Developing the Accountability Statement

The College has developed this Accountability Statement through a structured process informed by its strategic priorities, its review of local needs, and engagement with key stakeholders across the local skills system.

The College has engaged with the development of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), recognising its role as the primary employer-led framework for identifying local skills needs. Although the current LSIP is in draft form, the College has contributed to its development and has taken account of its emerging priorities, particularly in relation to employer engagement, the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours, and the alignment of provision to labour market demand.

In developing this statement, the College has drawn on a range of evidence sources, including:

- Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities and supporting labour market intelligence
- LLEP skills reports, sector profiles and economic evidence
- Student outcomes and destinations data, including progression to Higher Education and employment
- Internal curriculum planning and performance data
- Feedback from employers, higher education partners and local stakeholders
- Outcomes from the College's review of how well its provision meets local needs (Local Needs Duty)

The College engages actively with local and regional partners to inform its planning. This includes ongoing collaboration with:

- The East Midlands Chamber of Commerce as the designated Employer Representative Body for the LSIP
- Local higher education providers, supporting progression pathways and local graduate retention
- Local schools and colleges, supporting coherent progression routes across the post-16 system
- Employers and industry representatives, informing curriculum design and employability development

This collaborative approach supports the development of a coherent and responsive curriculum offer, aligned with both national skills priorities and local economic need. It also reflects the College's role within a wider system of providers, contributing to a joined-up approach to skills planning, improved progression pathways and the development of a highly skilled workforce.

The priorities and objectives set out in this Accountability Statement are therefore directly informed by:

- The College's strategic mission to prepare young professionals
- Evidence of local, regional and national skills needs
- Student outcomes and progression data
- The actions arising from the College's Local Needs Duty review

Contribution to national, regional, local priorities

The College will deliver the following priorities for 2026–27, informed by national skills priorities, the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), and the outcomes of the Local Needs Duty review.

Aims/Objectives	Target Outcomes
To continue to provide and strengthen a high-quality pathway to Higher Education, aligned to national skills priority sectors and local LSIP priorities.	At least 78–80% of Level 3 students progress to Higher Education, maintaining current levels. - Maintain high rates of progression to courses aligned to national priority sectors (e.g. STEM, business, health, digital).
To at least maintain the proportion of students gaining places at high tariff 'Sutton 30' Universities.	- For the 2027 leavers at least 30% of those with an HE place go to a Sutton 30 university. - To continue the support for students available via the Sutton 30 enrichment. - To continue with additional enrichments to support STEM progression to Sutton 30 HE.
To increase participation in higher-level learning and support progression to Level 4+ pathways.	- Maintain strong progression to HE and higher-level apprenticeships in line with national ambition to increase L4+ participation towards the two-thirds participation target for young people by age 25. - Increase awareness and uptake of higher/degree apprenticeship pathways through targeted guidance and enrichment.
To grow and refine curriculum provision in areas aligned to priority sectors and student demand.	- Deliver one additional set in Economics and one additional set in Business Studies from 2026–27 in response to sustained student demand and alignment with financial, professional and business services sectors. - Maintain high levels of enrolment in STEM, business and social science pathways aligned to national and LSIP priorities.
To expand employer engagement and meaningful work-related learning opportunities.	- Increase the number of students participating in employer-led activities (live briefs, talks, projects) with all Level 3 courses offering at least one structured employer interaction per year. - Further develop structured employer engagement within curriculum and enrichment programmes.
To maintain and further develop strong collaboration with local Higher Education providers and stakeholders.	- Sustain and extend partnerships with local universities to support progression and local graduate retention. - Maintain at least 75% of HE progression within commuting distance, supporting local workforce needs.
To ensure provision remains responsive to local labour market needs and LSIP priorities.	- Annual curriculum review informed by LSIP, labour market intelligence and destinations data. - Identify and respond to emerging skills including digital, green and employability priorities identified through the draft LSIP for 2026-29.
To further develop inclusive progression and maintain high rates of positive destinations.	- Maintain >90% positive progression outcomes and NEET below 5%, in line with recent cohort performance. - Sustain strong progression outcomes across all student groups, supporting inclusive participation.

Inclusive Mainstream Fund

WQE Approach to the Inclusive Mainstream Fund

WQE already has a strong foundation of inclusive practice, reflected in its high levels of positive progression, its diverse student population, and the work of its welfare and learning support services. The IMF will enable the College to further enhance this provision and embed inclusion more consistently across all areas of the student experience.

The College will prioritise the following areas:

Strengthening inclusive teaching and learning

- Further develop high-quality adaptive teaching across all curriculum areas, ensuring that teaching approaches meet a wide range of learning needs.
- Embed inclusive pedagogical approaches that support participation, engagement and achievement for all students.
- Continue to integrate literacy, oracy and study skills development to remove barriers to success in Level 3 programmes.

Early identification and targeted support

- Enhance processes for the early identification of additional learning needs, including those linked to SEND, SEMH and barriers arising from disadvantage.
- Provide timely and proportionate support through Additional Learning Support (ALS), exam access arrangements and targeted interventions.
- Strengthen the use of data and assessment to monitor participation, progress and outcomes for key student groups.

Accessible and inclusive learning environments

- Continue to develop inclusive learning environments across both campuses, including physical accessibility, digital accessibility and inclusive resources.
- Ensure that curriculum materials and learning technologies support a wide range of needs and learning styles.

Evidence-informed interventions and student support

- Expand the use of evidence-based interventions to support students whose needs extend beyond the universal offer.
- Strengthen integration between curriculum teams, welfare services and learning support to provide holistic support for students.
- Develop targeted support for attendance, wellbeing and engagement, recognising their link to successful progression.

Staff development and whole-college inclusion culture

- Invest in continued professional development for teaching and support staff focused on SEND, adaptive teaching and inclusive practice.
- Ensure that inclusion is embedded as a core element of curriculum planning, quality improvement and leadership at all levels.
- Promote a whole-college culture of inclusion, belonging and high expectations for all students.

Impact and Outcomes

Through the effective use of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, the College aims to:

- Improve the capacity of mainstream provision to meet a broader range of student needs, reducing barriers to participation and achievement
- Maintain strong progression outcomes for students with additional needs, including progression to Higher Education and employment
- Support high levels of attendance, engagement and wellbeing across all student groups
- Further reduce any gaps in achievement and progression between different groups of students
- Contribute to the wider national aim of delivering an education system that is inclusive by design, with strong mainstream provision at its core

This approach aligns with the College's mission to prepare young professionals and supports its broader commitment to inclusive progression, social mobility and meeting local and national skills needs

Local Needs Duty

The College has undertaken a review of how effectively its provision meets local, regional and national skills needs, in line with the statutory Local Needs Duty.

WQE is a large sixth form college providing predominantly Level 3 provision through a broad curriculum of A Level and applied general qualifications. Analysis of current delivery shows that the majority of provision is concentrated at Level 3, with significant scale in STEM subjects (including Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science), Business and Economics, and Social Sciences such as Psychology, Sociology and Criminology. Alongside this, the College maintains a wide-ranging offer across Humanities, Creative and Cultural subjects, Health and Social Care, and Sport, with lower-level provision in English, Mathematics and ESOL supporting access and progression.

The review confirms that this provision aligns strongly with both national skills priorities and the draft Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan 2026-2029 (LSIP). At a national level, the curriculum maps closely to priority sectors including digital and technologies, life sciences, professional and business services, and creative industries, which are identified as key drivers of economic growth within the national skills system. Locally, the LSIP highlights the importance of transferable knowledge, skills and behaviours such as communication, teamwork and critical thinking, which are embedded within the College's "Young Professionals" approach and wider enrichment and progression programmes.

Outcomes from the 2024/25 cohort demonstrate that the College's provision is highly effective in supporting progression and meeting local needs. Overall, 94% of Level 3 students progressed to a positive destination, with 78.8% progressing to Higher Education, confirming the College's role as a key driver of Level 4+ progression in the local and regional economy. A further 11.2% progressed to employment or training, including apprenticeships across sectors such as business, engineering, ICT, construction and education. The proportion of students not in education, employment or training remains low at 3.9%, reflecting the effectiveness of the College's approach to progression and support.

The destinations profile also demonstrates strong alignment with priority sectors, with students progressing to higher education courses in areas including business and management, computing and digital technologies, health and social care, engineering, law and social sciences. In addition, progression patterns show a continued

strong local footprint, with large numbers of students progressing to universities within commuting distance of Leicester, supporting local graduate retention and the development of the regional workforce.

Overall, the College concludes that its provision is highly effective in meeting local needs within the context of its role as a predominantly academic sixth form provider. Its curriculum supports large-scale progression to higher-level study, aligns strongly with national and local skills priorities, and contributes meaningfully to local talent pipelines. The review also identifies the continued importance of strengthening employer engagement opportunities, enhancing work-readiness, and ensuring provision remains responsive to emerging priorities such as digital skills, inclusive participation and employment pathways.

As a result of this review, the College will:

- Further strengthen the integration of employability skills, behaviours and workplace expectations across all study programmes, in response to LSIP priorities
- Expand opportunities for meaningful employer engagement, including live briefs, enrichment and work-related experiences
- Continue to align curriculum planning and progression pathways with national skills priority sectors and emerging local labour market needs
- Enhance tracking and evaluation of student destinations to strengthen understanding of local and regional impact
- Collaborate with local partners, including universities, employers and other providers, to support progression to Level 4+ pathways and contribute to local graduate retention strategies

Corporation Statement

On behalf of the WQE and Regent College Group corporation, 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 corporation. The Corporation also confirms that this Accountability Statement fulfils the College's statutory Local Needs Duty.

The Accountability Statement for 2026-27 was approved by the Corporation at the meeting on June 24th 2026.

Chair of Corporation:

Date:

Hyperlink

[WQE Accountability Statement 26-27](#)

Supporting Documentation

[WQE Mission and Vision statement](#)

[WQE Ofsted Report](#)

[LLEP Skills report 2022-24](#)

N.B. Waiting for link to updated LSIP for 2026-29