



Annual Report 2024/2025

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2024/2025

MCG
Middlesbrough
College Group
TTE

Engineering Training Centre 1



Renowned broadcaster and proud Teesside native, Steph McGovern, opened the brand-new £12m TTE Centre, designed to provide a cutting-edge technical training facility that will equip the next generation of engineers and skilled professionals in the North East.

Foreword

It is with immense pride and gratitude that we present the Middlesbrough College Annual Report for the academic year 2024/25 – a year defined by ambition, innovation, and collective achievement.

This year, our students, staff, and wider community have once again demonstrated what makes Middlesbrough College a beacon of excellence in education. From strong and consistent student outcomes, to pioneering new curriculum pathways, we have continued to raise the bar in delivering high-quality learning experiences that prepare our learners for the future.

Among our many successes, we celebrated the opening of our new TTE centre – investing in cutting edge facilities, industry standard equipment and building on the success of our STEM strategy – empowering students to thrive in industries that are shaping tomorrow's economy.

We also deepened our commitment to inclusivity and wellbeing, introducing trauma informed practices, deepening our social action projects through partnership working and ensuring every learner feels seen, supported, and inspired.

Our staff have been instrumental in this journey, driving forward a culture of care, creativity, and continuous improvement and with us closing the year with our highest levels of staff satisfaction.

As we reflect on the milestones of 2024/25, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose. Middlesbrough College remains steadfast in its mission to develop skills, knowledge, and behaviours that help individuals to thrive and enhance the region's economic and social prosperity" and this report is a testament to the power of that mission in action.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this remarkable year. Together, we are building a brighter future – one learner, one innovation, one success story at a time.



Zoe Lewis

Zoe Lewis CBE
Principal and Chief Executive Officer



Laura M Woods

Dr Laura Woods
Chair of Governors

About us

Middlesbrough College Group is made up of four former colleges and two former training providers. Our strategy over many years has been to proactively invest in skills priority areas such as engineering, digital, construction and health and more recently emerging sectors including green energy and artificial intelligence, in a high quality accessible campus.

Today we are the largest provider of post-16 education and training in the Tees Valley serving over 12,500 learners from across the Tees Valley and beyond. The College strategic plan and curriculum have been developed in direct response to government policy and feedback from local employers and stakeholders including:

- A significant expansion of **STEM** facilities (2015) and subjects such that now two thirds of our school leavers are studying in 'priority' sectors rising from one quarter in 2008
- The acquisition of a respected apprenticeship training company (NECC training) covering complementary sectors and a wider geographic reach across the North East of England – creating **Northern Skills** the apprenticeship and training arm of the College (2016)
- Forming part of the **North East Institute of Technology** collaboration (2019) to further the development and take up of higher technical qualifications
- Utilising **devolved flexibilities** to develop new and improved **bespoke employer led provision** (BELPs) through our new adult and community learning centre (2019)
- Transferring a strategically important specialist engineering training provider from administration into the group (being adjacent to a new Freeport) **TTE** (2020)
- Delivering **T levels** from 2021
- Collaborating with local providers to support inward investors as part of the **Teesworks Skills Academy** consortium (2021)
- Working in partnership with our employer representative body (ERB) the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) to develop the Tees Valley Local Skills Improvement Plan **LSIP** and deliver changes through an associated **Strategic Development Fund** projects (SDF) (2021-22) and Local Skills Improvement Fund (2023)
- Developing **Skills Bootcamps** and **Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)** to meet local needs (2022)
- Delivering an ambitious **digital strategy** to eradicate digital poverty and improve employability including MC Click personal devices for all full-time students
- Completed an ambitious £14m development plan to relocate **TTE** from its current aged leased site in South Bank to our main campus (2024)
- Delivered priority investments from the Levelling up Partnerships Fund (LUP) and Towns Fund to secure the future of our adult learning through acquisition of a new **Adult Learning Centre** along with investments in **Health and Care, electric vehicles, welding expansion, retrofit courses** and support for our SEN students (2024)
- Expanded the development of our students beyond their qualification through our Thrive strategy. This includes expanding work experience opportunities, social action projects, personal development, trips and enrichment and exposure to employers in their area of interest.



Middlesbrough College Group is situated in the heart of the Tees Valley, an area shaped by its industrial past and evolving economic landscape and characterised by some consistent and common economic themes:

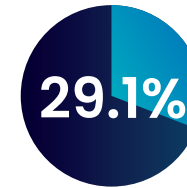
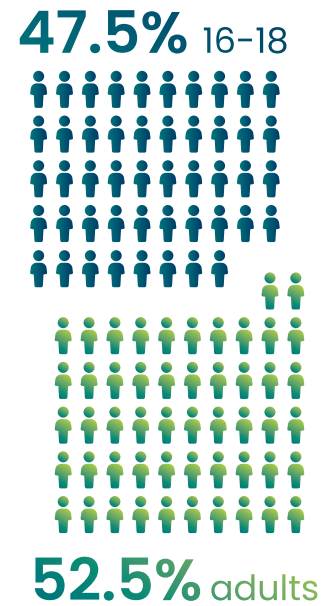
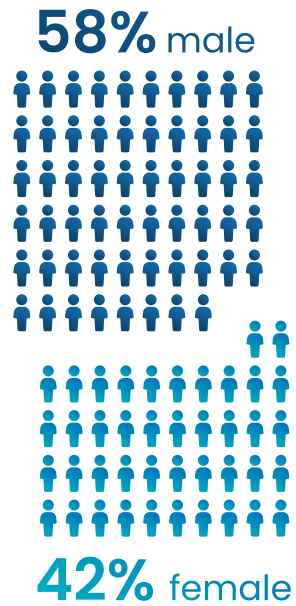
- The second most deprived LEP area in England
- Lower than average job density and high proportion of low skilled / low paid jobs
- A lower proportion of the population is qualified at Level 2 and above than in other regions of England, and 16% of the population have no qualifications
- The proportion of pupils in the local authority who achieve GCSEs grade 5 or above in English and mathematics is significantly lower than the national average
- A net graduate exporter with a proportion of those that remain here, being under-employed

At Middlesbrough College Group, we believe everyone has the potential to achieve great things. By building confidence, developing skills and offering real-world experience, we help unlock ambitions and support every individual, whatever their starting point, towards a brighter future.

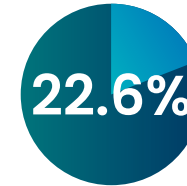
The College curriculum has been developed over years, through strong bi-lateral partnerships with employers and through close and regular analysis of the changing labour market requirements.

Our students

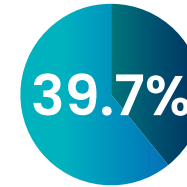
12,600
students



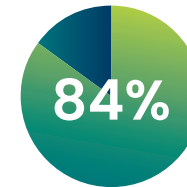
consider themselves to have a learning difficulty or disability



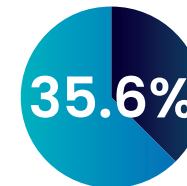
are from a black and minority ethnic group



live in a deprived area

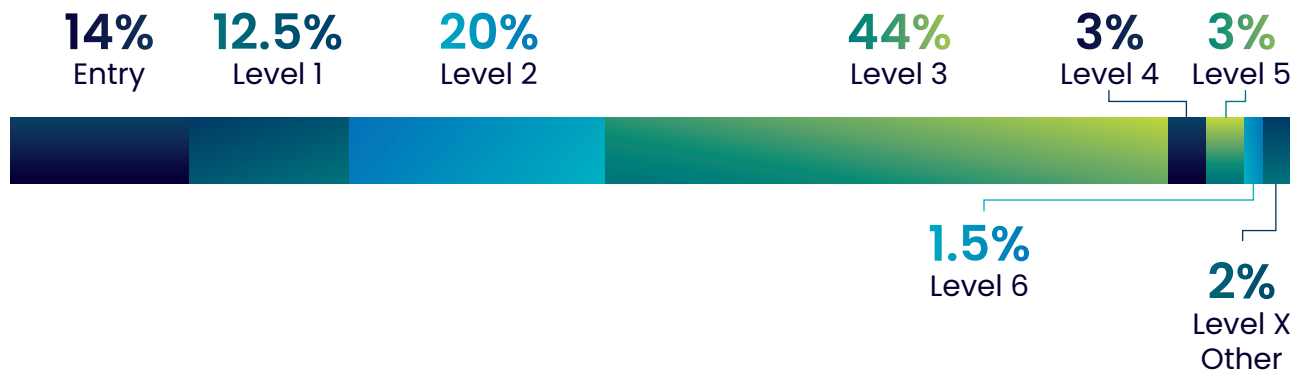


live within the Tees Valley Combined Authority

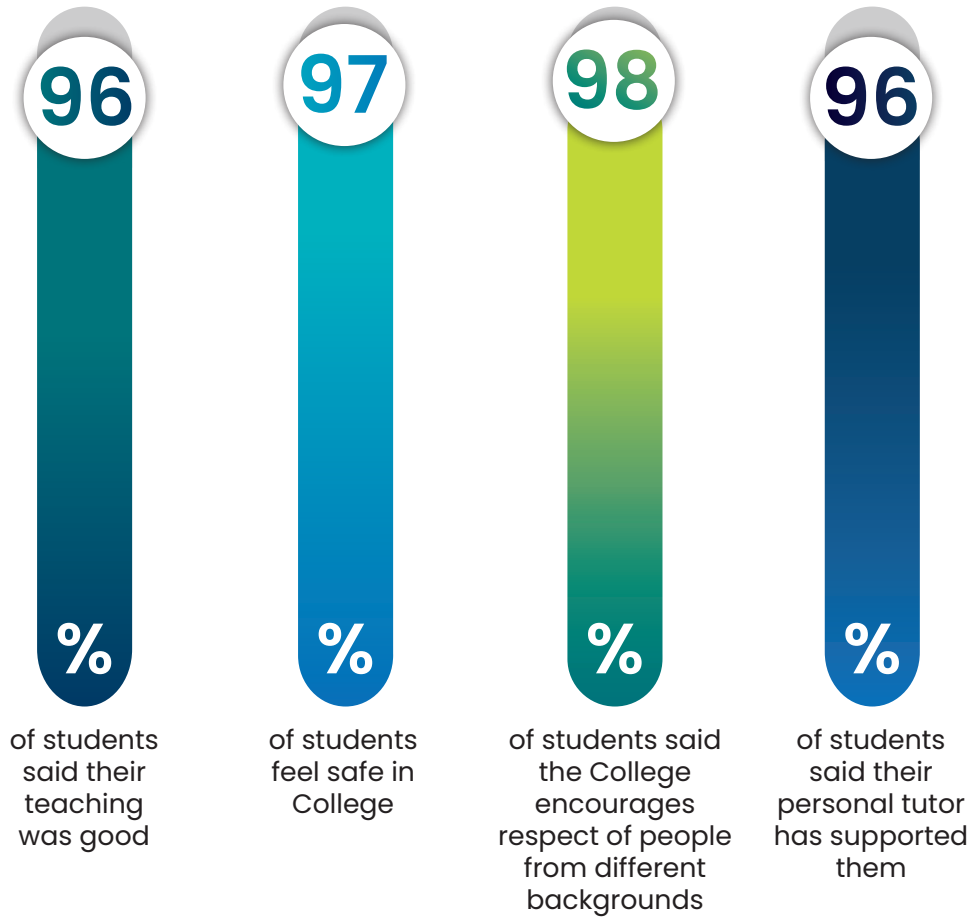


live within Middlesbrough's local authority

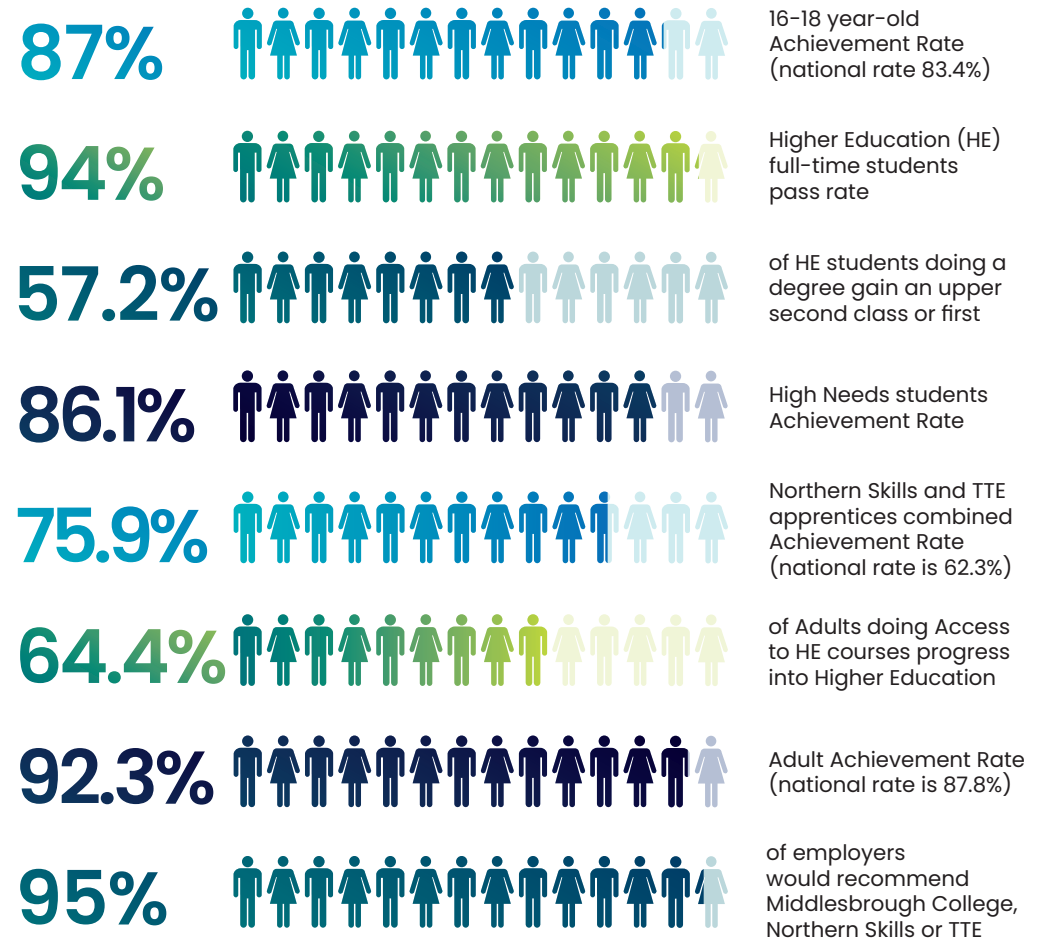
Student study levels



Student Satisfaction – Exit Survey



Student Outcomes



Our staff

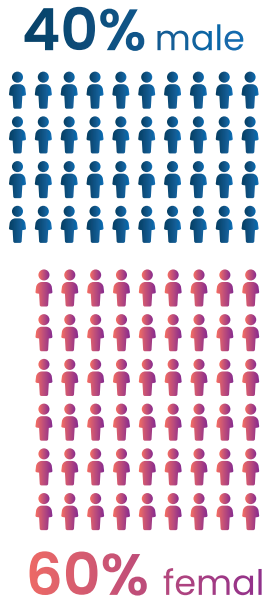


“Leaders and managers care about their staff and are very considerate of their workloads and well-being.”

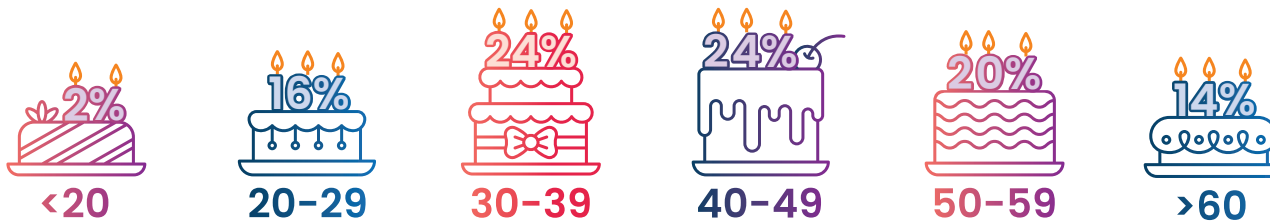
Ofsted 2024

1,113

members of staff



Staff age range



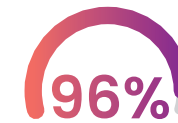
What staff say



support the college's strategic aims and objectives



are aware of the college's core values



believe their work colleagues are supportive



believe that they have gained new skills whilst working at the college



believe that their work is interesting

“Staff promote a positive culture of respect and care which learners and apprentices appreciate.”

Ofsted 2024

Our strategic plan

Our Mission

To develop **skills, knowledge** and **behaviours** that help individuals to **thrive** and enhance the region's **economic** and **social prosperity**.

Our Values

Take Responsibility

Aim High

Respect Others

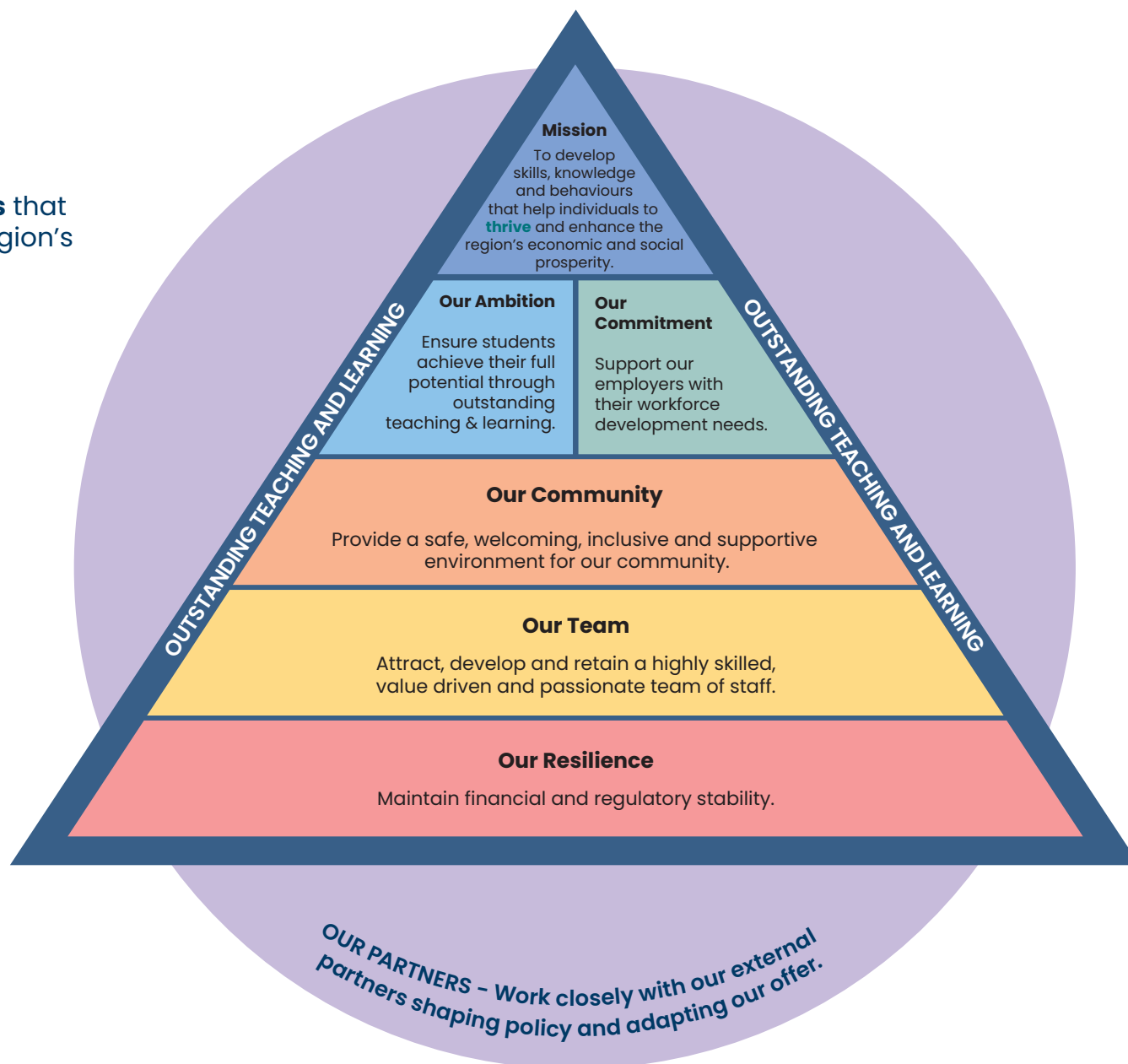
Work Hard

Do What's Right

Challenge Yourself

Take Pride

Our Strategic Plan



Our Ambition

- Teachers provide a high quality of education and training with specific focus on application of a strong evidence base to their practice, in conjunction with curriculum reform and our Taking Teacher Higher strategy which continues to drive professional development activity.
- Our Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme to support new staff into the profession and develop existing staff was judged as 'Good' in our latest inspection and our staff receive high levels of training and support, through ITE provision and extensive professional development opportunities and mentoring. We launched the first cohort of Early Careers Teacher (ECT) with exceptional levels of staff satisfaction reported.
- Although a challenge, we continued to see increasing numbers of staff new to the profession, particularly in skills shortage sectors. They talked positively about the high levels of support they received in developing as dual professionals as they embark on a new career.
- Our digital strategy to address digital poverty of our students and upskill staff continues to progress. We achieved Microsoft Showcase College status for the fourth year running. We have 37 Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts (MIEE) across the college group.
- Destinations of all our learners remains of the utmost importance, with 95% progressing to a positive destination, including higher education, apprenticeships, employment or further study.
- Our apprentices achieved at 75.9%, significantly higher than the national average.
- We continued to expand the range of personal development opportunities and skills competitions throughout our curriculum, to ensure our learner experience is holistic and that they are ready to take their next steps into employment, apprenticeships or higher education.
- By expanding the range of employer forums/advisory boards we are assured that the curriculum we offer is closely matched to employer and local skills needs. Stakeholder feedback is used effectively to shape future provision and features heavily in curriculum planning.

Our Commitment

- Worked collaboratively with local partners and the Employer Representative Body to continue to respond to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), through focused and complimentary investment to ensure build capacity and access to state-of-the-art equipment in construction, engineering and health care. This investment has been utilised to support NHS Foundation Trusts, inward investors and established businesses with their workforce skills needs.
- Continued to drive work placements, with an increase of 37 employers from the previous year, to over 685 employers facilitating placements for students and over 2,400 students undertaking an external placement (an increase of over 600 on the previous year). The College continue to invest in the development of work placement resources and capacity, to ensure our students have access to this essential element of their employability training.
- Officially opened the new TTE building and remodelled the STEM Centre, continuing to add to range of training options available to individuals and employers with a carbon capture, utilisation and storage plant facility, alongside a pump centre of excellence.
- Continued to develop, grow and deliver a suite of programmes to meet government initiatives such as Skills Bootcamps and increased the range of Bespoke Employer Led Provision (BELPs), to support partners in recruiting qualified local people into their businesses and upskilling of the current workforce. These programmes supported a range of sectors in the region including maritime port operations, warehousing, education, process engineering, construction and offshore wind energy.
- Continued to facilitate impactful Employer Advisory Boards bi-annually, in eight different sectors, to inform curriculum and better understand sector skills requirements.
- Introduced a scholarship scheme in engineering, supported by 28 employers, to provide 40 scholarship places at the College, which has delivered progression into apprenticeships/employment for more than 40% of the scholars involved.
- Grew recruitment of new apprenticeship starts, showing an 1.5% increase year-on-year, with key sectors in engineering and construction accounting for 36% of the new starts.

Our Community

- Continued to work closely with partners to support our students' welfare, mental health, and safeguarding needs.
- Our College has maintained a welcoming, calm and orderly environment. Students show respect for staff and each other, contributing to a positive and productive atmosphere.
- Continued to promote diversity within our College community. This year, we organised various events, groups and celebrations, fostering an inclusive environment where students embrace both commonalities and differences.
- Our Thrive programme has expanded to include participation in social action projects for all students. This initiative promotes citizenship and involves collaboration with community organisations, enhancing students' engagement and sense of responsibility.
- We have continued to implement our comprehensive careers strategy to ensure that support for all progression pathways is of the highest standard.
- Our student council has remained proactive and well-attended. Students feel empowered to make suggestions and positively contribute to the development of the College through various forums and meetings.
- Continued to develop our students' employability skills by providing a wide range of employer encounters and both internal and external work placements.
- Our proactive approach to supporting students who have experienced sexual abuse and harassment has continued.
- We are proud to maintain our accreditations, including Disability Confident Leader, Bullying Intervention Group and the Matrix Quality Standard.

Our Team

- Continued to develop our Thrive workforce development portal through which essential and bespoke training can be housed, tailored and tracked whilst building a continuous development culture where personal reflection and developmental curiosity is the norm.
- Continued our journey with Investors in People with a GOLD accreditation.
- Maintained excellent relationships with our unions and very high levels of staff satisfaction in our annual survey.
- Significantly increased the proportion of new staff who are from BAME communities.
- Developed further our people management system.
- Improved further our start for success programme which ensures new staff receive a high quality induction into the College and their role.
- Expanded further our wellbeing strategies including establishing our wellbeing group and raising awareness of our Employee Assistance Programme which supports staff and their families 24/7 with a good take up of counselling and other services.
- Harmonised and simplified a wide range of contractual variations and HR policies and procedures.
- Launched our management training programmes alongside a range of flexible and intuitive staff CPD programmes.

Our Resilience

- Maintained Good financial health in challenging economic and inflationary times.
- Launched a new Digital Strategy 2026-28 with aims being Equality and digital access for all, Improved learner outcomes, Enhanced productivity & Seamless customer experience.
- Continued to support all our full time students through the MC Click loan laptop scheme.
- Commissioned the new TTE building and installed additional modular buildings to support curriculum growth in Construction & TTE.
- Further increased our catering provision in the campus heart.
- Improved our cyber security resilience and hence our Microsoft score.
- Successfully applied for a Salix decarbonisation grant of £4.9M to replace all gas boilers with ASHP over the next two years and install additional solar panels to support our Sustainability action plan.
- Achieved the third year on year reduction in energy usage across the campus through better monitoring and smart building technologies.
- Achieved Microsoft Showcase School status for the fourth consecutive year.
- Continued to strengthen the Governance of the College recruiting new Governors with appropriate additional skills and experience.

Our Partners

- Principal/CEO appointed to the board of Skills England - the single authoritative voice on skills supply and employment demand.
- Selected by the Department for Education and FE Commissioner's team as an exemplar college in strategic planning, accountability agreements and apprenticeship success.
- Supported sector improvement through active participation in the College Collective.
- Responded to local priorities through opening our new TTE training centre and expanding our work into green technologies to support Net Zero Teesside Power which saw the College working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority, other FE colleges and major contractors to design and secure financial backing for a scholarship programme, from which 36 scholars will come to the College in 2025-26.
- Worked collaboratively with other local colleges (FE+) on a range of initiatives including supporting the North East England Chamber of Commerce on the delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).
- Supported Tees Valley Combined Authority on their Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Board and through active participation in skills workshops relating to adult funding priorities.
- Successfully piloted student support, skills bootcamps and adult funding initiatives, with the Department for Education through Project S, which aims to reduce bureaucracy across the further education system.
- Supported the Association of Colleges through chairing a strategic committee working with officials to support quality improvement and influence skills funding decisions.
- Secured increasing levels of adult education through meeting devolved authority priorities and achieving high quality employment outcomes through our growing bespoke employer-led programmes, developing innovative skills bootcamps and improving our offer of adult basic skills.
- Continued to show leadership on national skills priorities through expanding our T Levels and Foundation programmes, developing and expanding our Skills Bootcamps, and through developing Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) within our North East Institute of Technology consortium.
- Worked in partnership with Middlesbrough Council on their Town's Board, their Education Alliance and through a wide range of regeneration and community initiatives as well as reviewing post-16 education across the borough to align strategic priorities and support each other further in delivering solutions.
- Supported a range of local business events targeting key priority groups including Tees Business Women, Tees Tech Awards and other skills and business-related event.

Summary of awards

Middlesbrough College Group celebrates success at every opportunity with over 300 student awards being given. Here are just some of our amazing students from 2024/25.



Luke Storey receiving the Overall Student of the Year Award



Letisha May Bishop receiving the Inclusive Learning Student of the Year Award



Lynx Appiah-Adjei receiving the TTE Overall Student of the Year Award



Sophie Brown receiving the Overall Adult Learner of the Year Award



Le-Roy Ayitey receiving the Above and Beyond Student Award



William Harker receiving the Engineering BTEC Student of the Year Award



Theo Clements-Mogie receiving the Sport and Leisure Student of the Year Award

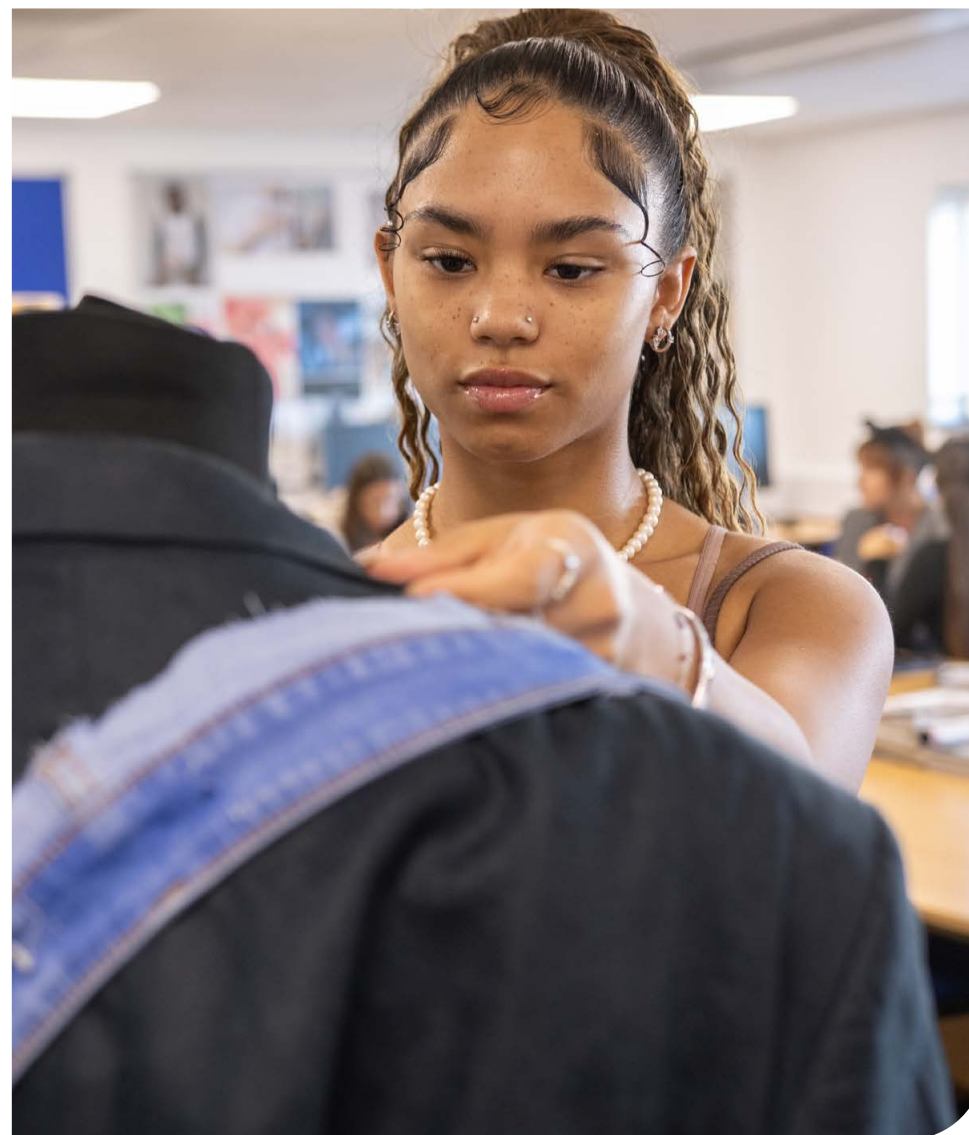


Precious Olukoya receiving the MC Digital Student of the Year Award

Summary of finances

Middlesbrough College had another financially successful year, growing our income by over £5m through attracting more school leavers, increasing the number of apprentices we train, in priority sectors, and through securing bids locally and nationally to develop employer bespoke programmes. We made a small surplus at the end of the year (before pensions adjustments) and generated sufficient cash to continue our campus and digital maintenance and investment plan. We achieved a Department for Education GOOD financial health rating at year end, and we aim to strengthen this further to OUTSTANDING in the coming year.

Summary financial performance	Year to 31 July '24 £'000	Year to 31 July '25 £'000
Total income	57,891	63,485
Staff costs	35,739	39,254
Other Operating Expenses	16,392	17,392
Depreciation and amortisation	5,659	5,990
Interest and finance costs	465	292
(Gains)/losses from disposal of assets	(73)	(2)
Taxation	0	1
Total expenditure	58,182	62,927
Pension Actuarial gain	(302)	(561)
Total comprehensive income	(593)	(3)
Sector specific EBITDA	3,409	4,301



Financial objective/benchmark	Year to 31 July 2025 Actual
"Good" financial health	Good
Meet bank covenants	All Met
Operating surplus/(deficit) set and delivered	(£0.003m)
Sector Specific EBITDA \geq £4m	£4.301m
Annual capital \geq £2m	£5.7m
Current ratio >1	1.57
EBITDA $>7\%$	7.1%
Borrowings to income $<35\%$	21.8%



Key developments for 2025/26

1

New Strategic Plan

We will consult widely, benchmark thoroughly, and consider solutions to local capacity challenges, shaping the next phase of our journey through publication of a new strategic plan – taking us beyond 2030.

2

Staff and Leadership Development

We will expand our leadership development programmes, increase our workforce development budget, innovate our reward and recognition mechanisms, continue our workload reduction plans, and support career progression through the creation of job families – moving us towards our goal of Investors in People Platinum.

3

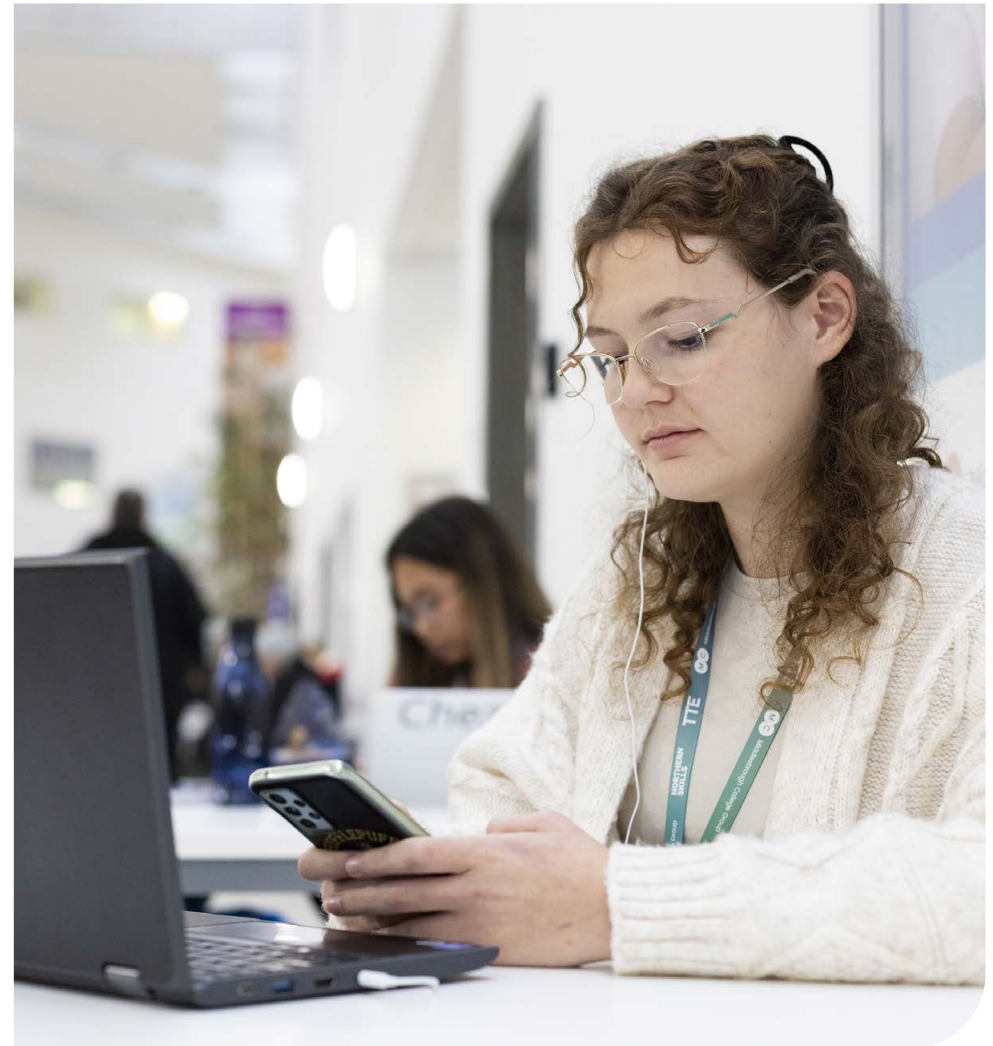
Strategic Place Based Partnerships

Middlesbrough College Group will expand our scholarship programmes and launch strategic partnerships with local anchor employers, providing enhanced opportunities for our students to excel.

4

Digital Innovation

Implement our new Digital Transformation Strategy 2025 to 2028 – including developing AI, innovating our business processes and enhancing our use of big data to support strong decision making.



Public Value Statement

Middlesbrough College is committed to adding value to the social, economic and physical wellbeing of the local community it serves.

We are committed to raising aspiration, increasing opportunity and providing a foundation for sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

Central to our responsibility is our work with partner organisations and our obligation to enrich the social, cultural, economic and physical wellbeing of our whole community.

In practice, this means we are ready, willing and able to respond to the needs of our community whatever and wherever they may be.

In making this commitment we may be challenged to work in new ways and, at times, our own capability or capacity may be tested.

We are nevertheless determined to devote ourselves to, and measure ourselves against, this endeavour.



**NORTHERN
SKILLS**


Middlesbrough
College Group

TTE