



# Annual Report 2023/2024

# Welcome to our Annual Report for 2023/2024



Renowned hospital doctor and award-winning TV presenter, Dr Ranj, led the official opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony of Middlesbrough College's new Immersive Health and Social Care Education Suite.

# Foreword

The academic year 2023-24 proved to be one of the most successful in the College's long and proud history. Our prior year investments and prioritisation in supporting and developing both our staff and students through our Thrive programmes, was positively acknowledged through a range of external awards, inspections and accolades.

Ofsted visited the College in February 2024 and awarded a GOOD overall judgment with six Outstanding sub categories including for our adult, apprenticeship and high needs provisions, and for the behaviour and attitudes, and personal development of our students as well as the overall leadership and management of the college. Pleasingly, the College also secured a STRONG judgment for the new enhanced inspection which assesses how well we respond to our labour market and skills needs in the region.

The Association of Colleges also awarded us a prestigious Beacon Award for our Careers and Enterprise service; we secured a number of Equality and Inclusion awards; and towards the end of the academic year Investors in People awarded the College a GOLD rating, highlighting many strengths including the manner in which our values, strategic mission and pride in our purpose is shared and demonstrated across our workforce.

Our work with partner organisations has gone from strength to strength. Supporting Middlesbrough Council with their Towns Fund Strategy; the North East England Chamber of College developing and delivering the new Local Skills Improvement Plan, the Tees Valley Combined Authority developing new flexible employer led courses, and supporting inward investors with their important skills pipeline.

We continue to forge strong and enduring partnerships with employers and partners and take great care to listen and respond to their needs.

Nationally, our College takes a keen interest in skills policy development, being members of a wide range of reference groups and forums to shape the future of skills policy and funding – including being selected as one of a handful of colleges who have both grown and delivered high quality apprenticeships, and working with the Department for Education to reduce bureaucracy across the college sector through a Project S initiative.

We are extremely proud of all that our students have achieved over the last year and grateful to our staff who show commitment and passion each and every day, and perhaps most importantly, become trusted role models for our students, in nurturing and developing them to be ready for their chosen next steps.

As we come to the end of the year and look back on all that we have achieved Middlesbrough College Group is confident that, working with our local partners, we can support the five new government missions and play an increasingly important and exciting part regenerating our local and regional economy.

We would like to congratulate and thank our students, staff and governors for what has been another highly successful and rewarding year for the College.

Zoe Lewis CBE  
Principal and Chief Executive Officer

Rob Davies  
Chair of Governors

# About us

Middlesbrough College today 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 12,000 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** 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)



Middlesbrough College is situated in the heart of the Tees Valley, an ex-industrial area characterised by some consistent and common economic themes:

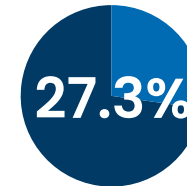
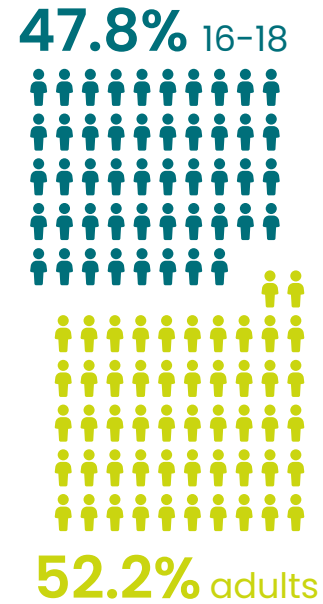
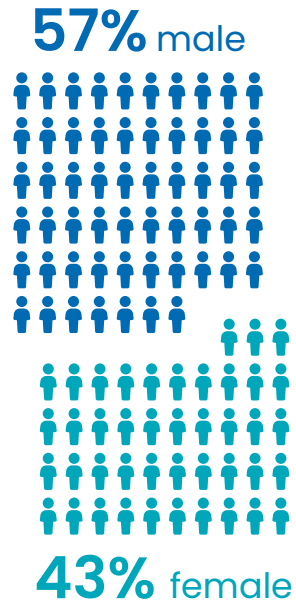
- The second most deprived LEP area in England
- Lower than average job density and high proportion of low skilled / low paid jobs
- A lower proportion of the population is qualified at Level 2 and above than in other regions of England, and 16% of the population have no qualifications
- The proportion 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 we firmly believe that every one of us has the potential to achieve great things and through building confidence, developing new skills, and providing work simulation and relevant industrial experience we can unlock ambitions and support everyone, no matter what their starting point, to achieve a brighter future.

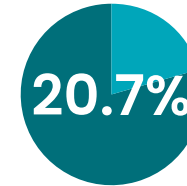
The College curriculum has been developed over years, through strong bi-lateral partnerships with employers and through close and regular analysis of the changing labour market requirements.

# Our students

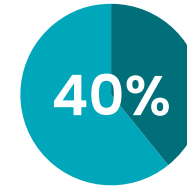
**12,000**  
students



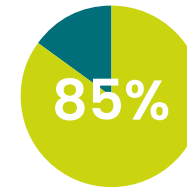
consider themselves to have a learning difficulty or disability



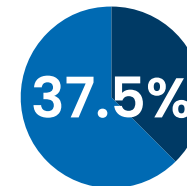
are from a black and minority ethnic group



live in a deprived area

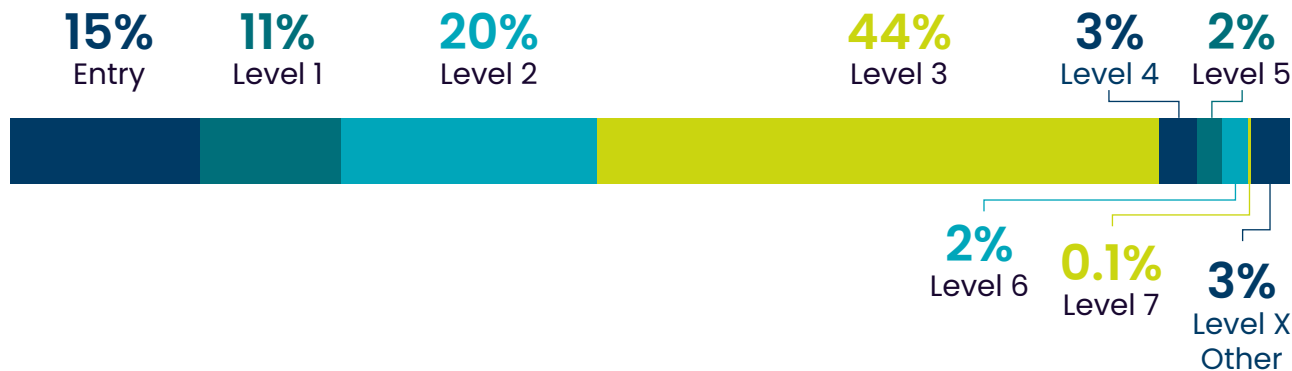


live within the Tees Valley Combined Authority

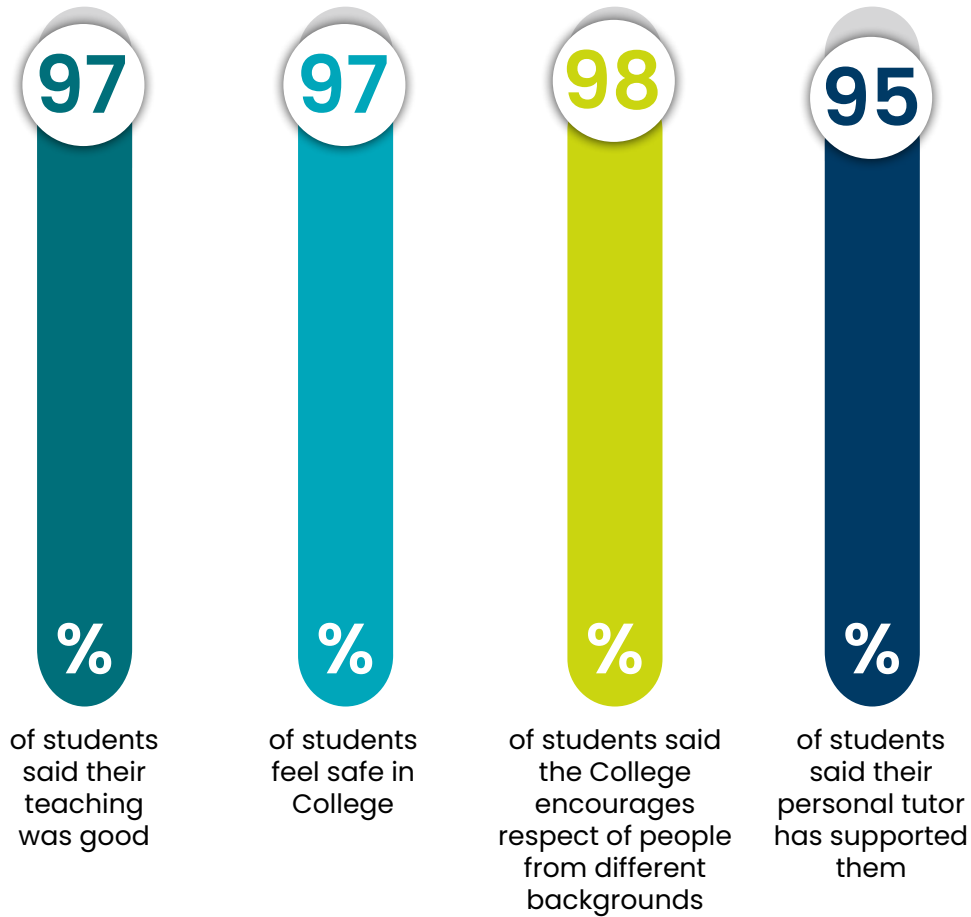


live within Middlesbrough's local authority

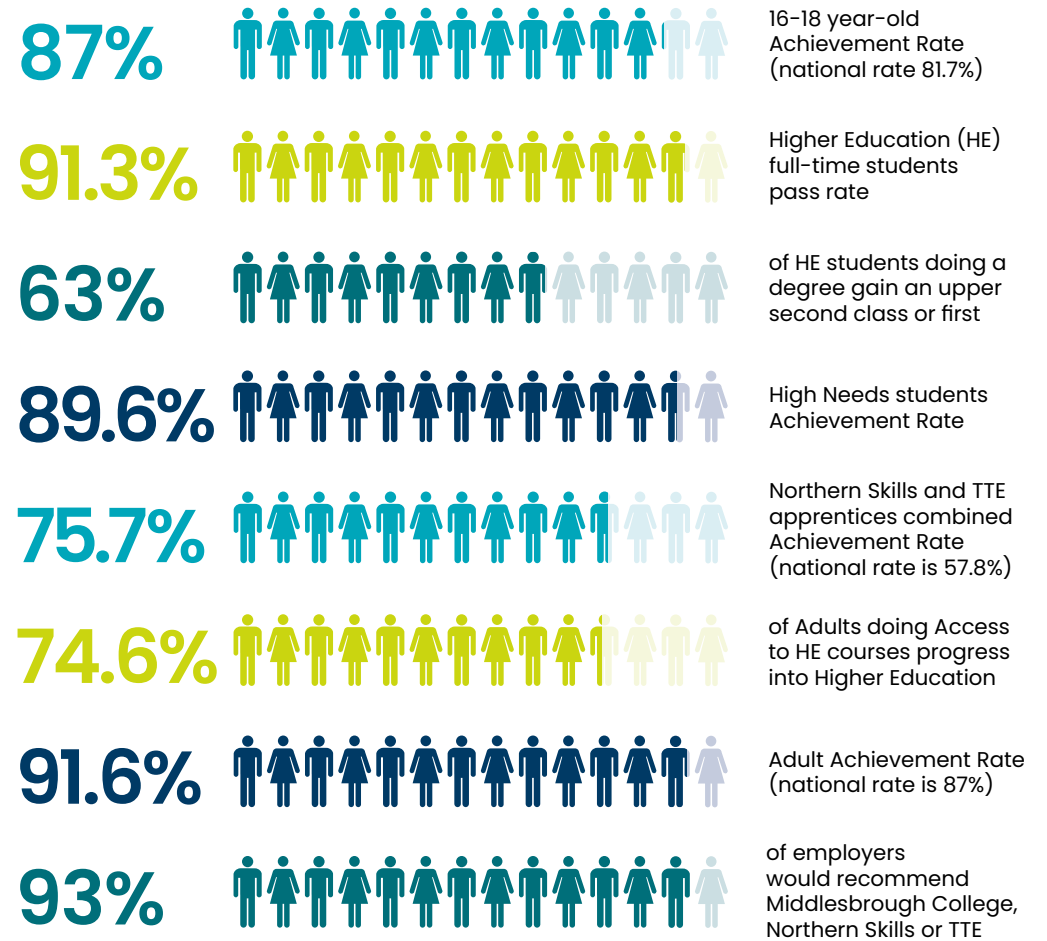
## Student study levels



## 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

# 1,127

members of staff

40% male



60% female



4.9%  
LGBT+



8.7%  
with a disability



2.2%  
apprentices



9.6%  
BAME

## Staff age range



<20



20-29



30-39



40-49



50-59



>60

## What staff say



believe their behaviour reflects the organisation's values



believe the organisation has clear values and that they share the organisation's values



believe that their work is interesting



believe that the organisation has a plan for the future



believe they are encouraged to use initiative in their role

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

# 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

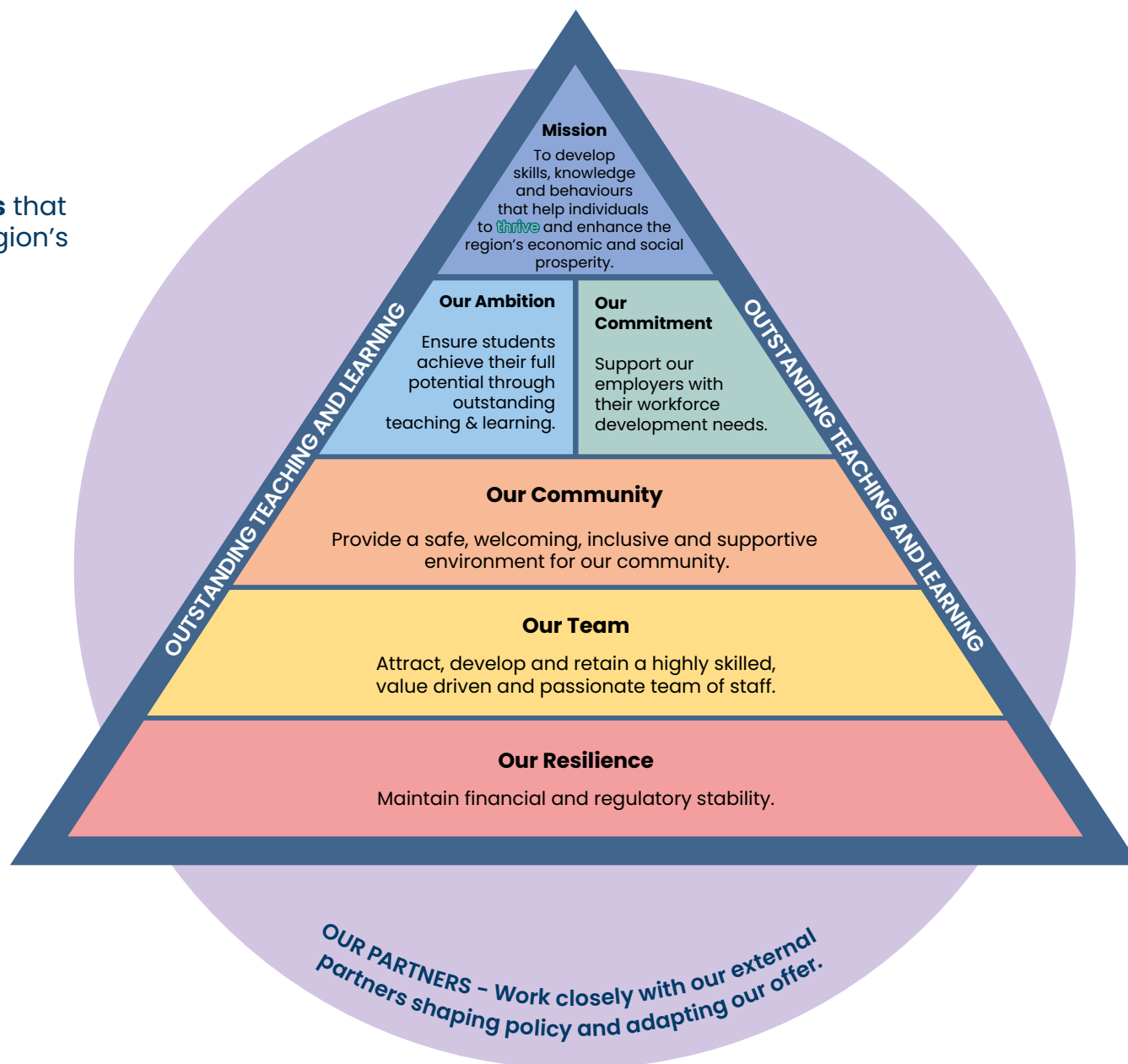
Work Hard

Do What's Right

Challenge Yourself

Take Pride

## Our Strategic Plan



# Our strategic plan

## Our Ambition

- Teachers continued to provide a high quality of education and training with specific focus on application of cognitive science to their practice, in conjunction with curriculum reform and our Taking Teacher Higher strategy
- 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 continued to recruit increasing numbers of staff new to the profession, particularly in skills shortage sectors. They talk positively about the high levels of support that they receive in developing as dual professionals as they embark on a new career
- Continued to embed our digital strategy to address digital poverty of our students and upskill staff, building on our Microsoft Showcase College status
- 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 significantly higher than the national average at 70%
- 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
- 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

## Our Commitment

- Worked collaboratively with local partners and the Employer Representative Body to respond to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), through focussed and complimentary investment to ensure build capacity and access to state of the art equipment in construction, engineering and health care
- Continued to drive work placements, with an increase of 67 employers from the previous year to over 650 employers facilitating placements for students. 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
- Developed and opened the new TTE building and remodelled the STEM Centre, to create an engineering training environment informed by the sector, which meets industry needs
- 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
- Implemented and facilitated impactful Employer Advisory Boards bi-annually in eight different sectors, to inform curriculums and better understand sector skills requirements
- Grew recruitment of new apprenticeship starts, showing an 11% increase year on year, with key sectors in engineering and construction accounting for 38% of the new starts



# Our strategic plan

## 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 winning a Beacon Award for Careers
- 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
- Started 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
- Welcomed TTE to our Middlehaven Campus
- 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 strategic plan

## Our Resilience

- Maintained Good financial health in challenging economic and inflationary times
- Continue to progress our ambitious digital transformation strategy issuing free loan laptops to all full time students and embracing AI technology
- Completed the new £14.6M TTE build in April 2024 and welcomed the first students in September 2024
- Further developed and embedded our physical and cyber business continuity and disaster recovery plans
- Expanded our catering outlet provision in the Campus heart , increasing the range of food and drink options available to staff and students
- Achieved progression to 'Established' phase of the FE Pathway for Sustainability and launched phase 2 of our Strategy Action plan
- Acquired a property in January 2024 to secure the future expansion plans for our adult and NEET provision in line with local and regional priorities
- Delivered c£3M of capital works to create a new Healthcare Ward, an Electric Vehicle Workshop, and created additional classroom and teaching spaces with mezzanine installations
- Achieved Microsoft Showcase School status for the third consecutive year
- Continued to strengthen the Governance of the College recruiting new Governors with appropriate additional skills and experience

## Our Partners

- Worked with the Association of Colleges and our FE+ partner colleges to carry out a thorough review of our collective curriculum, identify gaps and areas of focus and make recommendations of skills areas for us to collectively work on over the coming years
- The College was selected by the Department for Education to work with them on Project S – which aims to reduce bureaucracy across the further education system
- Provided peer support to a wide range of colleges on their inspection outcomes, including being identified as one of a handful of colleges who have both grown and delivered high quality apprenticeships
- Chaired a national group working with the Association of Colleges to actively influence education policy with a particular focus on quality, accountability and funding
- Worked collaboratively with other local colleges (FE+) to support the North East England Chamber of Commerce on the delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)
- Worked closely and at short notice with Tees Valley Combined Authority to pitch a skills solution to key potential inward investors that we hope will choose Teesworks to invest and develop
- 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
- Led on national skills priorities through becoming an early adopter of T Level qualifications, a developer of Skills Bootcamps, through delivering Multiply programmes and through developing Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) within our North East Institute of Technology consortium
- Delivered a new TTE training centre in Summer 2024 which will expand our offer in green technologies
- Delivered a range of projects in partnership with Middlesbrough Council through their Towns Fund and Levelling Up Partnership Fund – including a state of the art health and care suite
- 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 celebrates success at every opportunity with over 300 student awards being given. Here are just some of our amazing students from 2023/24.



Zachary Gilchrist receiving the Overall Apprentice of the Year Award



Mariam Kakooza receiving the Vocational Steps Student of the Year Award



Zac Cessford receiving the TTE Student of the Year Award



Lilia Long receiving the Business Student of the Year Award



Alyssa Agaimwonyi receiving the Over and Above Special Award



Joel Routh receiving the Overall Engineering Student of the Year Award



Lauren Taylor receiving the Sport & Leisure Student of the Year Award



Thomas Ealand receiving the MC Digital Student of the Year Award

# Summary of finances

The Middlesbrough College Group continues to report “Good” financial health despite ongoing inflationary cost pressures and some difficult trading conditions, particularly in the apprenticeship market. The College reported EBITDA (cash income) of £3.4m in year which was reinvested in support of capital expenditure and servicing of borrowings.

Summary financial performance	Year to 31 July 2023 £'000	Year to 31 July 2024 £'000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>52,528</b>	<b>57,891</b>
Staff costs	32,685	35,739
Other Operating Expenses	15,596	16,392
Depreciation and amortisation	5,014	5,659
Interest and finance costs	721	465
(Gains)/losses from disposal of assets	26	(73)
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>54,042</b>	<b>58,182</b>
Pension Actuarial gain	4,121	(302)
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>2,607</b>	<b>(593)</b>
<b>Sector specific EBITDA</b>	<b>2,751</b>	<b>3,409</b>



The Middlesbrough College Group manages financial performance against the strategic plan by reference to a suite of financial performance metrics. During 2023/24 the college invested heavily in its estate with the relocation of TTE to a new state of the art building, plus improvements in the existing Middlehaven estate. The College faced increased cost pressures due to rising student numbers and above inflation increases to exam and registration costs. Despite these pressures “Good” financial health was maintained and a surplus is planned for 2024/25.

Financial objective	Year to 31 July 2024
At least “Good” financial health (ESFA methodology)	<b>Good</b>
Meet bank covenants	All Met
Deliver an operating surplus	(342)
EBITDA of at least £3m	£3.409m
Annual Capex at least £1.25m	£15.9m
Current ratio >1	1.03
EBITDA at least 7% of income	5.9%
Borrowings to income less than 35%	24.3%



# Key developments for 2024/25:

1

## Leadership Development

We will continue implementing the College's leadership development programmes, designed to support middle and senior leaders while ensuring effective succession planning.

2

## Scholarship Programme

Middlesbrough College will launch a pilot scholarship programme in partnership with key employers, providing enhanced opportunities for our students to excel.

3

## Investors in People Accreditation

Building on the College's achievement of a 'Gold' IIP rating in 2024, we will implement a strategic plan to progress towards 'Platinum' accreditation for 2026.

4

## Innovative Staff Recruitment

We aim to explore and adopt innovative approaches to attract and recruit talented staff, ensuring we remain competitive and future-ready.

5

## Strengthening Professional Recognition

We will strengthen our links with Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies to ensure an increased number of programmes receive formal recognition from their representative organisations.

6

## Digital Transformation Strategy

Develop, implement and launch our Digital Transformation Strategy 2025 to 2028.



# Public Value Statement

Middlesbrough College is committed to adding value to the social, economic and physical well-being 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**