



Strategic Plan

Our journey to outstanding 2026

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Introduction from the Principal and Chair



On behalf of myself and our Chair, I am delighted to introduce our ambitious and updated strategic plan, a roadmap that will propel us on our path to become an outstanding College. It is our privilege to present this vision for our institution, one that encapsulates our unwavering commitment to educational excellence and the holistic development of our learners.

At Derwentside College, we have always been dedicated to nurturing talent, and providing our learners with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world. However, we also recognise that the landscape of education is evolving rapidly, and so must we. This strategic plan is our blueprint for not just keeping pace with change but setting the pace for others to follow.

Our journey towards outstanding is driven by a profound belief in the transformative power of education. We aim to create an environment where every learner, regardless of their background or circumstance, has the opportunity to excel academically and vocationally, developing essential life skills and growing as responsible and engaged members of our society.

This strategic plan is the culmination of extensive collaboration and input from our dedicated staff, visionary Board, and invaluable College community. It is rooted in our core values of excellence, enterprise, trust, respect and enjoyment, and it outlines clear and actionable steps that will guide us over the coming years.

In the pages that follow, you will discover the strategic priorities and objectives that will shape our future. These priorities encompass Governance and Leadership, Curriculum and Quality and finally, Engagement. They reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and our aspiration to reach new heights in our ambition to become an outstanding College.

As we embark on this journey together, I want to express my profound gratitude to all of you who make Derwentside College a vibrant and engaging place to learn and work. Your dedication, expertise and passion are the driving force behind our pursuit of excellence. Together, in the years to come, we will chart a course that will make us not just outstanding, but a beacon of excellence in the sector.

On behalf of myself, the Chair and our Board, I thank you for your unwavering support, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all to achieve our shared vision for the future.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, belonging to Chris Todd.

Chris Todd

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, belonging to David Allsop.

David Allsop
Chair of the Board

Mission

To provide high quality education and training that shapes the future and transforms lives

Our mission statement describes our core purpose and focus as a Further Education College.

Vision

To be an outstanding college that is highly valued by our learners and partners

Our vision provides a clear view of what we intend to achieve, contextualising our long-term aspirations and providing staff, learners and stakeholders with a clear and engaging view of our future.



Values & Behaviours

The College Values are the key to our culture and we strive to live by them each and every day. They serve as a compass to help guide us on our path to success, as well as a bridge to the future, supporting the achievement of our Mission and Vision over time.



In order to embed our culture and values within the College, we have developed behaviours against each value, covering the following key groups:

Governance

Leadership

Staff

Students

Strategic Priorities and Aims

Leadership & Governance

Leadership and governance are crucial strategic priorities for the College, impacting our overall effectiveness, sustainability, and reputation. Over the coming years, we will provide outstanding leadership and governance across the organisation, delivering on our strategic plan and achieving our goals.

What we are already doing well

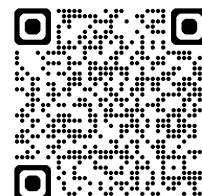
- We have a clear and compelling strategy that is supported by staff, students, and key partners.
- Our Board of Governors is well-structured, providing strategic oversight and direction. It includes highly qualified independent governors from diverse backgrounds, bringing varied perspectives and expertise.
- We have a progressive committee structure that offers challenge and support in key areas of our business, with the Corporation Board focused on strategy and direction.
- We have adopted the AoC Code of Good Governance and implemented board assurance frameworks to ensure adherence to our legal and regulatory obligations.
- Our leadership team is highly effective, supported by a full-time governance professional providing guidance to the Board.

What we plan to do

- Continue harnessing the knowledge, skills, and experience of our governors to enhance our corporate governance structures and practices.
- Establish and embed a clear set of values and behaviours for governors aligned with the overall college values.
- Develop our governors as a team, building their understanding of the curriculum and creating an environment that allows them to add value.
- Continue developing and retaining a high-performing leadership team capable of driving the college's strategic vision and operational excellence.
- Promote a culture of performance and accountability at all levels of the organisation.
- Implement succession planning across governance, leadership and the workforce to ensure continuity and stability.
- Enhance our approach to risk management, proactively managing risks and ensuring regulatory compliance.



Governance



Values and Behaviours

Curriculum & Quality

Delivering a high-quality curriculum that is aligned with national, regional, and local skills needs is of paramount strategic importance to the College. We will strive to deliver a curriculum that provides a significant contribution to the economy and our employer partners, but one which also enriches the prospects and lives of our students.

What we are already doing well

- Our curriculum offer is well-aligned with national, regional, and local skills needs, covering apprenticeships, adult learning, and education programmes for young people.
- We have successfully expanded our education programmes for young people, collaborating closely with local feeder schools to build our reputation.
- Our apprenticeship offer has been refined to focus on a smaller range where we can deliver high volume and outstanding quality.
- We have increased capacity in our adult learning and business development team to support future growth.
- A Quality and Standards sub-committee of the Board provides increased support and challenge in this key area, aiding our drive to become outstanding.
- We use self-assessment and quality assurance activities to create ambitious quality improvement plans.
- We have implemented 'Professional Development Weeks' and 'Teacher Innovation Days' to provide staff with opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- Significant investment in our building infrastructure and facilities has created high-quality, industry-standard learning environments.

What we plan to do

- Continue delivering a curriculum that is relevant, innovative, and responsive to national, regional, and local skills needs.
- Achieve sustainable growth and financial prosperity through expanding existing markets, exploiting new opportunities and delivering efficiencies.
- Utilise our robust quality assurance and improvement planning processes to support continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment, and achieving our goal of becoming an outstanding college.
- Promote excellence in teaching through high-quality professional development, innovative practices, and a supportive teaching environment.
- Further develop our estates strategy to support our curriculum development and growth plans, enhancing our facilities to provide a student-centred and inclusive learning environment.
- Continue to develop our strong safeguarding culture and embed a positive health and safety culture.



Ofsted Report



Accountability Agreement

Engagement

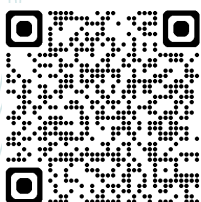
We believe that communication and engagement are critical factors in our ongoing success as a College. We will optimise our services through our people agenda, empowering our staff, students, employers and stakeholders to release our full potential.

What we are already doing well

- We have a positive, supportive and inclusive culture that is well embedded across all areas.
- Our annual staff and student surveys are consistently excellent, with both groups reporting high levels of satisfaction and cultural alignment.
- We maintain very positive relationships with local schools, working in partnership to support careers advice and guidance.
- We have excellent relationships with employers and work with a broad range of organisations to deliver apprenticeships, adult education, and education programmes for young people.
- We have a range of positive stakeholder relationships outside of the organisation, which we use well to the benefit of the College.

What we plan to do

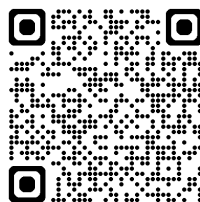
- Foster a vibrant and inclusive student community that promotes active participation with the aim of:
 - Building aspiration;
 - Enriching learning programmes and enhancing the student experience;
 - Supporting the local community.
- Create a supportive and collaborative work environment where staff feel valued, motivated, and involved in the College's mission.
- Build strong partnerships with employers to enhance the relevance of the College's learning programmes, improving student employability.
- Continue working closely with local schools to build the College's reputation with parents and prospective students.
- Ensure that leaders and governors are actively engaged with staff, students, employers and stakeholders across all areas of the College's business.



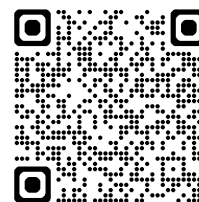
Values and Behaviours



Staff Survey



Learner Survey



Employers

Measuring Performance

KPI Category	KPI Ref	KPI Description	Target 2023-24	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target
Ofsted & SAR Grades	1	Overall Effectiveness	Good	Good	Outstanding
		Quality of Education	Good	Good	Outstanding
		Behaviour and Attitudes	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
		Personal Development	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
		Leadership and Management	Good	Good	Outstanding
		Apprenticeships	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
		Education Programmes for Young People	Good	Good	Outstanding
		Adult Learning Programmes	Good	Good	Outstanding
		Contribution to meeting local skills needs grade	Reasonable	Strong	Strong
Financials	2	Financial Health Grade (ESFA)	Good	Good	Good
		EBITDA Surplus as a percentage of income %	4%	5%	5%+
		Turnover	£9.8m	£10.7m	£12.1m
Growth - Apprenticeships	3	Funding generated from new starts cumulative (£000)	£1,750k	£1,900k	£2,200k
Growth - Adult Education	4	DfE contract funding generated (College only)	£1,466k	£1,525k	£2,200k
		DfE contract funding generated (Delta North only)	£200k	£265k	£265k
		Tees Valley contract funding generated £	£381k	£410k	£537k
Growth - Education Programmes for Young People (EPYP)	5	Funding generated (College only) £	£1,808k	£2,450k	£2,550k
		Funding generated (Delta North only) £	£377k	£300k	£300k
		T-Level Learner Numbers	5	62	90

KPI Category	KPI Ref	KPI Description	Target 2023-24	2024-25 Target	2025-26 Target
Staff and Culture	6	Staff survey – I am proud to be a member of staff (York College Survey)	96.6%	Upper Quartile	Upper Decile
		Staff survey - I feel valued in the College (York College Survey)	88.8%	Upper Quartile	Upper Decile
		Staff survey – the College is well led and managed (York College Survey)	94.9%	Upper Quartile	Upper Decile
Employer Satisfaction	7	Employer survey - I would recommend Derwentside College to others looking for apprenticeship training	91%	91%	91%
		Apprenticeship Employer satisfaction rating (gov.uk)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Learner Satisfaction	8	Annual learner survey - I would recommend the College to my friends and family %	96%	94%	95%
		Annual learner survey - I would recommend the College to my friends and family %	91%	90%	95%
		Apprentice satisfaction rating (gov.uk site)	Good	Excellent	Excellent
Quality - Apprenticeships	9	Apprenticeships Achievement Rate – Overall %	61%	65%	67%
		Percentage number of withdrawals – as per accountability framework	<15%	<13%	<13%
		% of apprentices on a BiL - 180 days over their planned return from BiL date	15.6%	<13%	<10%
		% of apprentices on a BiL - 365 days over their planned return from BiL date	25.1%	<13%	<10%
		% of apprentices (full cohort) - 180 to 364 days over their planned end date	1.2%	<2%	<1%
		% of apprentices (full cohort) - 365 days or more over their planned end date	1.7%	0%	0%
Quality - EPYP	10	Achievement rate %	88%	89%	89%
		Percentage attendance – overall – cumulative	77%	87%	88%
Quality - Adult Education	11	Achievement rate %	86%	88%	88%



