TMC Board Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2025, Openshaw

Present: Dame Ann Limb (Chair), Philip Johnson, Justice Ellis, Rachel Curry (Principal), and Catherine Hill OBE (from item 6 onward).

Apologies: Mark Fletcher, Garry Bridges and Edward Lack

In Attendance: Debbie Sanderson (Vice Principal Resources, Planning & Performance), Michael Walsh (Deputy Principal: Adult Curriculum and Student Support), Sarah-Jane Gilmore (Deputy Company Secretary), Barry Atkins (Deputy Principal), Michelle Fletcher (Vice Principal – TMC Quality), Orla Wood (Divisional Finance Director – College and Income Team), Marie Stock (Vice Principal Student Experience and Support) Stuart Steen, Vice Principal FE, Yetunde D. Olabode (Governance and Legal Advisor), and Christian Jowles (Assistant Principal Quality)

PART A

The meeting opened at 10:01 and was quorate with at least 3 Governors present	
1	**Apologies** Apologies were received for Mark Fletcher, Edward Lack, and Garry Bridges.
2	**Declarations of Interest** There were no declarations of interest.
3	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting** The minutes of the meeting on the 10th of June 2025 were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.
4	**Matters Arising** The Board noted the ongoing actions.
5	**Final Position Statement – Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024-25** The Board reviewed the final 2024-25 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), which is monitored throughout the year and in the event of a future inspection would form part of Ofsted's evidence base. The RAG methodology was applied consistently across targets. Areas for Improvement (AFIs) 4, 5, 6, and 7 met their objectives, with AFI 4 (attendance) carried forward to 2025/26. AFI 6 was achieved, and AFI 8, following Ofsted inspection, was confirmed as a new development area for the subsequent QIP cycle. The Board discussed national policy on GCSE resits in English and Maths considering the proposed reforms. It was noted that the Government's developing proposals could impact the College's approach and strategy. While acknowledging uncertainty, the Board emphasised protecting student ambition. Regarding attendance, the College had implemented "attendance and progress monitors" and contact protocols across departments, enabling early identification of barriers such as transport issues. The Board noted improvements, including a three pp rise in 16-18 attendance, and praised the shift towards supportive engagement, encouraging continued refinement of standards for 2025/26. The Board was appraised of Target 2 (Assessment and Feedback) and questioned areas

	where progress had been slower, notably within Travel, Tourism, and Counselling. Travel & Tourism experienced considerable staffing instability during the year, but stabilisation measures were in place, supported by cross-departmental collaboration and targeted quality assurance. The Counselling department was undergoing an enhancement activity to ensure consistent and differentiated developmental feedback for students at varying achievement levels. The Board acknowledged the interventions and the positive trajectory but emphasised the importance of sustaining progress across all curriculum areas. The Board questioned the uptake of new assessment practice training, with 87% staff completion. It was clarified that a targeted model was adopted instead of mandatory approach, with compulsory modules only for statutory areas, such as safeguarding and health/safety. Training targeted staff identified through observations, as needed. The Board accepted this approach while emphasising the need for evidence impact through teaching consistency and outcomes. The Board challenged where the most significant residual risks remained within the QIP. It was reported that while English and maths continued to demonstrate steady improvement, these areas still required focused attention due to contextual factors such as English as an additional language and legacy learning gaps from the COVID-19 cohort. The Board noted improved local secondary outcomes, but supported continued emphasis on accountability, classroom practice, and the attendance framework that showed positive results. Principalship to maintain accountability for English and maths delivery, reporting outcomes through mid-year checkpoints. **Action: Vice Principal Quality to maintain the strengthened accountability framework for English and Maths delivery, with updates on consistency and high-grade outcomes to be reported through mid-year checkpoints**. The Board learned that the Curriculum and Assessment Review and Ofsted framework proposals were due to the published. It was agreed that once the renewed framework was published, its implications for quality assurance and reporting would be fully considered in designing the 2025-26QIP. **Action: Vice Principal Quality to presents proposals for QIP structure and assurance alignment once the renewed Ofsted framework is confirmed**. The Board noted the final position statement on the 2024-25 QIP, acknowledging progress in attendance, feedback, and the English and Maths provision. The Board commended the Principalship's quality assurance and confirmed that these actions would inform the 2025-26QIP design.
6	**Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2024-25** The Board was informed that the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2024-25 was validated by the Group Quality Team in the last month. The SAR was developed under the current Education Inspection Framework, with 15 new strengths identified, showing the College's performance culture and strategic progress. The Princess Royal Training Award was received, recognising the College's commitment to excellence. Final outcome data would be added after the Individualised Learner Record submission. Achievement rates showed 16-18 learners at 90.4% (6.5 points above national rate), adult learners at 92.1% (4 points above national), and overall, College achievement at 91.3% (5.2 points above national), the highest in recent years. The Board praised the report's clarity and evidence, acknowledging Principalship' ambition to progress from "very good" towards excellence. The College's estate transformation through the Centres of Excellence improved teaching environments and student behaviour. New facilities enhanced professional standards and employer engagement, with the Nicholls campus receiving positive feedback from students and staff. The Board recognised that enhanced facilities supported hands-on teaching approaches, in which students responded positively. Governors noted the connection between the environment, teacher engagement, and learner outcomes. Learning walks evidenced exceptional teaching practices with high student participation and the use of industry-standard equipment. Members

	acknowledged that these environments elevated the teaching quality and enhanced staff recruitment and satisfaction. The Board questioned how the College ensured that students recognised and valued their exposure to industry-standard resources, noting that awareness of this link could further enhance student aspiration. It was confirmed that this connection was being reinforced through learning walks, tutorials, and employer-led programmes. The investment strengthened the College's reputation and attracted new staff and students. *Catherine Hill joined the meeting 10:49am* The Board discussed SAR grading and the "good" classification. While eight key judgments were "good", this descriptor made it difficult to distinguish emerging excellence from areas needing development. It was explained that the College's BRAG system identified performance across provision and, under the renewed framework, would move from four to twelve judgments for better quality differentiation. Under the renewed framework, the College would have greater flexibility to demonstrate strong performance. A detailed mapping exercise would be the next step in aligning the provision with new framework descriptors, identifying current performance levels, and improved priorities. The Board questioned whether the SAR adequately reflected increased trends in the number of EHCP students and those needing additional support, noting the College's high proportion of disadvantaged students. The Board recommended that future SARs explicitly capture this demographic growth to highlight the success of inclusive education. **Action: Vice Principal Quality to include trend data on demographic changes and an increasing proportion of supported learners in future SARs.** The Board discussed the Preparation for Adulthood Framework (PfA), supporting 600 EHCP students. It was confirmed a thematic review of EHCP cross college would examine how staff and students engaged with targets. **Action: Vice Principal Quality to report on the thematic review of EHCP in the quality update report to be considered by the Board in March 2026, evaluating both quantitative and qualitative impact across curriculum areas.** The Board recognised the CEIAG offer as a strength with strong positive destinations for further education and employment. They commended the College's employer partnerships, programmes, and industry placements as evidence of external engagement. The Board addressed the Ofsted observation of attendance which was different in some areas to the recorded end year average. It was confirmed that the College had undertaken **a** forensic review of inspection evidence, identified affected curriculum areas and incorporating targeted improvement actions into the 2025-26 QIP. It was clarified that isolated attendance inconsistencies during inspection week had been due to contextual factors such as external university interviews or off-site enrichment. The Board commending its evidence base and alignment with what was the EiF Ofsted criteria, acknowledging it as an accurate assessment of the College's performance. **The Board resolved to approve The Manchester College Self-Assessment Report 2024/25**
7	**Draft Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2025-26** The Board was informed that the draft Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2025-26 was an early version to be finalised for the November Board. The QIP would expand from quality improvement indicators within this draft to include enhancement indicators in line with the College's ambition set out within its refreshed vision statement. The QIP would be a live document, updated once the renewed Ofsted framework was settled within the sector. The Board learned that five Areas for Improvement (AFIs) from the previous year's SAR remained relevant, except for two closed AFIs. The AFI for Year 2 Level 3 career guidance was met through improved progression advice, while the enrichment participation AFI was achieved through increased engagement. Both themes would continue as enhancement indicators in the revised QIP framework.

	The five key AFIs include: i. In a few instances, teachers did not provide students with sufficient guidance on how to challenge themselves or extend their learning, and questioning was not always widened to engage all learners, leading to some students becoming passive in class. ii. In some cases, staff did not monitor effectively the targets set for students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), nor consistently track the smaller steps of progress those students made. iii. The progress of EPYP students in GCSE English and Maths remained below college expectations, with too few achieving higher grades. iv. Attendance levels were too low on a small minority of EPYP and ALP courses. v. EPYP Animal Care provision is underperforming. Regarding AFI 2, Target 1, on monitoring students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), the Board asked about sharing good practice. It was confirmed that a college-wide thematic review was planned in November to evaluate excellence across the curriculum and support teams for wider implementation. The Board examined Target 2, regarding Preparation for Adulthood (PfA), across departments to monitor the progress of students with EHCPs. A member queried the relationship between PfA and EHCP targets and sought assurance that EHCP's legal requirements remained primary. It was explained that PfA targets were developed from each student's EHCP and translated into accessible learning strategies. The process ensured that the targets were bespoke and informed by the EHCP priorities. The Board noted that the PfA framework enabled tracking across employment, relationships, health, and independent living domains, while the EHCPs remained the statutory reference. Learning support teams were responsible for ensuring that the EHCP reviews were current and effectively translated into PfA strategies. The Board was informed that inconsistencies in EHCP documentation from schools, often outdated before the transition, presented challenges. The Board acknowledged this sector-wide issue and commended the College's approach in interpreting the EHCP content for the post-16 provision. Governors recognised that this demonstrated flexibility and commitment to ensuring tailored support. The Board noted that the current draft of the QIP was more succinct than in previous years. Members agreed that the streamlined format improved clarity, reflecting maturity in the quality management processes. The Board commended this, acknowledging that many improvement actions had become established practices. The Board discussed distinguishing between Areas for Improvement and Areas for Enhancement, agreeing that this reflected the College's transition to continuous excellence. Members noted that "enhancement" conveyed ambition and encouraged staff engagement. The Board supported the introduction of enhancement indicators alongside improvement measures to capture innovation and forward-looking practices. Discussing how enhancements would be monitored, it was agreed that while improvements would be RAG-rated, enhancements might initially need a qualitative approach. The Board advised that enhancements should follow the same assurance framework as improvement areas for accountability but noted that RAG-rating enhancements should be more nuanced as many would cross years. Members sought clarification on the Ofsted "renewed framework" as pilot inspections were underway. It was explained that the College would engage with framework training during the autumn term and adjust the QIP as necessary throughout the year. The revised framework introduced updated evaluation criteria, with an emphasis on inclusivity and impact. The College would align its SAR with these descriptors for the next cycle of self-assessment for 2025/26 but planned a mapping exercise in the Spring term. An Initial Teacher Education inspection expected in early 2026 would benchmark a College's readiness for full inspection. Principalship would share ITE review findings with Quality and Curriculum teams to inform planning. **Recommendation: The Board agreed to formally note The Manchester College QIP 2025-26 subject to ongoing updates and scrutiny.**
8	**Draft Student Outcomes Report 2024-25** The Board was informed that the Student Outcomes Report for 2024-25was presented in draft form, pending final version at the November Board. The current version excluded achievement data to be populated after the Individualised Learner Record submission. The completed report

would include student group achievement data, deprivation analysis, and curriculum area outcomes. The report showed a positive position, with most metrics rated "green". The Board expressed its thanks to the team for what was an impressive set of outcomes, and they appreciated that this profile was only possible following significant work and commitment from all for the College's students.

The Board reviewed Functional Skills achievement rates and questioned entering twelve 16-18 learners for Level 2 Functional Skills English, given the 40% achievement rate. The Board expressed concerns about the strategic appropriateness of this cohort. It was noted that 16-18 learners should no longer take Level 2 Functional Skills, as the focus shifted to GCSE delivery. It was acknowledged that, while some entries enabled immediate progression, this would be reviewed for policy alignment.

Action: Deputy Principal 16-18 to review Level 2 Functional Skills entries and ensure alignment with English and Maths strategy for 16-18 learners.

The Board praised the transparent reporting, noting that including "red" rated areas demonstrated commitment to accurate governance. Members compared this to recent reported issues within the sector, noting that the College's structure and oversight ensured performance issues were highlighted and challenged. The Board examined T Level performance, noting the downward trend in high-grade achievement, which had fallen by seven percentage points from the previous year while remaining above the national average. The Board was advised that additional teachers within engineering with industry experience and restructured management and dedicated oversight, along with investment in professional development, were expected to improve high-grade outcomes.

Action: Vice Principal/Deputy Principal – 16-18

- **To monitor T Level high-grade achievement through mid-year reviews and update the Board in March on monitoring point progress.**
- **To make arrangements for the Engineering team/students to attend a future meeting of The Manchester College Divisional Board.**

The Board discussed the implications of engineering expansion and any risks of recruiting more students given the high demand for qualified teachers. A new Engineering Facility would expand capacity from 2026, requiring careful workforce planning. It was confirmed a recruitment strategy was underway, supported by competitive salaries and facilities. The Board noted that while expansion was essential for local skill needs, any risks to quality required careful oversight and management. The Board discussed the growth trajectory and acknowledged that while achievement rates remained strong, increasing scale impacted support services and spaces. It was confirmed that these measures were in place to maintain quality during expansion. The Board reaffirmed high standards during growth as a priority.

The Board questioned criminology high-grade achievement. It was explained that quality improvement measures focusing on assessment design and feedback, supported by the Quality team's intervention plan were in place.

The Board reviewed student destination tracking plans, with 2024-25 leaver data to be collected in December 2025 and returned in January 2026. A detailed Destinations Report would be presented in March 2026. Governors stressed the importance of using destination outcomes to demonstrate College impact, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Action: Vice Principal Quality to present the 2024-25 Destinations Report in March 2026, analysing outcomes by student group.

The Board noted the draft Student Outcomes Report 2024/25, recognising its performance profile and areas for improvement. They commended the Principalship's focus on standards amid growth and awaited the final version with achievement data in November.

	Action: Vice Principal Quality to present final student outcomes report at the November meeting.
9	**Safeguarding Policy** The Board was informed that the Safeguarding Policy had been updated per legislative changes effective September 2025, with primarily textual revisions. Key updates focused on digital safeguarding, addressing risks of misinformation and conspiracy theories online. The policy included expanded sections on kinship care and adult safeguarding provisions for vulnerable learners. The Board learned that policy dissemination was progressing, with mandatory safeguarding modules released in September alongside departmental training sessions. The policy changes would be incorporated into the LTE Safe and Fair Recruitment Framework, with final approval pending at the next LTE Group Board meeting. A divisional Safeguarding Annual Report would follow in November. The Board discussed safeguarding within the College, noting increased referrals recently. It was reported effective incident management but highlighted rising cases linked to social tensions and community factors, including polarised views and misinformation on social media. The Principalship was monitoring trends and maintaining a balanced approach between zero-tolerance for discrimination and sensitivity to underlying social factors. The Board endorsed the proactive interventions to preserve campus safety and cohesion while maintaining the College's reputation as an inclusive learning environment. The Board discussed societal challenges, noting that national and local issues like community tensions, misinformation, and extreme ideologies were increasing pressures on young people. Members noted social media platforms had amplified these effects, spreading false narratives that led to student conflict and anxiety. The Board expressed concern about social media misinformation and supported the College's engagement with digital platforms, including content removal requests. The Board questioned how the College helped students navigate "truth" and develop critical thinking in the digital era. It was explained this was addressed through the restructured tutorial programme, which encouraged open discussion and debate on real-world issues. Tutorials were now facilitator-led, enabling constructive dialogue and multiple perspectives in an inclusive environment. Guest speakers and outreach initiatives provided learning experiences. The Board acknowledged that increased safeguarding cases reflected the College's inclusive intake and reporting culture rather than behavioural issues. It was noted that behaviour remained good, supported by strong pastoral systems across campuses. The Board emphasized continued vigilance given the student body's size and diversity. The Board discussed the impact of staff anxiety and community tensions on college life, noting that societal stressors occasionally influenced behaviour within the workplace. It was agreed that clear communication, consistent leadership messages, and supportive management structures remained key to sustaining a positive culture. Members reflected on safeguarding challenges in a "post-truth" era of misinformation and polarisation. The Board commended Principalship for maintaining an evidence-based, value-led culture within the College. The Board approved the Safeguarding Policy for submission to the LTE Group Board and agreed the Annual Report would be presented in November to update on implementation and compliance. **Action: Vice Principal Student Experience and Support to present the Annual Report at the November 2025 Board, including data on referrals, trends, and digital actions.** **The Board resolved to recommend the approval of The Manchester College Safeguarding Policy to the LTE Group Board.** The Board commended the Principalship's safeguarding oversight and the positive safety environment observed during learning walks they had undertaken themselves. Students expressed high satisfaction with their learning experience, citing welcoming environments and effective teaching. The Board noted improvements in Health and Social Care and Level 1 provision, attributed to quality interventions and committed teaching teams.

10	**Any Other Business** [REDACTED]
11	**Signed (Chair)** **Dated**
Meeting closed at 12:35pm	