



ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

2026/2027

PRESTON
COLLEGE



Principal Comment

Preston College is proud to serve, and be part of, its diverse community. Our role in providing technical education and training has always played a critical role in supporting individuals and businesses to acquire the skills they need, and this will be even more vital in years to come. The contribution that colleges in general, and Preston College in particular, can make to skills development and economic growth is huge, and this Accountability Statement outlines some of the ways in which we achieve this.

To say that the last few years have been challenging would be an understatement. Having emerged from a global pandemic, the world was then thrust into political and economic turbulence. War in Ukraine, cost of living, conflict in Gaza and Iran, together with the impact of economic policies both at home and abroad, have created a new set of uncertainties. In the face of this shifting economic and political climate, with very real impacts on the lives and careers of many people across the country, the role of further education colleges is more pivotal than ever. We are ideally placed to understand the skills that are needed in our local area, and then to provide education and training to help meet those needs. Here at Preston College, we aspire to facilitate transformation, but within a calm and stable environment.

We believe that, through our first-rate engagement with both individuals and employers, we already make a strong contribution to local skills needs. Ofsted agreed with this in January 2023, and I have no doubt that the College has simply got even better since that time. We take nothing for granted, and know that we need to work hard to maintain this strength, but this Accountability Statement clearly demonstrates how we are doing this. In previous Statements, I have reflected that we will continue to stretch and challenge ourselves and our students in the years to come; this year's Statement builds further on that aim to ensure that we deliver a robust curriculum that serves all of our stakeholders.

For the College, there will also be a new Principal and Chief Executive following my retirement in August 2026. The Board is committed to ensuring that this transition is managed smoothly to ensure that the evolutionary improvements put in place over recent years are continued, and that the College will deliver effectively against its statutory duties. This Accountability Statement is a clear statement of this intent.

SIMON NIXON
Principal and Chief Executive



College Overview, Vision and Values

Preston College is a leading further education college in Lancashire, rooted in its local community and ambitious in its outlook. With a strong focus on high-quality teaching, modern facilities and personalised support, the College supports students of all ages and backgrounds gain technical skills, knowledge, recognised qualifications and the ambition to progress.

At the heart of Preston College is a clear and powerful vision: **to transform lives through education.**

This ambition goes beyond qualifications alone. The College strives to be a place people actively choose because they want to change their lives in a positive way, whether by improving their job prospects, developing new skills, building confidence, or gaining the life skills needed for long-term success and wellbeing.

Preston College delivers a broad range of opportunities, including full-time study programmes for school leavers, adult learning, apprenticeships and higher education. Working closely with employers and industry partners, the College ensures that learning is relevant, responsive and focused on employment skills, enabling students to progress into work, advance in their careers or move on to further study.

Everything the College does is underpinned by a strong set of values that shape its culture, decision-making and daily interactions:

- **Welcoming and inclusive**
We believe in making sure that all students, staff and visitors to the College feel welcomed and valued at all times
- **Supportive and compassionate**
We believe in the importance of being reassuring, encouraging and caring towards our College community
- **Aspirational**
We believe in being ambitious in the way we work and promoting this with our learners
- **Integrity and transparency**
We believe in acting honestly at all times, and having open and transparent communications
- **Accountability**
We believe in the importance of taking ownership of our actions, and expect others to act similarly

This commitment to excellence, aspiration and inclusion positions Preston College as a springboard to the future, helping individuals fulfil their potential and strengthening the communities it serves.

Our Mission, Purpose and Curriculum Intent

At Preston College, our mission is to **inspire, educate and support our diverse community to reach its potential**. This is not just an ambition, but a commitment that guides what we do every day. We believe education has the power to unlock opportunity, build confidence and transform futures, and we work relentlessly to ensure every student and colleague can flourish.

Proudly rooted in our community, Preston College brings together a rich diversity of students and staff. We plan our curriculum, support services and wider activities to ensure that everyone, regardless of background or starting point, has the opportunity to achieve what they are truly capable of.

Inspiration is central to our approach, through setting high expectations, providing positive role models and meaningful learning experiences, we motivate individuals to aim higher and go further.

Individual support sits at the heart of our purpose. We are known for the care, encouragement and guidance we provide, recognising that people succeed best when they feel supported, valued and understood. By combining ambition with compassion, Preston College creates an environment where potential is recognised, nurtured and realised.

Our Strategic Aims and associated priorities

AIM 1: Ensure excellence in teaching, learning and support, evidenced by high levels of attendance, achievement and positive outcomes for students.

- **Priority 1.1**
Deliver ambitious teaching, learning and assessment that accelerates student progress, develops wider skills, and leads to exceptional outcomes and progression for all students and apprentices
- **Priority 1.2**
Provide an inclusive and engaging learning experience that enables all students and apprentices to achieve their potential and realise ambitious progression goals
- **Priority 1.3**
Widen participation by removing barriers, strengthening progression pathways, and ensuring all students and apprentices benefit from an exceptional, supportive and aspirational college journey
- **Priority 1.4**
Enhance the student experience through an inclusive, engaging and holistic programme of personal, social and wellbeing development
- **Priority 1.5**
Innovate in curriculum delivery and assessment to develop the skills and attributes required for an agile future workforce.

AIM 2: Promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion as a leader within our community, including a strong sense of belonging and togetherness.

- **Priority 2.1**
Further strengthen our culture of excellence, inclusion and unique student experience
- **Priority 2.2**
Introduce and embed a College Year of Belonging and Togetherness
- **Priority 2.3**
Continue to implement and refine the College EDI Strategy
- **Priority 2.4**
Extend the use of College Culture Days to promote understanding and awareness.

AIM 3: Invest sustainably in our physical resources for the benefit of students and staff.

- **Priority 3.1**
Continue to implement the College's Estates Strategy, maximising value from College funds and available grant schemes
- **Priority 3.2**
Develop and implement sustainability projects, including student engagement, to contribute to carbon reduction and minimise energy consumption, alongside a longer-term plan supporting the UK ambition to achieve net zero by 2050
- **Priority 3.3**
Maintain and improve financial surpluses to generate sufficient cash to meet higher long-term capital requirements while sustaining investment in revenue expenditure
- **Priority 3.4**
Implement the College's ICT Strategy to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place within a broader framework of cyber resilience and disaster recovery.

AIM 4: Promote and embed a culture where health and wellbeing of students and staff is at the heart of College values.

- **Priority 4.1**
Develop and implement a comprehensive Wellbeing Strategy
- **Priority 4.2**
Provide enhanced wellbeing and enrichment opportunities during, before and after the normal College day
- **Priority 4.3**
Provide and promote volunteering opportunities.

AIM 5: Support a skilled and sustainable workforce, including meaningful development and progression opportunities, and mitigate recruitment/retention challenges.

- **Priority 5.1**
Develop and implement a comprehensive HR Strategy covering pay, staff engagement, workforce development and succession planning
- **Priority 5.2**
Develop and implement a Learning and Development Strategy that supports both College-wide priorities and the development of individual staff in their current and future roles
- **Priority 5.3**
Use recruitment and retention strategies effectively, including a more structured approach to career development and succession planning.

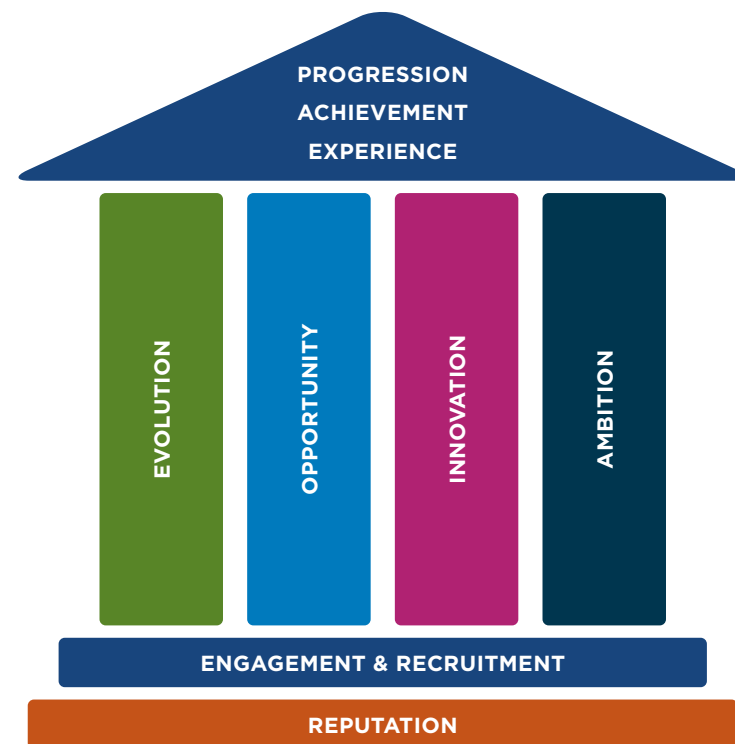
AIM 6: Deliver an ambitious, inclusive and future-focused curriculum that responds to the needs of students, employers and the wider economy.

- **Priority 6.1**
Continuously evolve the curriculum through effective planning, promotion, design and review, ensuring alignment with Technical Education Reform, labour market intelligence and regional skills priorities
- **Priority 6.2**
Provide an inclusive, industry-relevant curriculum that builds knowledge, develops advanced technical and professional skills, and supports meaningful progression
- **Priority 6.3**
Embed digital, technological and AI-enabled approaches within curriculum design, delivery and assessment to prepare students for a rapidly changing economy
- **Priority 6.4**
Strengthen employer engagement and partnership working to ensure curriculum relevance, enrich learning and support local and regional economic growth
- **Priority 6.5**
Develop and grow provision in priority sectors and emerging industries to meet current and future workforce demand
- **Priority 6.6**
Promote innovation in curriculum delivery that develops the skills, behaviours and attributes required for an agile future workforce.



Our Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is underpinned by four strategic pillars:



- **Evolution** drives the way we plan and design our curriculum, ensuring it continually reflects the needs and aspirations of our students, employers and community. In response to technical education reform and labour market intelligence, we offer relevant, coherent learning pathways that promote student engagement, achievement and progression.
- **Opportunity** ensures every student can access an inclusive, engaging and holistic curriculum that supports personal growth, social development and wellbeing. We value our diverse college community and provide aspirational progression routes for students and staff, removing barriers and enabling all students to realise their potential.
- **Innovation** shapes how our curriculum is delivered and assessed. We promote creativity, curiosity and adaptability through high-quality teaching, learning and support, developing the technical skills, employability attributes and resilience needed for a dynamic and evolving workforce.
- **Ambition** underpins our commitment to purposeful growth, strong employer partnerships and financial sustainability. We align our technical and vocational offer to local and regional priorities, strengthen the College's reputation, and ensure our curriculum contributes effectively to outstanding student experiences, organisational performance and long-term investment capacity.

The foundation of the core pillars is reputation, and how we use this as the basis for positive stakeholder engagement.

- **Reputation** strengthens how we are perceived, experienced and chosen by our students, employers and community. We will ensure a clear and distinctive identity, underpinned by high-quality provision, strong outcomes and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Through consistent messaging, impactful partnerships and positive student experiences, we enhance our visibility and credibility across Preston, Lancashire and beyond, driving engagement, recruitment and civic contribution.

Through this curriculum intent, Preston College delivers high standards, meaningful opportunities and positive outcomes, supporting students to progress, employers to thrive, and communities to grow.

Preston College fulfils its Local Skills Duty through a deliberately strategic, employer-led and place-based approach to curriculum planning and delivery that is closely aligned with the national direction set by Skills England. Skills England's mission, **Better Skills for Better Jobs**, places a clear expectation on providers to reduce skills shortages, support economic growth, and ensure that people of all ages can access clear pathways into skilled and sustainable employment. The College's approach directly reflects this mission by bringing together national priorities, regional strategies and local employer intelligence into a coherent and responsive curriculum offer.

Central to Skills England's remit is the requirement to understand current and future skills needs through strong use of data, employer insight and labour market information. Preston College applies this principle rigorously by using the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework and ongoing employer engagement to inform curriculum design, delivery and review.

The College played a significant role in the development and implementation of the Lancashire LSIP, working closely with the North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce as the designated Employer Representative Body, ensuring that employer voice is embedded at every stage of the skills planning cycle. The Lancashire LSIP identifies priority sectors critical to addressing skills shortages and supporting economic growth, including manufacturing and engineering, construction, digital and cyber, low carbon and sustainability, health and social care, hospitality, and transport and logistics. Preston College has aligned its Curriculum Strategy and portfolio planning to impact on key priorities and continues to evolve provision in response to updated LSIP intelligence, Skills England guidance and emerging regional and national skills demands.

Skills England also places strong emphasis on simplifying access to skills and creating clearer progression pathways so that individuals can move more quickly and confidently into skilled employment. Preston College supports this ambition by providing inclusive, coherent pathways from Entry Level through to Level 7 across 16-19 study programmes, adult provision, apprenticeships, higher technical qualifications and higher education.

The College's extensive delivery of English, mathematics, digital skills and ESOL plays a vital role in supporting Skills England's focus on work readiness, employability and inclusion. As the UK's first nationally recognised College of Sanctuary, Preston College contributes directly to national and regional inclusion priorities by enabling asylum seekers and refugees to develop language, technical and employability skills that support progression into learning and employment, thereby widening participation and strengthening the local workforce.

Mobilising employers and partners to co-create place-based solutions is a further core expectation of Skills England. Employer engagement is deeply embedded within Preston College's operating model, with employers actively informing curriculum content, assessment approaches, work experience opportunities and progression routes. The College works closely with sector bodies and local authorities to ensure that provision responds not only to current skills shortages but also to emerging workforce needs linked to infrastructure investment, technological change and industrial transformation.

The impact of this employer-led is evidenced by sustained growth in student numbers in priority technical areas. Between 2021/22 and 2025/26, the College's 16-19 study programme provision grew from 1,760 to 2,420 students, reflecting strong demand for high-quality, employment-aligned provision and confidence from students, parents and employers in the relevance of the College's offer.

Skills England emphasises the importance of collaboration and system leadership in creating a coherent and effective skills system. Preston College plays an active leadership role across the Lancashire skills landscape as a founding partner of the Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology, a delivery partner for United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programmes, and a lead organisation for Strategic Development Fund (SDF) and Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) initiatives commissioned by the Department for Education. Through these partnerships, the College contributes to reducing duplication, maximising public investment and strengthening the responsiveness of the local skills system.

Through this integrated, data-informed and employer-led approach, Preston College ensures that its curriculum planning and delivery not only meets statutory Local Skills Duty requirements but also actively supports Skills England's national priorities, Lancashire LSIP delivery and the wider Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework. This enables the College to deliver high-quality provision that improves employment outcomes, supports economic growth and transforms lives through education.



Demonstrating Impact Against National, Regional and Local Skills Priorities

Preston College plays a positive, proactive and influential role in supporting national, regional and local skills priorities by effectively translating national policy, employer intelligence and labour market need into high quality, responsive curriculum delivery. Our approach aligns closely with Skills England's mission to deliver better skills for better jobs, ensuring that individuals of all ages can access clear, relevant pathways into sustainable employment while enabling employers to access the skilled workforce they need.

Nationally, the College has responded positively to skills reform by successfully implementing T Levels, embedding meaningful industry placements and employer engagement at the heart of delivery. T Levels complement a continually evolving apprenticeship offer, developed in close partnership with employers to reflect changing occupational standards and workforce demand. Alongside this, Preston College has initiated and delivered Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) through the Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology, strengthening progression routes into higher level technical roles in priority sectors. Together, these pathways simplify access to technical education and provide credible, high impact routes into skilled employment.

Regionally, Preston College has made a significant contribution to Lancashire's skills agenda through leadership and collaboration. The College has played an active role in shaping and delivering the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), aligning curriculum planning to priority sectors including construction, engineering, digital and cyber, low carbon and sustainability, health and social care and the service industries. In response to major infrastructure investment through the Preston and Lancashire City Deal, the College established the Central Lancashire Construction Skills Hub, driving growth in construction provision and earning national recognition through an AoC Beacon Award for Employer Engagement.

At a local level, Preston College works closely with Preston City Council and employer partners to deliver targeted skills and employment focussed provision that supports economic growth, inclusion and workforce progression. The College has successfully delivered UK Shared Prosperity Fund programmes focused on green skills, addressing specific local skills shortages and supporting in work progression. Adult Education provision is consistently planned around local labour market intelligence and community need, enabling the College to regularly over deliver its Adult Education contract and provide flexible opportunities for reskilling, upskilling and re engagement in learning.

As a community focused provider and nationally recognised College of Sanctuary, Preston College ensures that skills provision is inclusive and progressive. Strong delivery of English, maths, digital skills, ESOL and supported pathways enables students from all backgrounds to progress into further learning or employment. Through employer led curriculum design, leadership of regional skills initiatives and consistent delivery across technical, higher level and adult learning, Preston College demonstrates clear impact in meeting skills priorities and transforming lives through education.



Promoting Inclusion and Supporting Diverse Communities

In 2024/25, Preston College continued to deliver strong outcomes while serving a highly diverse student population that reflects the local community. Over a quarter (28%) of young people and adult leavers were from ethnic minority groups, achieving an excellent 93.4% achievement rate. Nearly half of students (48%) reported a learning difficulty or disability, achieving at 88.8%, while 159 students with an Education, Health and Care Plan achieved at 91.5%. The College supported high numbers of students facing disadvantage, including 701 students eligible for free school meals and 168 looked-after children who achieved 88.1%. Almost half of apprentices (48%) also reported a learning difficulty or disability, demonstrating a strong commitment to inclusive technical education.

High Achievement and Positive Outcomes

The College maintained strong achievement across all programmes, with overall technical achievement rates of 89.4% for students of all ages, above national benchmarks. Classroom-based provision achieved 90.4%, with excellent retention of 95.3%, around 5 percentage points above national rates. Apprenticeship outcomes improved significantly, reaching 70.3%, plus a further 4% achieving into 2024/25, sitting 8 percentage points above the latest national benchmark of 62.3%. Importantly, there were no significant or sustained achievement gaps by gender, ethnicity, disadvantage or disability.

Meeting Local Skills Needs through Technical Education

Preston College made a strong contribution to addressing local and regional skills gaps. There were 14,991 enrolments across 14 of the 15 Subject Sector Areas, with overall achievement of 90.4%. A quarter of young people's enrolments were in STEM or health-related programmes. Construction remained a key strength with 1,137 enrolments, while apprenticeship provision continued to grow with 1,174 apprentices overall and 530 new starts. Outcomes were excellent across priority areas, including King's Trust (99.4%), ESOL (96.6%), Visual and Performing Arts (95.2%) and Health, Business and Uniformed Services (90.4%).

Strong Student and Employer Engagement

Student and employer satisfaction remained high. 96% of students felt safe at College and 94% felt part of the Preston College community. The College engaged with approximately 970 employers during the year, supporting curriculum relevance, industry placements and apprenticeships, with employer and apprentice survey feedback rating the College as good.

Investment in Resources and Learning Environments

In 2024/25, Preston College invested £2.5m in its campus and resources through College funding and external grants. Key investments included £938k on new roofs, £95k completing PC replacement and Windows 11 rollout, £40k on new smart screens, £18k on iPads for work-based tutors and over £100k on new classroom furniture. Additional classrooms and specialist spaces were created or refurbished using LSIF, HTQ and transformation funding. Other investment further enhanced wellbeing, communications and security, including a new memorial garden, upgraded phone system and improved site security.

Context, Place & Collaboration



Preston College is based in Lancashire in the North West of England. Lancashire is one of the most diverse economic areas in the country, characterised by a polycentric mix of towns and cities alongside rural, coastal, agricultural and industrial communities. With a population of 1.5 million, Lancashire's 55,000 businesses generate around 700,000 jobs across a wide range of established and future-facing sectors, including manufacturing, tourism, digital, cyber and low-carbon industries. The county's £35bn economy is home to globally significant sector and supply-chain clusters, including the fourth largest aerospace cluster in the world. Labour markets operate pan-Lancashire, particularly for technical and professional roles, with significant workforce movement to and from neighbouring areas such as Greater Manchester, Cumbria and the Liverpool City Region.

Employment and Skills form one of the eight strategic priorities within the Lancashire 2050 Vision, which sets a clear ambition to support people to develop skills throughout their lives and to attract businesses through a highly skilled workforce. This ambition is reinforced by the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (2023), which highlighted the growing importance of the local skills agenda in responding to post-pandemic and post-Brexit economic change. Preston College recognises its central role within this landscape, and its vision, mission and strategic objectives underpin a strong commitment to delivering positive economic and social impact.

The College places strong value on collaboration with other education and skills providers across Lancashire to understand collectively how well provision meets local need. Through joint working, partners aim to deliver coherent curriculum and progression pathways that serve local communities, while building on individual strengths and specialisms to maximise collective impact and respond effectively to employer demand.

Preston College currently engages with over 1,000 employers through apprenticeships, industry placements and curriculum development activities. The introduction of Sector Advisory Groups in January 2024 has further strengthened employer influence on curriculum design and review, building on the strong contribution to skills recognised by Ofsted at the College's most recent inspection.

The College is an active member of The Lancashire Colleges Group, a long-established collaborative partnership comprising all further education and sixth-form colleges across the county. Through this partnership, Preston College has a strong track record of collective working to enhance curriculum coherence, improve quality and deliver provision that responds directly to business and community needs.

Pan-Lancashire analysis commissioned through The Lancashire Colleges has strengthened understanding of student participation, progression patterns and demographic change. This has been complemented by the development of detailed sector pathway maps, which inform collaborative curriculum review and support clearer lines of sight from learning into priority occupations and sectors.

The College uses Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF) funding to strengthen its inclusive mainstream provision for 16-19 students. This includes investment in high-quality adaptive teaching, inclusive learning environments and early identification and support for students with additional needs.

The College's approach focuses on enabling students to participate successfully in mainstream programmes, build independence and progress to positive destinations. IMF funding compliments, but does not replace. High Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan based provision, and is deployed in line with shared local expectations agreed with partners.

The College works collaboratively through The Lancashire Colleges partnership to support coherent post-16 pathways across the County, share effective inclusive practice and avoid unnecessary duplication, ensuring students can access provision that best meets their needs.

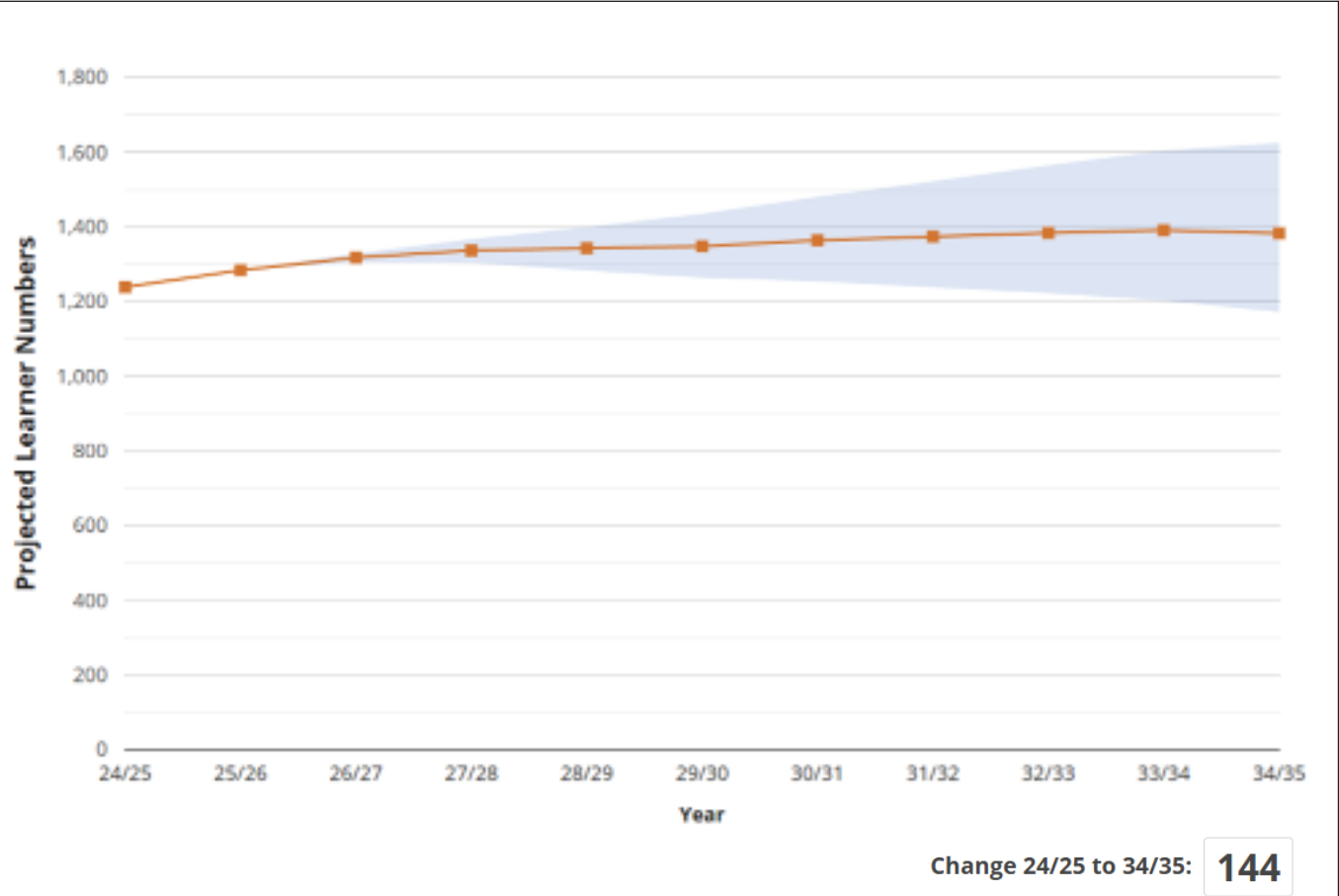
Preston College is actively supporting preparations for the Lancashire Combined County Authority Devolution Deal, which from August 2026 will include responsibility for adult skills funding. Working through The Lancashire Colleges, the College is contributing to the development of a place-based skills strategy, helping to demonstrate the impact of adult education on individuals, communities and the local economy, and identifying how devolution can bring greater flexibility to respond to local priorities and emerging needs.

Alongside this, Preston College played an influential role in shaping the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan and continues to work closely with the local Chamber of Commerce to engage employers, capture intelligence and understand emerging skills needs. This collaboration has already driven curriculum development in areas such as Net Zero, Roofing and Cyber and will continue to inform locally designed solutions to skills challenges across priority sectors.

Through collaborative programmes funded via the Local Skills Improvement Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Preston College has worked closely with local authorities, college partners and employers to invest in industry-standard learning environments and develop new curriculum aligned to business need and economic growth.

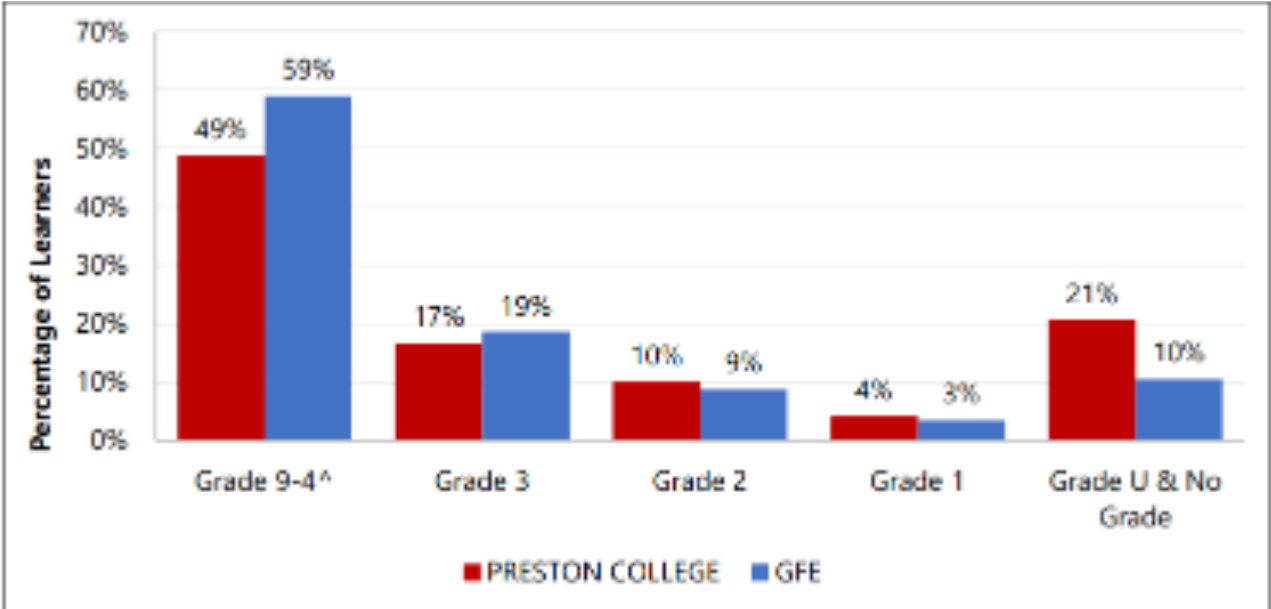
The College remains committed to working closely with partners across Lancashire and supporting the College Board in discharging its duty to review provision in the local area. Through the development of shared goals and coordinated action, Preston College will continue to contribute, individually and collectively, to meeting the evolving skills needs of Lancashire's communities and employers.

Our Students



This chart outlines the year on year increase in school leavers in Preston projected to 2034/35. This provides the College with the confidence that there continues to be further scope to grow, particularly as this data does not reflect inward migration into the City.

Previously Taken GCSE English Grade Profile (as at the start of the 24/25 academic year)



Source: MIDES ILR R14 2024/25 (College Base: 2,200 Learners)

^ This includes learners identified as having a GCSE 9-4 equivalent qualification identified in the Condition of Funding

This table outlines the fact that the Preston College 16-19 cohort have lower GCSE English grades than the sector average on Entry, with 21% of students enrolling with a Grade U or no grade.

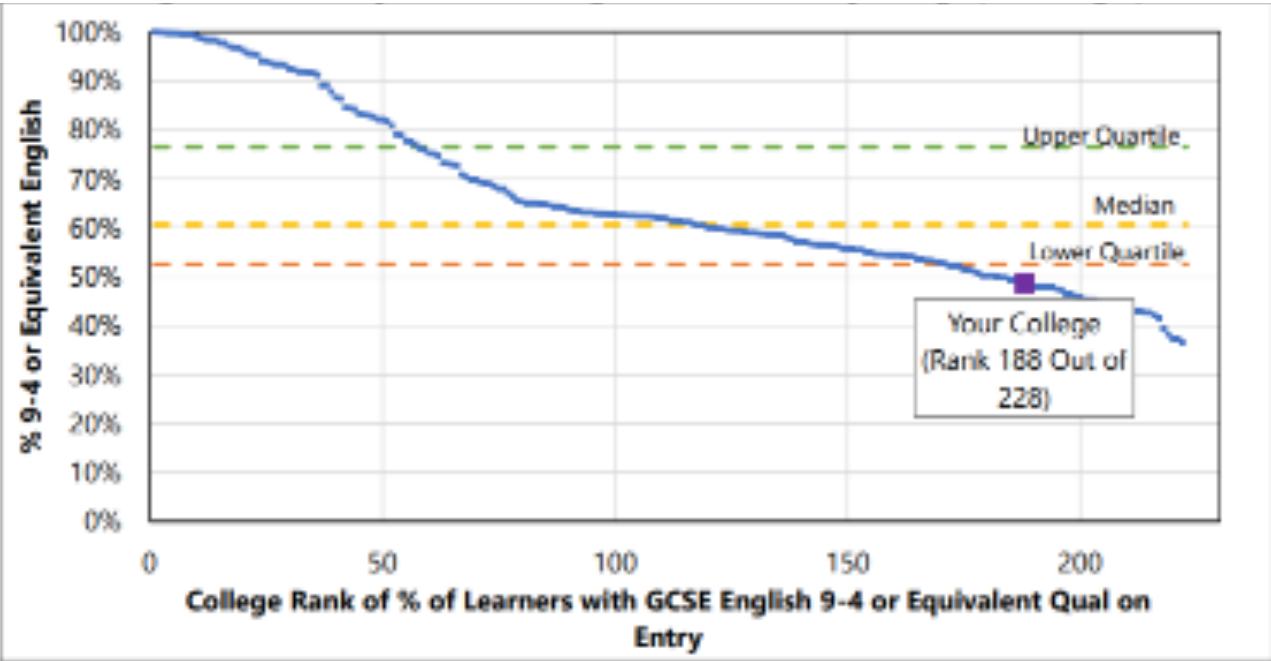
Deprivation Profile



Data Sources: ILR data (2020/21 - 2024/25) and schools data (PLAMS/Autumn Learning Aims and Pupil Census 2020/21 - 2024/25), IMD 2019 and Mid-Year 2022 Population estimates
A ** indicates that a figure has been suppressed due to low numbers (<5)

This graph reinforces the fact that Preston College recruits a significant proportion of 16-19 students from the most deprived wards in the City. This information reinforces the strength of our community impact, whilst outlining opportunity in relation to future recruitment from the more affluent wards in the City in increasing our market share.

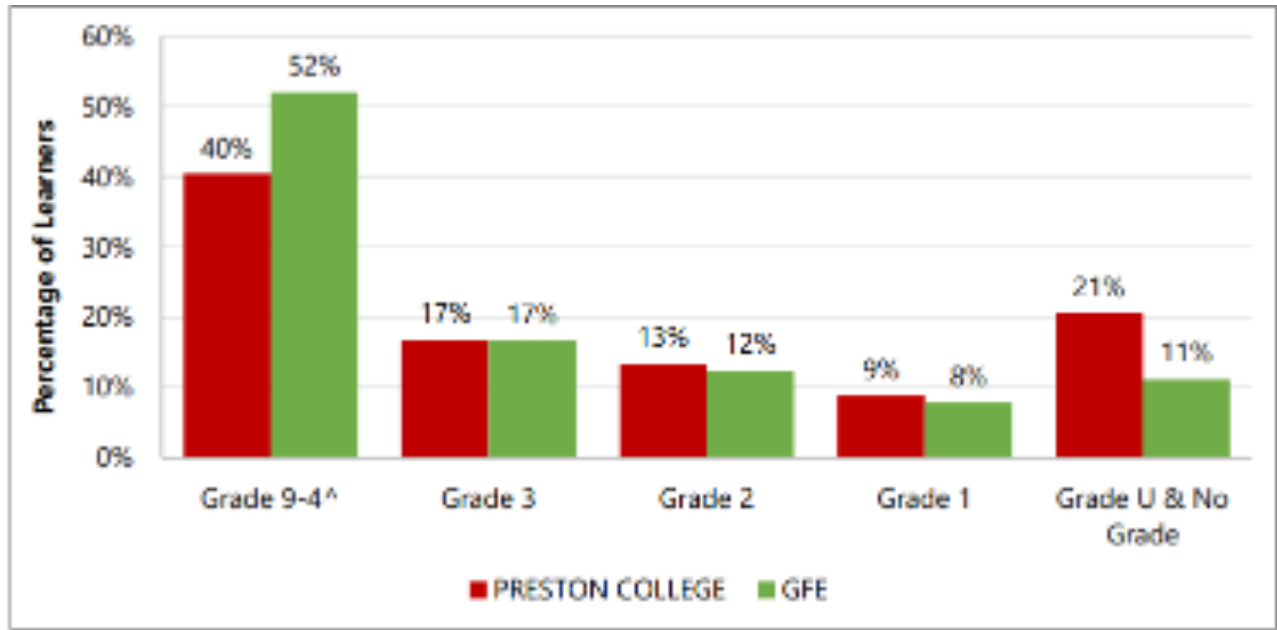
Previously Taken GCSE English - % 9-4 Rank by College (All Colleges)



Source: MIDES ILR R14 2024/25 (limited to 10 or more enrolments)

This chart reinforces that the College ranks in lower lowest quartile in relation to the percentage of 16-19 students who enrol with a GCSE English qualification graded 9-4. This means that in order to meet the condition of funding, Preston College has to provide more access GCSE learning within student study programmes than other providers nationally.

Previously Taken GCSE Maths Grade Profile (as at the start of the 24/25 academic year)

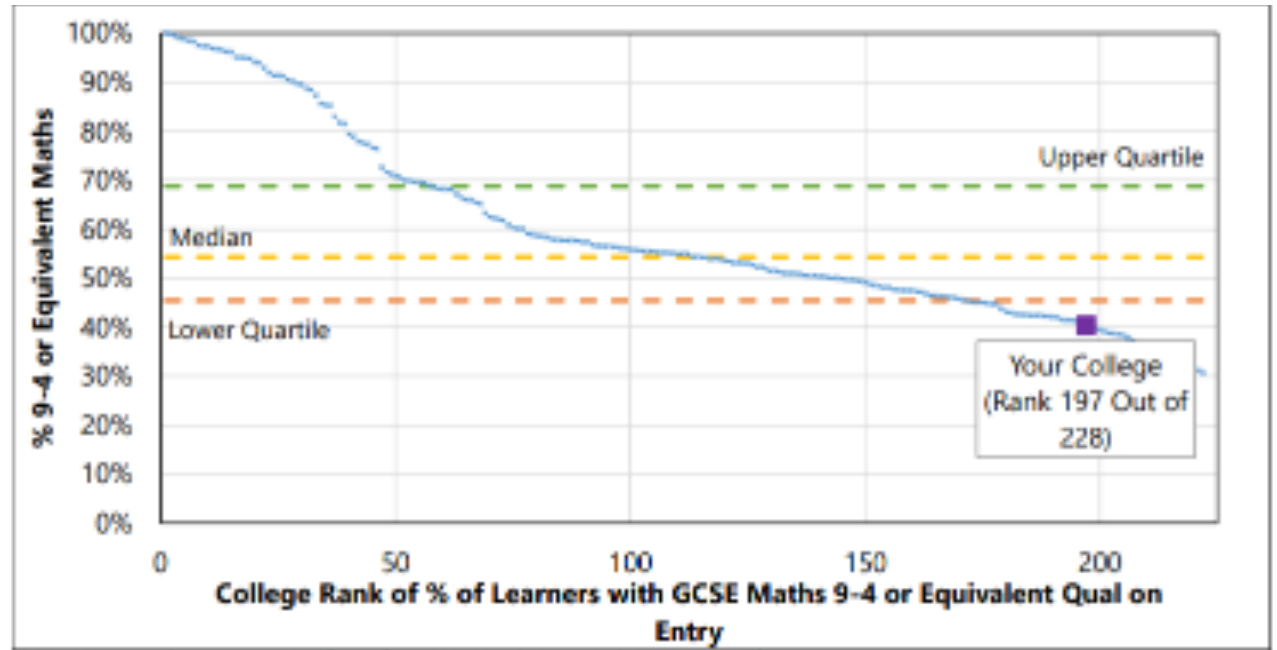


Source: (College Base: 2,194 Learners)

^ This includes learners identified as having a GCSE 9-4 equivalent qualification identified in the Condition of Funding

This table outlines the fact that the Preston College 16-19 cohort have lower GCSE maths grades than the sector average on Entry, with 21% of students enrolling with a Grade U or no grade.

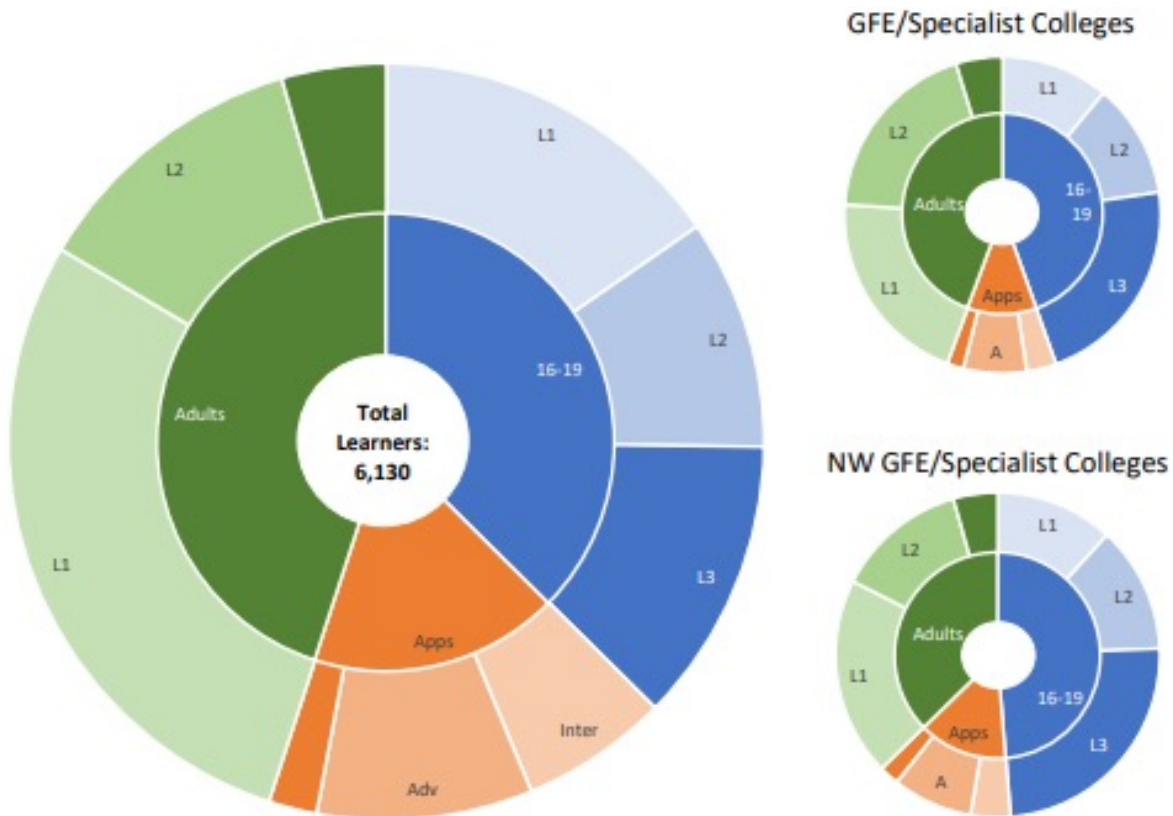
Previously Taken GCSE Maths - % 9-4 Rank by College (All Colleges)



Source: MIDES ILR R14 2024/25 (limited to 10 or more enrolments)

This chart reinforces that the College ranks in lower lowest quartile in relation to the percentage of 16-19 students who enrol with a GCSE Maths qualification graded 9-4. This means that in order to meet the condition of funding, Preston College has to provide more access GCSE learning within student study programmes than other providers nationally.

Profile of Learners



See Key Below

	Learners	% College	% GFE/SC	% NW GFE/SC
16-19 Funded	2,290	37%	45%	49%
Level 1 or below	940	15%	11%	12%
Level 2	600	10%	12%	13%
Level 3	750	12%	22%	24%
Apprentices	1,080	18%	11%	14%
Intermediate	390	6%	3%	4%
Advanced	570	9%	6%	8%
Higher	130	2%	2%	2%
Adults	2,760	45%	44%	37%
Level 1 or below	1,740	28%	20%	20%
Level 2	740	12%	19%	13%
Level 3+	270	4%	5%	4%
Total	6,130	100%	100%	100%

This chart reinforces that Preston College has a larger proportion of adult students in its overall cohort than other providers regionally and nationally, particularly at Level One. The size, scale and diversity of adult provision is positive, and delivery performance in 2024-25 in terms of both recruitment and student achievement and progression, reinforces significant impact being made. The ongoing growth in 16-19 study programme students remains positive, and continued growth will remain an ambition in our new Curriculum Strategy 2026-29, reflecting the fact that our curriculum responds positively to Local need. In a changing market, apprenticeship provision remains impactful, particularly in the College market share of 16-19 apprentices.

Local Needs Duty Review

Key Local Needs Identified

Through our Local Needs Duty review, ongoing employer engagement, and analysis of the Lancashire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and labour market intelligence, Preston College has identified the following priority needs:

- **Skills shortages in key sectors** including construction, engineering and manufacturing, digital and cyber, low carbon, health and social care, and logistics
- **Growing demand for higher technical skills**, particularly at Levels 4 and 5, linked to regional economic growth and infrastructure investment
- **Low prior attainment in English and maths** among a significant proportion of 16–19 students, requiring strong foundational skills provision
- **High levels of deprivation and inclusion needs**, including students with additional learning needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- **Need for clearer progression pathways** into employment, apprenticeships and higher-level study
- **Employer demand for work-ready skills**, including digital capability, adaptability and technical competence

Our Priorities for 2026–27

In response to these needs, the College will focus on the following key priorities:

1. Align and evolve curriculum to meet priority skills needs

- Deliver a full curriculum review to ensure full alignment with LSIP priorities and labour market intelligence
- Expand provision in high-demand sectors, including construction, digital, health and engineering
- Implement technical education reform, including T Levels, apprenticeships and new qualifications

1. Strengthen pathways into employment and higher-level skills

- Increase progression into apprenticeships, employment and higher technical education
- Expand Level 4+ provision through Institute of Technology partnerships
- Improve curriculum pathways for students who are NEET or at risk of disengagement

1.3. Improve access, inclusion and student success

- Enhance support for students with low prior attainment in English and maths
- Expand adult and part-time provision, including an enhanced “Evening College” offer
- Further reduce gaps in participation, achievement and progression for disadvantaged groups

1.4. Enhance innovation and future skills development

- Embed digital, AI-enabled and green skills across the curriculum
- Deliver employer-informed innovation projects in all curriculum areas
- Develop specialist facilities, including Future Skills Hubs

1.5. Strengthen employer engagement and system leadership

- Deepen partnerships with employers to co-design curriculum and support workforce development
- Continue to play a leadership role in LSIP delivery, LSIF projects and regional skills planning
- Support the development of a devolved, place-based skills system in Lancashire

Expected Impact and Outcomes (2026–27)

The College will measure its impact through a clear set of performance indicators, including:

- **100% of curriculum aligned to priority skills needs**
- **Growth in enrolments in key sectors**
- **Improved student attendance, achievement and progression outcomes**
- **Increased numbers progressing to apprenticeships, employment and Level 4+ study**
- **High levels of student and employer satisfaction**
- **Expanded adult participation in technical programmes**

Our Commitment

Through this Accountability Statement, Preston College demonstrates a clear, evidence-based and forward-looking approach to meeting local, regional and national skills priorities. By aligning curriculum, strengthening partnerships and investing in innovation and inclusion, we will continue to support economic growth, enhance individual opportunity and fulfil our statutory Local Needs Duty.



Preston College Skills Priorities 2026/27

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	IMPACT MEASURES	TARGETS/KPIS (2026/27)
EVOLUTION Shape and deliver a curriculum that truly reflects the needs and ambitions of our students and our community.	Review - Full curriculum review and map provision to LMI, local priorities and industry standards. Refresh - Implement or update relevant curriculum based on TechEd Reform (to include T Levels, V Levels and new Apprenticeship Standards), local priorities and industry standards. Expand - Identify 3 key high demand areas for curriculum expansion and plan capacity building activity (human/physical resources) and improve structured curriculum offer for students who are NEET.	1. 2027/28 Curriculum Plan completed and validated (April 2027) 2. New and divested curriculum approved, planned and communicated. 3. Growth areas identified, agreed, promoted and resourced.	1. 100% of curriculum areas reviewed and aligned to local and regional priority skills needs 2. New / revised curriculum approved and implemented by April 2027 3. Minimum 5% growth in enrolments in identified growth sectors 4. A validated NEET offer with delivery KPIs for 2027-28 approved by April 2027.
OPPORTUNITY Provide an inclusive, engaging and holistic experience that unlocks personal growth, career development and wellbeing.	Review - Define baseline attendance, retention, wellbeing and participation metrics across specific Personal Development related activity. Refresh - Implement updated Personal Development Framework and enhanced Enrichment offer which promotes inclusion and belonging for all. Expand - Improve access to support for part-time adult students through the introduction of an enhanced 'Evening College' offer.	1. Agree baseline metrics (September 2026) and progressive three year delivery targets 2. Approve Personal Development Framework (all provision) 3. Enhanced 'Evening College' offer to ensure equality of opportunity for all students	1. Attendance rates improved by 3% across all provision or in-line with agreed KPI. 2. >92% student satisfaction (experience, support, enrichment) 3. 100% of learners accessing at least one enrichment / personal development activity across all provision types. 4. >10% increase in adult evening students accessing support and careers interventions.
INCLUSIVE Widen participation by removing barriers, strengthening progression pathways, and ensuring all students and apprentices benefit from an exceptional, supportive and aspirational college journey.	Review - Appraise targeted retention and attendance strategies including Every Lesson Matters Refresh - Strengthen early intervention: 6-week settling in reviews including those with identified SEND needs Expand - Strengthen curriculum maps showing routes to HE, apprenticeships, employment to support CEIAG (Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance)	1. Improved early retention rates (first 6-12 weeks) 2. Reduction in key participation barriers (financial, access, digital) 3. Clear progression pathways visible across all curriculum areas 4. Improved learner satisfaction in support and guidance	1. Early retention (6-12 weeks): ≥95% 2. Student satisfaction with support services: ≥88% 3. Progression rate to positive destinations: ≥93%
INNOVATION Promote creativity, curiosity and be pioneering in delivery, building the skills needed for a dynamic future workforce.	Review - Map current technical skills provision to Industry standards to identify any 'gaps' in delivery. Undertake research in relation to future skills at sector level. Refresh - Deliver (at least) 1 innovation project per School to incorporate digital tools, AI enabled learning and sustainability in adding-value to the student experience. Expand - Introduce the first 'Future Skills Hub' (of four) to enhance innovation at School level.	1. Content and future skills review completed and reported at sector level (November 2026) 2. All full-time students to complete an 'innovation' project which focuses on Digital skills and incorporates a sustainability theme. 3. The first 'Future Skills Hub' designed and developed.	1. 100% of teaching staff trained in identified priority pedagogy (e.g. digital, AI-enabled learning) 2. At least 7 innovation pilot projects delivered and evaluated 3. Student perception of teaching innovation >85% positive 4. 1 Future Skills Hub delivered.
AMBITION Drive targeted, purposeful growth that responds to employer needs and strengthens the College's overall offer.	Review - Curriculum impact review to include market share, market approach, student achievement and student progression metrics. Refresh - Rebuild the College website and refresh stakeholder plans using data driven insights and review outcomes. Expand - Student progression and applicant conversion in ensuring growth in 16-19, Apprenticeship and HE provision.	1. Growth in student recruitment and conversion across targeted growth areas particularly. 2. Enhanced student progression into further study or apprenticeships, supporting growth and reinforcing excellence. 3. Improved market position in Preston and Lancashire, particularly in target growth areas.	1. 2500 16-19 students in learning beyond qualifying period. 2. 510 new apprentices enrolled. 3. £6.8m adult contract delivered in full. 4. L4+ delivery target achieved (380 starts) 5. +5% increase in conversion rates in student conversion (enquiry/ application → enrolment)
REPUTATION Strengthen how we are seen and experienced, ensuring a reputation that drives demand, deepens engagement and powers our impact across the city.	Review - Undertake a reputation and perception audit targeting students, partners, employers and community stakeholders. To include local, regional and national context. Refresh - Define and embed a clear and consistent value proposition which reinforces who we are and what we stand for, strengthened through ongoing enhancement of the stakeholder experience. Expand - Deepen high-impact employer and civic partnerships whilst delivering targeted campaigns to grow provision in high demand areas.	1. Improved reputation and stakeholder perception across key audiences. 2. Increased demand and improved conversion across priority provision. 3. Stronger employer partnerships driving growth and economic impact.	1. Baseline stakeholder perception scores reported 2. 15 new partnerships formed with employers (Delivery) 3. 3-5 flagship civic/employer partnerships established



Board Statement

On behalf of the Preston College Board, we can confirm that we conduct reviews in line with local skills duty, as described in this plan. This accountability statement 2026/27 sets out an agreed description of purpose and delivery objectives as approved by the Board at a meeting on 9 July 2026.

This accountability statement will be published on the College's website in line with Department for Education requirements.



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