



**Self-Assessment Report  
2023-2024**

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## Executive Summary and Overall Effectiveness

### Progress in 23/24:

- In 23/24, United Colleges Group published their accountability agreement, in line with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for London. This document articulates how the curriculum intent for the group, meets the overarching skills needs for the local and regional economy.
- Leaders have engaged extensively to develop a new strategic plan for implementation in 2024. This included a consultative exercise involving all staff, our governing body, our students and our external stakeholders including our local borough partners of Brent, Camden and Westminster, the Greater London Authority, Business London, and our sister colleges in London.
- Leaders have responded well to the changing skills landscape through work with Westminster Business Council, Business London, the West London Alliance and Central London Forward to implement the Learning and Skills Improvement Fund. This has seen investment in priority sectors such as Construction and Green Skills, Health and Social Care and Creative and Media Industries.
- Leaders and Managers have developed an appropriate range of courses to develop learners' skills and knowledge. Courses offered at the college have relevance to either the world of work, or to enable a pathway into higher level learning.
- Leaders have introduced a developmental observation model agreed in partnership with our Trade Union Partners which is underpinned by UCG Method agreements 1 and 2. This was introduced in the second half of the academic year 23/24 and aligns with our new values articulated in the new Strategic Plan.
- Alongside the developmental observation model, a set of accountability metrics, supported by the revised datasets and dashboards have been launched which align with UCG Method agreement 3 and provide teachers and managers with the means to monitor and review their individual/team progress throughout the academic year.
- In the majority of provision, Leaders continue to see improved understanding and evidence of intent, implementation and impact. Retention and Achievement has improved from last year for both 16-18 and 19+. In Education Programmes for Young People, 16-18 achievement was 75.6%, +4.9% above the 22/23 position of 70.7%. The retention rate increased by 9.8%. For adult learners 19+ achievement

was 86.7%, +3.7% above the 22/23 position of 83.0% with the retention rate increasing by +4.6%.

- High volumes of young learners achieve well on lower-level vocational courses. 68% of 16-18 vocational enrolments are Level 2 or below, representing 3,581 enrolments, with achievement in Level 1 and 2 programmes exceeding national rates
- Leaders have introduced a set of live dashboards to support teaching and learning interventions. This has provided meaningful information for leaders and managers to support the regular and effective monitoring of key performance indicators.
- Achievement has continued to improve, with many areas performing well above National Rates, including in 16-18 provision Vocational Science, 16-18 and 19+ learners in Computing, Music and Performing Arts, Public Services and Sport. ESOL both age groups, Security and Retail Provision and the Employability Skills Provision for adults continue to serve a large volume of students who have very good outcomes
- Good progress in achievement has been made in Engineering, Construction and the Built Environment (16-18 +13.8 Adults +6.1%), Creative Industries and Digital (16-18 +10.2%, Adults +27.0%) and Business (16-18 +10.8%, Adults +12.0%).
- Students are well-inducted into their programme and their time at college. Classes received information during Induction from Safeguarding, Bursary, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Enrichment, and the Learning Resource Centre teams. This gave a good understanding of the support services available ensuring that a key and consistent message was received by all learners.
- Leaders have continued to invest and deliver significant infrastructure projects that have allowed more timely intervention for students which are improving the student experience, either through improved information technology resources, the use of artificial intelligence or the successful implementation of systems. More consistent tracking of student progress has been introduced by using mark book within Promonitor in curriculum areas.
- Operational planning aligned to our balanced scorecard approach continues to embed further and has seen continued improvement in all key metrics. This has given governors the opportunity to challenge and support the executive on our improvement journey. These metrics focus on the 4 key areas of strategic focus of Enhancing the Student Experience & Outcomes, People Culture & Growth, Fit for Future Assets and Robust Financial Health.
- Leaders have continued to ensure that the diversity of our organisation moves closer to represent the communities we serve with ethnic diversity at manager level at 55% from last year's figure of 48%.

- Leaders and Managers have introduced an Advanced Practitioners Group (APG) that works alongside the Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) Development Coaches to support curriculum/course management and develop performance in those areas that require improvement.
- 98% of Apprentice achievers progressed into sustainable employment or further education. Robust tracking software has been implemented to track learner progress on all components of the apprenticeship, supporting regular meetings with assessors, tutors, and curriculum managers.
- Student satisfaction has increased over the last 2 academic years, with the college sitting in quartile B as a whole in the QDP student survey, which is benchmarked alongside 75 other colleges, with some categories in quartile A.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

### Overall Group Key Judgements SAR Grades for 2023/24

Key Judgement	Grade 2023/24	Grade 2022/23	Previous OFSTED Inspection Grade
Overall Effectiveness	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
Quality of Education	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
Behaviour and Attitudes	Good	Good	Good
Personal Development	Good	Good	Good
Leadership and Management	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
Contribution to meeting skills needs	Strong	Reasonable	Reasonable

### Provision Types: Judgements & Proportions

Provision Type	Grade 2023/24	Grade 2022/23	Previous OFSTED Inspection Grade	Proportion of enrolments
Education Programmes for Young People	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	29%
Adult Learning Programmes	Good	Good	Good	67%

<b>Apprenticeships</b>	Good	Good	Good	1%
<b>Provision for Learners with High Needs</b>	Good	Good	Requires Improvement	4%

**Rationale for Key Group Judgements:**

- Although there has been significant progress and improvement in the majority of areas, in the remaining, the pace and improvement has not yet been rapid enough. As a result of this, it has not been possible to self-assess a Good grade for the Quality of Education and Education Programmes for Young People, and as such the Overall Effectiveness grade remains at Requires Improvement. Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

## Quality of Education

### Progress in 23/24:

#### Curriculum Planning – meeting the skills needs of London:

- Within 23/24 United Colleges Group updated their accountability agreement, in line with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for London. This document articulates how the Curriculum Intent for the group meets the overarching skills needs for the local and regional economy.
- Each career cluster listed thematic and specific details on the curriculum intent and how this would be supporting residents contribute to the skills need in their local area.

#### Teaching, Learning and Assessment – a holistic approach:

- The new Developmental Observation model is a strand of activity that sits alongside several others to form a holistic approach to improving and developing the Quality of Education through attention to Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Performance and Quality and Curriculum Leadership and Management. The other major strands are set-piece CPD days; the CPD hour programme; engagement with ETF and SET activities; CM Away Days; P&Q Checkpoint activities; the Advanced Practitioner Group and the 13 Impact Measurements for Teachers.
- These strands are founded upon central structures and resources that are in place to support teachers; they enable middle managers to assume a more confident role in improving the quality of education in their own areas, and they ensure teachers are clear about what metrics they should be using to reflect upon their own performance and the impact on their learners.
- All strands of activity are underpinned by six key TLA priorities summarised in the acronym PQ-FAST for easy recognition (Planning, Questioning, Feedback, Assessment for Learning, Stretch and Challenge, Target-Setting).
- TLA Activity is supported by a refreshed team of eight Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) Development Coaches and an Advanced Practitioner Group (APG). The team underwent a comprehensive training programme, and the coaches also undertook joint lesson observations in preparation.
- Thematic learning Walks were undertaken in Terms 1 and 2 by Curriculum Managers supported by the TLA team exploring Assessment for Learning (AfL) after which each teacher was assigned a HOW2 linked to AfL. Summary data was produced revealing What Went Well, Even Better If for CMs to use with their teams. Business Development managers noted that HOW2s have been utilised

consistently to develop areas of needs identified during learning walks and linked to PQ-FAST, seeing an improvement in the use of strategic questioning, peer assessment and assessment for learning as well as digital assessment.

- Significant effort has been made by leaders and managers to resource and implement a range of new structures, processes and practices to support and promote TLA. Teachers have responded enthusiastically, with evidence of professional conversations about their practice being undertaken across the career clusters and evidence of excellent practice in action in individual curriculum areas including Performing Arts, ESOL and Business Development.

### **Continuing Professional Development and Training**

- Teaching Staff CPD days build on the thematic strands introduced in 22/23 including Trauma Informed Practice, EDI and T-Levels. In addition, two new areas of focus have been introduced in 23/24: Decolonising the Curriculum and Sustainability which will be a focus for 24/25.
- The use of the corporate membership with The Society for Education and Training (SET) and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has been further developed over 23/24. Membership of SET grew to 83% with some career clusters showing 100% sign up (HWC). Teachers engaged with online and face to face training (e.g. a T-Level series and training for managers). In addition, 12 teachers from across the college attended the SET conference in January 2024. Individual teams and teachers (e.g. Maths Team at PG) undertook ETF and SET courses as a CPD hour option in Terms 2 & 3 to address specific areas of need.
- A centralised approach to the CPD hour was launched with the first term focusing on the six key TLA priorities (PQ-FAST) and the next two terms offering a menu of options to allow curriculum areas to address areas of need.
- A range of qualitative data was captured from the centralised CPD hour sessions that illustrated individual teacher engagement, reflection and planned next steps, providing managers with a picture of TLA in their own areas.
- The annual cycle of CM Away Days continued to enable key TLA and P&Q priorities to be explored with CMs and APs across the year.
- Pre-term training days for all permanent teaching staff continued in 23/24 to ensure that all staff were beginning from the same starting point.
- Individual Career Clusters continue to develop CPD in their own areas in response to specific development needs. For example, ESOL colleagues led cross-site interdepartmental sessions exploring language interference, reading text types and pronunciation.



## **Performance and Quality**

- A revised Quality Assurance process was implemented in 2023/24 supported by a Quality Assurance Handbook. UCGs Quality Cycle is a systematic and continuous process to assess, monitor, and enhance the quality of education and services we provide for learners.
- The cycle is made up of key components during the Academic year, broken down into three Blocks. In term 1, assessment plans of curriculum areas were reviewed, during term 2, marked work and feedback were scrutinized and in term 3 student tracking was evaluated. The Performance and Quality Team, supported by a team of moderators, reviewed and provided feedback against these themes to improve quality, ensure consistency across the college and identify opportunities for continuing professional development or support.

## **Achievement:**

- Retention and Achievement has improved from last year for both 16-18 and 19+. In Education Programmes for Young People, 16-18 achievement was 75.6%, +4.9% above the 22/23 position of 70.7%. The retention rate increased by 9.8%. For adult learners 19+ achievement was 86.7%, +3.7% above the 22/23 position of 83.0% with the retention rate increasing by +4.6%.
- Achievement has continued to improve, with many areas performing well above National Rates, including in 16-18 provision Vocational Science, 16-18 and 19+ learners in Computing, Music and Performing Arts, Public Services and Sport. ESOL both age groups, Security and Retail Provision and the Employability Skills Provision for adults continue to serve a large volume of students who have very good outcomes
- Good progress in achievement has been made in Engineering, Construction and the Built Environment (16-18 +13.8%, Adults +6.1%), Creative Industries and Digital (16-18 +10.2%, Adults +27.0%) and Business (16-18 +10.8%, Adults +12.0%).

## **Intent:**

## **Key Strengths:**

- Leaders and Managers have developed an appropriate range of courses to develop learners' skills and knowledge. Courses offered at the college have relevance to either the world of work or enable a pathway into higher level learning. At the Paddington campus, a new careers hub, the World of Work was opened getting learners ready for employment.
- Courses are designed with appropriate content to develop knowledge, skills, and behaviours for progression into Further or Higher Education, or into work. Courses

designed and offered in 2023/24 helped UCG meet the needs of the local economy and identified as priority skill sectors, (Creative, Health & Social Care, Built environment) and as cross cutting themes (Digital Skills, Green Skills, Labour Market Inclusion and Transferable Skills) in London's LSIP.

- Local residents from Brent, Westminster, Camden and from other communities in London benefit from a coherent, well planned 'Free Courses for Jobs Level 3 offer', targeting the key priority skills sectors, such as Green Skills, Digital and Health, identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan for London.
- In some areas such as Health, Wellbeing and Care (HWC), curriculum design was refined to include modules to support pathways to and to develop understanding of Dementia care. Within the Engineering Construction and the Built Environment, student knowledge and skills of the Green Skills agenda were developed through the rollout of additional bolt on sessions in carbon/climate literacy, sustainable construction and renewable energies.
- Within curriculum areas such as Engineering, Construction, and the Built Environment (ECBE), employers are involved in the development of the curriculum. Where employers are involved, learners benefit from insights into the potential job opportunities in various industries, which motivates learners to complete and achieve their courses.
- 2023/24 saw the implementation of Skills forums within ECBE, HWC and the Creative and Digital Industries (CID). These skills forums allowed employers to review and develop the curriculum offer, highlighting the skills needs in their industries. They saw a range of employers from industry leaders such as Microsoft, Fujitsu and Lenovo to smaller and medium sized enterprises such as Willmott Dixon, Mace Construction, Construction Youth Hub and AOG-247.
- Good use of course design and planning in Computing across the college group has assisted in increasing the achievement for an external exam component. For example, teachers ran revision and exam preparation sessions to ensure all learners were prepared to submit high quality work. This led to an increase in achievement of +18.2% for 16-18 learners compared to 22/23, a 7.5% increase at Computing Paddington and a 31.6% increase at Computing Willesden.
- Most learners who stay until the end of their programme at Level 3 are aware of their next steps and move up to the next level. Within HWC, Learners with EHCP were supported with university application/interview skills which allowed 83% of learners to secure a place in their 1st choice university.
- Within CID, 83% of UCAS applicants were due to start a HE course in October 2024, notable destinations include Goldsmith's College, University of London, UCL, Queen Mary University, City University, University of Sheffield, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of York, Ravensbourne University London and SAE Institute. Student destinations at HE matched the intent within CID with learners mainly progressing in line with the subject matter of their Level

3 qualification but some learners, who developed wider skills and interests through their study programme progressing to other key skill sectors.

- Curriculum Intent within UCG is well formed and has taken into account the Local Skills Improvement Plan, working with Central London Forward and the West London Alliance, ensuring that appropriate pathways are available for young people and adults.
- Curriculum areas such as HWC, CID and ECBE all accessed the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) to further develop the resources and course offer available to both young people and adults. This has resulted in upgraded equipment in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, a state-of-the-art Hospital suite within Paddington Green, providing learners with a real working environment to apply theory into practice and an upgraded TV studio allowing students to interact with a high specification industry equipment including 4K, augmented and virtual reality equipment.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- In a few programmes, students do not have enough exposure to employers, and any employer involvement in the curriculum does not permeate through into the learner experience.
- Curriculum Intent in certain programmes such as A Levels needs further refinement. In these programmes the sequencing of curriculum is not robust enough and does not often allow learners to recall and retrieve information to allow them to achieve their qualification.
- In a small minority of courses, the planned use of assessment strategies needs further refinement and diversification. Learning walk data indicated that digital assessment is not being used enough and differing assessment strategies are needed to avoid AI produced learner work.

### **Implementation:**

### **Key Strengths:**

- In 23/24 the 6 key TLA priorities PQ-FAST were rolled out. These priorities connect all TLA activity including the Developmental Observation model, Learning Walks and the CPD hour.
- A hybrid CPD hour model was launched with centrally curated masterclasses in Term 1, followed by a choice of options in Terms 2 & 3 facilitating increased teacher engagement with the CPD hour over 2023-2024. It enabled curriculum areas to focus on both areas of need and interest, providing teachers and practitioners with the opportunity to share best practice e.g. in ESOL, experienced teachers led a range of specialist workshops for their peers and a research project

exploring language interference which resulted in the production of a toolkit to be rolled out for use during 24/25.

- A range of data was collected during live CPD sessions and through evaluations which provide managers with insights into TLA for development in their own areas.
- Membership of SET grew to 83% in 23/24 with some career clusters showing 100% sign up (HWC). Teachers engaged with online training (e.g. webinars, leadership development), and face to face training (e.g. a T-Level series and training for managers). In addition, 12 teachers from across the college attended the SET conference in January 2024. Individual teams and teachers (e.g. Maths Team at PG) undertook ETF and SET courses as a CPD hour option in Terms 2 & 3 to address specific areas of need.
- Teachers continue to engage with Digital Learning and related technology. In 23/24 an AI Working Group was formed comprising colleagues utilising generative AI in their own areas and want to share best practice. The group utilise PQ-FAST as a thematic structure for their discussions, with different teachers presenting ways in which generative AI can be used to explore the themes with reference to specific platforms and products including Curipod and Teachermatic. The CM for Sport has also presented his work with AI at an External Conference and a CM for English at Paddington is undertaking work utilising AI to deliver EMS in vocational subjects, initially through exploration of Carpentry as a subject area.
- UCG retained Microsoft Showcase status for 2024-2025 and 16 colleagues to date have achieved Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert status. Additional staff have begun the Microsoft Educator pathways and completed individual modules which can be built upon during 24/25.
- The ALS Curriculum Managers at PG undertook a project with the Head of Development and Innovation exploring the use of Assistive Technology for learners in the classroom, and the outcomes of this project will be disseminated via the CPD hour in 24/25.
- A number of Curriculum Areas continue to integrate employability and industry links within their curriculum including:
- In ECBE, the range of groups accessing Construction Youth Trust (CYT) careers tutorials and site visits grew and all FT 16-18 courses in building services and construction trades at CWC had regular engagement with CYT.
- LLL teachers and students at Maida Vale participated in Planet Earth Games in which learners developed a host of sustainability initiatives including wellbeing projects, growing and making food, upcycling and eco travel.
- Computing at Paddington participated in the Amplify Project run by the Local Village Network exploring the importance of networking and soft skills. It connected

students with mentors from various industries, enhancing their visibility and access to opportunities and networks.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- Share examples of good practice and address areas where practice is inconsistent through CPD days, the CPD hour and the Developmental Observation model. This will ensure effective practice is consistently evident in all curriculum areas.
- Effective implementation of all six priorities of PQ-FAST as well as continuing to employ live 'in the moment' techniques.
- Utilise the knowledge and resources available via our systems (e.g. ProMonitor), our in-class resources (e.g. LSAs) and our wrap around resources (e.g. ALS) to improve planning for learners' individual needs with particular emphasis on the consistent use of group profiles across all curriculum areas.
- Revisit and develop specific approaches to effective target-setting and prioritise the use of ProMonitor as a central repository for information accessible by learners, teachers and support teams.

### **Impact:**

#### **Key Strengths:**

#### **Achievement:**

- Headline achievement numbers are still requiring improvement; however, they are showing sustained improvement, demonstrating the impact of actions taken to improve the quality of education.
- Achievement has improved from last year for both 16-18 and 19+ learners. In Education Programmes for Young People, 16-18 achievement was 75.6%, +4.9% above the 22/23 position of 70.7%. For adult learners, 19+ achievement was 86.7%, +3.7% above the 22/23 position of 83.0%.
- High volumes of young learners achieve well on lower-level vocational courses. 68% of 16-18 vocational enrolments are Level 2 or below, representing 3,581 enrolments, with achievement in Level 1 and 2 programmes exceeding national rates: Level 1 +1.2% above NR; Level 2 +3.9% above NR
- Students make good progress in GCSE English and maths relative to their starting points. According to MIDES data, 42% of students had neither English nor maths GCSE grade 9 to 4 at the start of the 2023/24 academic year. This compares to 31% across all FE colleges. In English 20% had a grade U or no grade at the start of 2023/24 compared to 10% across all FE colleges, in maths, 21% had a grade U or no grade at the start of 2023/24 compared to 11% across all FE colleges.

- For 16–18-year-olds, achievement has improved since 22/23 in 8 areas, these are as follows:
  - Lifelong Learning; +2%, 85.9% achievement
  - Creative Industries and Digital; +10.2%, 85.9% achievement
  - Health, Wellbeing and Care; +2.7%, 83.8% achievement
  - Business Development; +1.1%, 95.8% achievement
  - Maths GCSE; +6.2%, 84.9% achievement, with High Grades improved and above National Rate by 1.2%
  - English GCSE; +6.3%, 83.9% achievement
  - Engineering, Construction and the Built Environment; +13.8%, 79.5% achievement
  - Business; +10.8%, 65.2% achievement
- For adult learners, 19+ achievement has improved since 22/23 in 10 areas, these are as follows:
  - Security and Retail Provision; +3.2%, 96.3%
  - Employability and Skills Provision; +8.3%, 90.6%
  - Lifelong Learning; +2.3%, 89.6%
  - English GCSE; +10.5%, 86.8%
  - Maths Functional Skills; +8.4%, 76.5%
  - Health, Wellbeing and Care; +1.7% 84.8
  - Creative Industries and Digital; +27.0%, 81.2%
  - Engineering, Construction and the Built Environment; +6.1%, 82.5%
  - Business; +12.0%, 57.1%
- In 16-18 provision, 19 out of 25 curriculum areas had improved outcomes as compared to 22/23, with a small 20<sup>th</sup> provision reporting achievement for the first time (100% for 2 Supported Internships). 16 of the 25 had achievement rates above National Rate.
- In 19+ provision, 19 out of 30 curriculum areas improved as compared to 22/23.
- 53% of 16-18 learners study on main subject programmes at Level 2 or below, with 30% studying at Level 1 or below. 49% of UCG young learners are from the 30% most deprived areas in the UK with 76% from 50% of the most deprived areas. Despite this data, learners on Level 2 courses or below achieve above the overall national rates aligned to level and perform better than the college average achievement rate for young learners.
- The overall apprenticeship achievement rate for 23/24 was 58% for all ages, this is an improvement of +2.6% as compared to 22/23 and above a National Rate of 54.3% by +3.7%

## Retention:

- Overall retention increased for 16–18-year-olds by +9.8% from 22/23 to 93.5%, which is 3.5% above the National Rate of 90.9%. Overall retention increased for adult learners by +4.6 from 22/23 to 94.2% which is 0.6% above the National Rate of 93.6%.

## EDI:

- Excluding 'Other' due to the ambiguity of this categorisation, the largest ethnicities of 16-18 learner by volume (i.e. those ethnicities accounting for 5%+ of all 16-18 learners) are:
  - African – 14%
  - Other White – 10%
  - Arab – 10%
  - Caribbean – 8%
  - White British – 8%
  - Other Asian – 7%
- Within these ethnicities, key areas of strength include:
  - Other Asian 16-18 achievement rate increased by 7.2% and was +3.3% above the college 16-18 Headline at 78.9%.
  - Other White 16-18 achievement rate increased by +5.1% and was +3% above the college 16-18 Headline at 78.6%
  - Arab 16-18 achievement rate increased by +6.3% and was +0.7% above the college 16-18 Headline at 76.3%
  - African 16-18 achievement rate increased by +4.4% and was +0.5% above the college 16-18 Headline at 76.1%
- For 19+ and excluding 'Other', the largest ethnicities of learner by volume (i.e. those ethnicities accounting for 5%+ of all 19+ learners) are:
  - Arab – 19%
  - African – 15%
  - Other White – 14%
  - Other Asian 8%
- Within these ethnicities:
  - 19+ achievement rate for Other White learners increased by +6.5% and was +3.1% above the college 19+ Headline at 89.8%
  - 19+ achievement rate for Other Asian learners increased by +2% and was +0.9% on the college 19+ headline at 87.6%

- 16-18 female achievement rate increased by +4.9% and was +2.1% above college 16-18 Headline at 77.7%. For adult learners female, 19+ achievement rates increased by +4.8% and was +1.3% above college 19+ headline at 88%

## **Destinations**

- Final results of the destinations survey conducted by J2 Research, on 3268 known destinations from 2023/24 showed that 2926 (90%) of students attained positive destinations, 58% of learners that progressed/continued in Further Education and 23% that progressed into Higher Education.
- Of the 70 learners at College of North West London who completed a UCAS application, 80% were placed, including 1 learner at a Russell Group University.
- Of the 509 learners at City of Westminster College, who completed a UCAS application in 2023/24, 81% were placed, including 19 learners across 10 Russell Group Universities.

## **Key Areas for Improvement:**

### **Achievement:**

- Despite sustained movement at headline level, achievement numbers still require improvement. In particular:
  - 16-18 achievement is at 75.6%
  - 19+ achievement is at 86.7%
- Although retention rates have risen, pass rates have fallen for 16-18 learners from 84.4% to 80.8% and for adults from 92.5% to 92.0% since 2022/23. Further work is required to support all learners better prepare for their external examinations and assessments.
- A small number of 16-18 learners taking A-level Sciences and AAT Level 2 had extremely poor outcomes. These programmes have been paused for 24/25.
- 16-18 learners on vocational Business programmes have improved significantly since the last 2 years but remain too far behind the National Rate.
- 16-18 Functional Skills learners in Maths declined, and although English improved slightly, both subjects remain below the National Rate, although significantly more learners at Paddington Campus have achieved than in previous years.
- For adult learners, not enough learners, Business, Art & Design and Media, some areas within Health, Well Being and Care, and Functional Skills English achieve.
- Some achievement rates for learners within Engineering, Construction and the Built Environment for 19+ learners have improved but are still too low as compared with National Rates



## **EDI:**

- Referring to the previous lists of largest ethnicities by volume of learners, for 16-18 learners:
  - Caribbean 16-18 achievement rate increased by 5.4% but was -6.3% below the college 16-18 Headline at 69.3%
  - White British 16-18 achievement rate increased by 5.7% but was -4.3% below the college 16-18 Headline at 71.3%
- For 19+ learners:
  - 19+ achievement rates for Arab learners increased by +2.2% but was -0.7% below the College 19+ Headline at 85.8%
  - 19+ achievement rates for African learners increased by +4% but was -1.5% below the college 19+ Headline at 85.2%
- Although 16-18 male achievement rate increased by +4.9%, it was -1.6% below college 16-18 Headline, and -3.7% below 16-18 female achievement at 74%. For male learners aged 19+, the achievement rate increased by +2.2% but was -1.8% below college 19+ headline at 84.9%.
- 16-18 achievement rate for learners with High Needs decreased by -5.4% and was -2.9% below college 16-18 Headline at 72.7%.
- Despite increasing by +4.8%, 19+ achievement rate for learners with High Needs was -4% below the college 19+ Headline and -3.8% below 19+ learners without High Needs at 82.9%

## **Destinations:**

- Results of the destinations survey conducted by J2 Research, on 3268 known destinations from 2023/24 showed that 293 learners (9%) had known negative destinations, of these, 153 were 'not in paid employment, looking for work'.

## **Final Grade: Requires Improvement**

## Behaviour and Attitudes

### Progress in 23/24:

- There has been ongoing review and development of all aspects of the Student Experience to ensure we meet the needs of our learners. There has been a variety of strategies to support all aspects of the learners' journey.
- Systems such as MyConcern and ESafe are used by all to support and monitor the safeguarding process. Ongoing CPD training delivered to all staff ensures a full understanding and has been beneficial to maintain effective knowledge of safeguarding and PREVENT at a localised and national level. Learners have access to a range of support and the college is able to effectively understand, engage and communicate to learners emerging priorities.
- Induction and Tutorials are important for students to receive consistent information from Safeguarding, Bursary, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Enrichment, careers, Work Experience and Learning Resource Centre teams.
- Leaders and managers ensure poor attendance is followed up with students, parents and carers quickly. New policies have been developed in 2023/24 such as the Students Missing from Education which is designed to address challenges with students who are absent from education for extended periods or frequently without explanation. This outlines protocols for identifying, monitoring, and supporting students at risk ensuring we maintain close contact with students their families and external agencies if required. A new Low-Level Concerns policy focuses on identifying and addressing minor concerns related to behaviour, student interactions, or other aspects of college life.
- Leaders reviewed the Bursary Policy in 2023/24 and adjusted the financial eligibility thresholds to improve future take up. Access was also made available earlier for progressing students. The student services team actively engaged with parents and carers to clarify that bursary take up does not impact existing benefits. The college recognises the impact that the increased take up of bursaries will have on the continued improvement in attendance.

### Key Strengths:

- Learners' behaviour and conduct are good. The college has high expectations around behaviour standards. The Learning and Behaviour Policy, applies standards consistently and fairly, the positive behaviours are reflected in learners' conduct around the five campuses. Punctuality is good at over 90% across all areas. In the QDP survey, 83% of learners stated 'I know how I am supposed to behave in college'. Life at all campuses has a good and positive atmosphere as

demonstrated in the QDP survey where 80% of students said that 'Learners from different backgrounds work well together'.

- The college works closely with learners with particular needs to improve their behaviour and attendance, 49% of young learners are from the 30% most deprived areas in the UK with 76% from 50% of the most deprived areas. The college enrolled 142 young people who are either Looked After Children (LAC) or estranged from their families and living independently, this number has increased by 7% since 2022/23, in 2023/24 we had 244 students as identified by DWP as requiring Free School Meals. We recognise that COVID-19 may have disproportionately affected many of our learner's transition to further education so we adopt a trauma informed approach to dealing with matters calmly and effectively. The support to our learners has contributed to improvements in attendance, retention and behaviour.
- Duty Managers set high expectations of behaviour for learners through monitoring and supporting the security teams at busy times. They use iPads to check learner timetables and monitor attendance and punctuality.
- Leadership and management have continually evaluated and improved all areas of behaviours and attitudes. This can be demonstrated through the consistent use of systems by all staff such as MyConcern and ESafe. These ensure prompt and effective communication, enabling concerns to be dealt with swiftly, 83% of learners felt they knew how to keep themselves safe on the internet/mobile phone.
- Mental Health 1st aiders supported 97 learners, re-enforcing a trauma informed approach to dealing with rising issues in a calm and effective manner. Safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing events had increased participation.
- High volumes of input from external organisations and visiting speakers, allow learners to benefit from listening to different perspectives and points of view. Current and emerging themes are responded to flexibly in line with changing landscapes. Previously the college deployed a rapid response to news events around misogyny, now a consistent thread in tutorials, ensuring learners have a clear understanding of risks and how to keep themselves safe.
- Tutorial topics covered in 23/24 included; domestic violence, men's mental health, sexual harassment, alongside PREVENT themes such as terrorism and extremism, knife crime, and gang awareness. Events this year reached students in areas such as mental Health awareness week, Gangs unit sessions, Prevent Awareness Day: 'Your Voice, Your Views' Apprenticeship Enrichment Week - Healthy Relationships Tutorial. EmpowerMENT Week, sexual health awareness week, Brent Prevent, Westminster Police, mental health and wellbeing charities, SASH Sexual health, Key 4 Life Gang awareness, CALM Male support. SUFFRA food bank and Speakers for Schools visit college to speak about key issues.
- In Supported Learning, support for students to manage peer relationships is effective, and issues are addressed swiftly and robustly. These students reported

that they felt safe at college and that bullying issues were well dealt with (QDP survey A quartile).

- The college is a member of a range of borough groups: Brent Violence against Women & Girls panel, Westminster Reflective Practitioner Group for DSL's, Brent Designated Safeguarding Lead forum, Westminster Designated Safeguarding Lead forum, Extremism, Violence & Vulnerabilities panel for Brent, Post 16 Education Panel for Islington, Brent Prevent Delivery Group, Brent Prevent Overseers Board, Camden Prevent Forum and Stop & Search Group for Westminster.
- Improved collaboration and swift action with the apprenticeship management team through 10-minute takeovers, raised the profile of Safeguarding and Prevent for apprentices with them reporting a clear understanding of the danger of extremism and radicalisation. This academic year, a bespoke range of safeguarding and prevent training and healthy relationships through an Apprentice calendar of events covered safeguarding and Prevent on a regular basis. In addition, we created a Prevent treasure hunt for students as an additional resource, ensuring additional capacity and impact.
- Enrichment provision is good and reaches a broad range of students. We provide for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents beyond the curriculum. Participation has grown with an average of 900 students per week as a minimum using the Hubs cross college equating to approx. 27,000 visits. Building on Learner voice surveys, additional activities were introduced such as Offsite Gym sessions with 1,736 total sessions attended and female only events, increasing female participation female only Basketball, football, gym sessions and activities in International Women's Day.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- Overall attendance requires improvement at 74.4% in 2023/24. However, attendance increased by +3.9% since 2022/23 which shows learners are increasingly clearer about expectations of their attendance.
- Learners supported by the bursary had a slight increase in their attendance to 78% in 2023/24. We will ensure increased bursary take up in 2024/25, to sustain improvements in attendance.
- There has been a rise in exclusions from 23 students in 2022/23 to 30 in 2023/24, 25 following a disciplinary and 5 immediate exclusions. Exclusions data by ethnicity has seen a rise in students identifying as any other Black/African/Caribbean background from 3 in 2021/22 to 8 in 2023/24.

**Final Grade: Good**

## Personal Development

### Progress in 23/24:

- We have introduced a bespoke student app called MyDay which has become the catalyst for efficient communication with our students. Opportunities such as work experience and cross college events from all aspects of student experience are live on MyDay, enhancing students' accessibility to new experiences. Usage improved significantly in 23/24 to 249,520 from 1,136 learners accessing the system in 22/23.
- The 'World of Work' facility created in the Paddington Campus LRC in 23/24, has enabled students to have visible and easier access to careers advisors and the work experience team. The 'corporate' feeling space has given the opportunity to hold masterclasses and mentoring opportunities. There are mini hubs at each campus, with a 'World of Work' area in development in the Willesden campus for launch in early 2025.
- Participation in enrichment has grown with approximately 900 students per week using the Hubs cross college equating to approx. 27,000 visits over a 30-week period. Offsite Gym sessions have been provided with 1,736 total sessions attended. Listening to feedback from learners resulted in additional activities being introduced such as female only events and increasing female participation in Basketball, football, gym sessions and activities for International Women's Day.
- The structural realignment of links to Career Clusters for work experience, has been embraced positively. There has been a development group in collaboration with the Business Development team, with an increased focus on employer partnership working, aligning with the skills agenda alongside T level industry placements and work experience opportunities.

### Key Strengths:

- Learners from all areas of the college develop a range of wider soft skills, such as resilience, confidence, and independence through the student services offer. This is evidenced through the Navigate system, parent feedback and annual reviews.
- The college supports learners' wider development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents beyond the curriculum. The Enrichment provision is good, 2,554 learners accessed a broad range of enrichment activities in 23/24. Provision of internal and external sports clubs, subsidised gym memberships, and art and music clubs enable learners to develop their skills and interests. Analysis by ethnicity suggests that a diverse range of students access enrichment in particular a high level of White and Black African and other Asian background participants.

- Young learners are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. The Tutorial programme is good, and Tutorial themes equip learners to be responsible, respectful, and active citizens. For example, students from across the Paddington campus participated in a community safety campaign in conjunction with Citizens UK. Proposals were submitted to the local councillor and MP for the area as a catalyst to improving lighting and other aspects in the park and church areas on route to the campus.
- There are many opportunities for students to attend group events at the college. The Freshers Fair introduced students to college life effectively and was attended by approximately 1,400 students over multiple campuses. A range of Masterclass talks, presentation from support agencies, provided progression and development opportunities. These were very well-attended reaching over 3,000 learners.
- Consistent and proactive training approach with relevant stakeholders enables the good use of systems to improve tracking and communications, such as MyDay, Navigate, Pay My Student, My Concern and E safe. LRCs are key to supporting students' development.
- The LRCs issued over 23,318 resources to students and staff in 23-24, including 3,434 laptop loans. All LRC staff are Safeguarding trained, and students can use the phrase "Ask Angela" if they need help with the managers trained as 1st aiders and mental health 1st aiders.
- Through Support Services, events and Tutorials students continue to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. Diversity is celebrated and learners develop their understanding and appreciation through the celebration of diverse cultures and promoting respect for different protected characteristics, as defined in law. The QDP student survey in 2024 showed responses to the question "Learners from different backgrounds work well together" was in quartile B.
- Learners' understanding of healthy relationships and healthy living is good, supported by an established tutorial programme and apprentice inductions through a series of themed events, such as Mental Health and Wellbeing week and Sexual Health Awareness week.
- Employer links have improved, through the development of masterclasses, working with young Enterprise and Citizens UK alongside attending external events such as the Medics Ball and Hidden Gem networks, developing Employer Breakfast events, and employer skills forums, utilizing these contacts for placements and as speaker/mentors for students. Our employer engagement is improving the CRM data base (Navigate) stands at around 1,700 employers we have currently engaged with.
- Work experience and Industry placements is an improving picture. A large majority of T levels students undertook their industry placement in their first year of study. The remainder will undertake this in their second year. Overall employer confirmed

hours increased significantly, by 296% from 18,000 hours recorded in 2022/23 to 53,000 recorded in 2023/24.

- Most Curriculum Areas support learners' personal development through a range of trips, external speakers, and masterclasses. For example, Construction, RAC, Plumbing and Gas visited industry-specific trade events. Students were supported via additional training sessions delivered by industry experts to explore their routes to employment within the construction and built environment industry. Learners in Hair and Beauty gain expertise in additional diverse hair techniques. Learners in Creative Industries benefit from briefs from industry partners and collaboration with external professional partners such as the National Theatre.
- Our Deaf Learners have been able to participate in work experience. An example of positive engagement included Spitalfields Community Farm where learners looked after the animals and helped with the general estates and upkeep of the farm under instruction from the staff. These sessions were excellent for students' well-being as well as introducing them to different communities and experiences.
- Preparing learners for future success in their next steps is integrated throughout the Curriculum through the Tutorial programme and the Careers service. The college meets all Gatsby benchmarks and has improved its overall this score from 86% in 22/23 to 89% in 23/24.
- The quality of UCAS applications has improved as evidenced through the University acceptance rate of 79.8% in 23/24 from 78.7% in 22/23. Of these applicants, 20 learners were accepted into the Russell group universities which is an improving trend. The UCAS process was improved and supported by events such as HE and Futures Fair where over 40 businesses and 20 Universities attended each campus enabling students to make informed destination choices.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- Work Experience has improved but still requires further improvement, with just over half of eligible learners undertaking a form of work experience or work-related activity.
- Although the Student Union is well established, attendance at board meetings and representation on college wide groups needs to be improved to expand their influence at the college.

**Final Grade: Good**

## Leadership and Management

### Progress in 23/24:

- Leaders have engaged extensively to develop a new strategic plan for implementation in 2024. This included a consultative exercise involving all staff, our governing body, our students and our external stakeholders including our local borough partners of Brent, Camden and Westminster, the Greater London Authority, Business London, and our sister colleges in London.
- Leaders have developed a new behaviour framework for all staff segmented by role which aligns with the new values of the strategic plan. The values are aligned to key principles to ensure that all staff and students are clear of our expectations as a member of the United Colleges Group Community.
- Leaders and managers have further built on our external stakeholder engagement through employer representative bodies such as Business London, and other sectoral bodies to deliver the key priorities of the local Skills Improvement Plan.
- The strategic leadership team of the college has been expanded to include more perspectives and voices at the most senior level to help inform and design our approach to improvement as that improvement aligns with our balanced scorecard metrics.
- Leaders' significant investment in both middle leaders and teachers continues. The impact of that investment is clear that, in most cases, middle leaders and teachers can clearly articulate the key strengths and weaknesses of their provision.
- Leaders have introduced a set of live dashboards to inform curriculum/course management interventions and support teaching, learning and assessment.
- In the majority of provision, Leaders continue to see improved understanding and evidence of intent, implementation and impact.
- Operational planning aligned to our balanced scorecard approach continues to embed further and has seen continued improvement in all the key metrics held within the balanced scorecard. This has further given governors the opportunity to challenge and support the executive on our improvement journey. These metrics focus on the 4 key areas of strategic focus of Enhancing the Student Experience & Outcomes, People Culture & Growth, Fit for Future Assets and Robust Financial Health.



- Leaders have introduced a developmental observation model agreed in partnership with our Trade Union Partners which is underpinned by UCG Method agreements 1 and 2. This was introduced in the second half of the academic year 23/24 and completely aligns with our new values as they are articulated in the new Strategic Plan 2024-30.
- Alongside the developmental observation model a set of accountability metrics, supported by the revised datasets and dashboards have been launched, which align with UCG Method agreement 3 and provide teachers and managers with the means to monitor and review their individual / team progress throughout the academic year.
- Leaders have introduced TLA Development Coaches to support teachers to improve their pedagogical skill and their impact.
- Leaders and managers continue to be resolute in their expectations around attendance ensuring learners are clear for the need for good attendance.
- Leaders have introduced a specific progress coach role to support managers and teachers and students to maximise both their attendance and progress. The progress role is complementary to the teacher's responsibilities and in no way replaces that teacher obligation.

### **Key Strengths:**

- United Colleges Group has a highly effective and committed board of governors that continually challenge and support the college's drive for improvement.
- Governors have a forensic understanding of the college's areas for improvement and how they can provide constructive challenge and support to make improvements through their link roles, committees and interrogation of the balanced scorecard.
- Leaders have committed to ensuring that our staff mix is closer to 80/20 permanent to temporary staffing levels through a strong approach to both fractionalisation of temporary roles, our 'grow your own' programme and external recruitment. In most areas this has been successful.
- Leaders continue to further develop the "grow your own" programme with two interim Vice Principals being recently appointed.
- Leaders and managers place diversity and inclusion at the heart of the college and the impact of this can be seen through the welcoming environments, resources developed and staff and students' promotion of equality. Our Paddington staircase is currently nominated for the EDI award by the Education Estates Organisation.

- Leaders have put a series of bespoke support measures in place for on boarding and classroom support for those permanent staff who are new to teaching.
- Leaders have continued to ensure that the diversity of our organisation moves closer to represent the communities we serve with ethnic diversity at manager level at 55% from last year's figure of 48%.
- Leaders and managers are acutely aware of the mental health challenges that both our staff and students face and have continued to support our staff through our Employee Assistance Programmes as well as our students with relevant internal resourcing as well as specialist third sector support such as Together All.
- Leaders and managers have a strong focus on establishing a culture of visible, whole-college leadership with clear evidence of consistency in accountabilities setting high expectations and aspirations for staff and students.
- Leaders and managers have developed a culture of continuous improvement which ensures students and apprentices receive a high-quality learning experience. The value of 'always improving' is a key tenet of our strategic plan.
- Leaders and Managers effectively manage our funding to maximise learning opportunities for the learners from the communities we serve whilst providing a wraparound service both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Leaders and managers continue to improve the estates facilities and our digital infrastructure facilities across all campuses to better meet the needs of our learners. This includes repurposing areas to better support our study programmes with the creation of a World of Work in our Paddington Campus for example and continued improvement in digital resources available to students.
- Leaders and managers proactively engage with our trade union partners to co-create positive outcomes for our student facing and student support staff teams. This can be seen with our recent award as an Investors in People accredited organisation and our subsequent nomination as the best newcomer to the Investors in People family of organisations.
- Leaders and managers have supported the college teams to develop, in most cases, strong relationships with key stakeholders who influence our curriculum and support teachers to improve their subject knowledge.
- Leaders and managers promote and lead a positive safeguarding culture where we always act in the best interest of our learners and staff to ensure they are safe.
- Leaders and managers focus on ensuring all students receive timely and appropriate guidance on next steps.
- Leaders and managers provide a key focus on destinations of learners regardless of their qualification outcome.

- Leaders have had external recognition for the work completed in the EDI space by the [National Centre for Diversity](#), [Investors in People](#), [Education Estates](#) and the [UnderOne Organisation](#)

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- In the minority of cases recruitment issues in a few areas have adversely impacted on teaching and learning.
- Leaders and managers must further develop our approach to continuous professional development for teachers
- In some cases, attendance remains challenging particularly for those learners with certain needs who, although aware of our high expectations, still present attendance challenges.
- In a minority of curriculum areas evidence of impact on learner outcomes is still below expectation.
- Further work in developing those key employer partnerships in a few areas needs to continue.
- In a few areas, leaders and managers have yet to consistently embed effective use of tracking and stretch and challenge in planning.

**Final Grade:** Requires Improvement

## Type of Provision: Education Programmes for Young People

### Progress in 23/24:

- Curriculum Intent continues to be a strength for Education Programmes for Young People, aligns well with the Local Skills Improvement Plan and Accountability Agreement, where a coherent curriculum is well-planned and enables young people to progress on to higher level courses, apprenticeships, or employment.
- Leaders and managers have improved systems and infrastructures in order to enhance oversight of performance in the curriculum and set high expectations of both students and staff. As a result, achievement rates have improved significantly as compared to 22/23, with significant improvements in most Career Clusters across the college Group, 80% of curriculum areas improving as compared to 22/23, with 2/3s exceeding National Rates and 1/3 exceeding National Rates by over +5.0%.
- Curriculum-enhancing activities have been developed well throughout the college, especially with the introduction of the World of Work in Paddington campus which holds the largest volume of young learners, where students have access to resources and contacts to support planning for their future, enhancing their wider work-related skills.
- Increased and focussed activity around the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment through the Continual Professional Development programme has had a positive impact on performance in the curriculum for young people, as evidenced by improved metrics, including students attending more, achieving more, an environment of improved behaviour across the college and greater student satisfaction.

### Key Strengths:

- The enhanced induction and tutorial programme sets high expectations for learners from the start of their journey at UCG, alongside the continued adoption of a trauma informed approach to provide an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students has been built upon in 23/24. As a result of these initiatives, engagement, behaviour, attendance and achievement has improved for young learners as compared to 22/23.
- In many programmes for young people, teachers create and deliver a broad curriculum that is well organised and provides both a varied suite of well scaffolded lessons. For example in Computing Paddington, 92% students expressed satisfaction when surveyed students that they agreed there was strength in session organisation, the quality of teaching on their study programme, and being consistently challenged, the impact of which is high outcomes for most learners; ESOL learners learn through varied approaches,

including the use of software and interactive tools to enhance their learning, increasing retention and achievement for students; courses for vocational Science learners are carefully organised and scaffolded, ensuring students are able to recall and reapply, supporting learners for exam based assessments and ultimately maximising outcomes.

- High expectations are set for young learners on Education Programmes for Young People, and as a result, high volumes of young learners achieve well on lower-level vocational courses. 68% of 16-18 vocational enrolments are Level 2 or below, representing 3,581 enrolments, with achievement in Level 1 and 2 programmes exceeding national rates: Level 1 +1.2% above NR; Level 2 +3.9% above NR
- Most Career Clusters provide opportunities for young learners to engage with the world of work. Excellent collaboration between Health & Social Care and the work experience department to allow all learners to conduct extensive work placements on their courses, and learners usually undertake these in hospitals and care homes. In Creative Industries and Digital, learners develop transferable skills related to the Deloitte Future Ready Workforce model. In Engineering Construction and the Built Environment there are links with organisations such as the Construction Youth Trust (CYT), Morgan Sindall, Wilmot, Dixon and Durkan construction, with additional activities including participation in the Construction Skills Day/Competitions, and preparing learners for World Skills, ensuring that learners receive a learning experience that is rich and aligned to their relevant career industry, preparing them for work.
- Within curriculum delivery, there continues to be a strong line of sight to industry through many courses. For example in performing arts courses with the National Theatre Connections Festival being the prime example of an industry led brief; Music courses enhanced their industry engagement through collaborations with performing arts for the Connections festival and also Papatango theatre; outstanding curriculum with links to industry and work-related activities weaved throughout the year and in each project, including HE providers (LAMDA, Fourth Monkey/ Oxford School of Speech and Drama) give those on the Extended Diploma access to valuable interview/audition skills to further their progression opportunities
- There is suitable careers advice and guidance provided for the next step for learners after their course and learners are supported well with careers service and tutorial programmes to advice to assist them to progress to the next level of education. For example in Creative Industries and Digital, 82.7% of UCAS applicants were due to start a HE course in October 2024, notable destinations include Goldsmith's College, University of London, UCL, Queen Mary University, City University, University of Sheffield, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of York, Ravensbourne University London and SAE Institute.
- 53% of UCG young learners study on main subject programmes at Level 2 or below, with 30% of learners on main programmes at Level 1 or below. 49% of

UCG young learners are from the 30% most deprived areas in the UK. 76% of young learners are from 50% of the most deprived areas. Despite this data, learners on Level 2 courses or below achieve above the overall national rates aligned to level and perform better than the college average achievement rate for young learners.

- Learners feel safe and behaviour is good.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- Although achievement for most young learners has improved in 2024, outcomes for learners in some subjects are not yet good enough and remain below National Rates. These include A-levels, Business, , and Functional Skills in English and maths.
- Although college expectations are high and the cohort of students is well understood, attendance is still too low, ultimately impacting on whether some students achieve their qualification. The quality of teaching has varied over 23/24 in some areas, mainly due to an over-reliance on agency teaching staff due to recruitment crises in the sector, where despite efforts to integrate new teachers quickly and effectively, this was not achieved in some cases and the churn and disruption to some learners was impactful. This was especially the case in Engineering Construction and the Built Environment.
- Not enough students pass their Functional Skill qualifications which inhibits their progression opportunities.
- Punctuality of some young learners is poor, suggesting a lack of engagement or inconsistent setting of high expectations.
- Although employer links and work-related activity is improving, this is not consistent in some areas and not enough evidence can yet be seen in the learning spaces that this is permeating consistently through the curriculum delivery, not preparing some young learners sufficiently to be work ready.

**Final Grade:** Requires Improvement

## Type of Provision: Adult Learning Programmes

### Progress in 23/24:

- Adult learners benefited from a range of interventions to extend involvement in Maths and numeracy via the rollout of the Multiply programme. In 23/24 this had impact on around 635 learners across a range of intervention strands, ranging from maths modules within vocational courses, courses targeted at parents wanting to improve their numeracy skills and courses designed to help adults use numeracy to manage money.
- Development of the UCG Accountability Agreement allowed for well-developed, coherent provision, demonstrably aligned to meeting local, regional and national skills priorities across a range of skills.
- There were continued extensive partnerships with a range of external stakeholders that led to meaningful vocational development for learners enhancing their progress and skills, particularly evident in the development of Green Skills with the development of Green Skills Hubs and the opening of the Euston Skills Centre. Opened in February 2024, the centre opened in partnership with Camden council, providing local Camden residents with the practical skills needed to work in the construction industry.

### Key Strengths:

- A well-developed coherent provision with clear rationale and alignment, meeting local and national skills priorities, leading to a good understanding of curriculum purpose and meeting skills shortage areas aligned to the LSIP. The portfolio of provision aligns with those areas identified as skills needs both locally and nationally and includes ECBE, Green technologies and Health and Social Care as well as opportunities in Digital. In addition, learners develop their ESOL and basic English and Maths skills. This means that adult learners develop skills in high demand from employers.
- Employability provision is well embedded across Level 1 and below, providing a curriculum for adults developing skills for employment and progression.
- The structure of the provision is well-designed to allow learners to progress between levels and move across provision, allowing for multiple entry points and short courses to enable those seeking to 'retrain and return' to employment, as well as meeting the needs of various stakeholders. The curriculum offer is adapted to provide routes to employment or progression for adult learners. For example, evening classes and short qualifications are offered not only in classroom-based qualifications such as ESOL and English and Maths but also a range of courses within ECBE supporting the upskilling or retraining of adults.

Electrical courses at Willesden for example, lead to a significant number of those who were not employed in the industry being able to change their profession. Within some areas, teachers take responsibility for their own CPD, lead CPD sessions, participate in supported experiments and share good practice. For example, teachers at Maida Vale researched and developed the use of AI in ESOL teaching and shared their findings across the ESOL college group.

- Close links with JCPs and local sector/employer stakeholders ensured a range of employer-facing and employment-focused short courses, aligning directly with borough and London priorities, supporting the unemployed and identified target groups to gain or improve skills for employment and engagement in identified sector areas. For example, routes to college and employment for those at risk of long-term unemployment, as well as partnership work in targeted vocational skills for local residents with employers, local authorities and the college.
- Employment/employer-facing 'roll-on roll-off' short courses have a strong understanding of individual learner starting points used to set clear targets for learners linked to lesson content leading to clear tracking and support.
- Learners across Curriculum Areas benefit from employer and external input. Learners in ECBE benefit from employer input from industry professionals, reinforcing the content of theory classes and projects, developing their professional practice. Learners in Creative Industries and Health and Social Care develop industry understanding and skills through work with external stakeholders.
- Achievement rates for 19+ learners are at 86.7% which is a +3.7% rise on the 83% achieved in 22/23. Within the 19+ course offer, 10 of the 13 Career Cluster areas demonstrated improved achievement from 22/23. 19 out of 30 Curriculum areas improved as compared to 22/23, representing nearly 80% of all 19+ enrolments
- These improvements ranged from +1.7% in Health Well Being and Care, to +26.5% in Creative Industries & Digital, with 91.7% of 19+ learners achieving their qualification at Computing Willesden, a +45.4% (217 learners), +14.1% in Engineering and Electrical (384 learners), and +2.7% for the Employability and skills Provision (870 enrolments) as compared to 22/23.
- Comparing outcomes for 19+ students, with the National Rates in 19+ provision, learners in areas such as ESOL, Employability & Skills Provision, Security & Retail Provision, 3 out of 4 curriculum areas in Creative Industries and Digital, along with some Engineering Construction and the Built Environment areas perform above their specific National Rates, Functional Skills and GCSE Maths, and GCSE English ranging from +0.9% to +13.5% above.



- ESOL has continued its positive upward trajectory after declining achievement rates during the pandemic, with LLL achieving at 89.6%. Achievement rates in 23/24 are +2.3% overall for 19+ ESOL.
- There has been a +8.6% improvement, from 22/23, for the Employability and Skills provision with 90.6% of learners achieving their qualification.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- The impact of employers on curriculum design is evident in ECBE, CID and HWC but is still in development across other key vocational areas such as Business and Science.
- In a minority of lessons, the quality of feedback provided is inconsistent and does not allow learners to develop and improve their performance within their chosen industry.
- Although achievement rates for adults rose compared to last year, a minority of qualification routes are below National Rates within Curriculum Areas. This includes qualifications within Business and Functional Skills English achievement rates, particularly given the volumes of learners, are too low overall. English Functional Skills suffered a -6.0% decrease from 22/23 and lags significantly behind the National Rate.

**Final Grade: Good**

## Type of Provision: Apprenticeships

### Progress in 23/24:

- The overall apprenticeship achievement rate for 23/24 was 58% for all ages, this is an improvement of +2.6% as compared to 22/23 and above a National Rate of 54.3% by +3.7%.
- 98% of apprentice achievers progressed into sustainable employment or onto further education.
- In year retention has increased from 57.7% in 22/23 to 77.1% in 23/24.
- A more robust tracking software has been implemented to capture individual learner progress on all components of the apprenticeship supporting regular meetings with Assessors, Tutors and Curriculum Managers to track each Apprentice's progress.
- Apprentices received additional personal development activities throughout the year, including Prevent, Safeguarding, Healthy Relationships, Mental Health and Enrichment Employers were also invited to attend some sessions.
- As a result of these interventions, apprentices can confidently discuss personal development subject matter, such as British values, understanding Prevent and radicalisation, as well as Safeguarding.
- Continuous improvements have been made with the design and delivery of apprenticeship standards, in line with industry practices and the updating of knowledge, skills, and behaviours across a number of standards by the Institute for Apprenticeships.

### Key Strengths:

- All new starts had a clear training plan with key milestones and reviews agreed between the college, Employer, and Apprentice; key apprenticeship staff were highly responsive to employers' queries.
- The assessor role was restructured to include industry skills tutors who assess mandatory qualifications embedded within a standard. Industry skills reviewers are the link between the employer, apprentice and college, ensuring apprentices stay on track with their programme of study.

- Trainers and mentors communicated up-to-date vocational and technical subject knowledge that reflects expected industry practice and meets employers' needs; teachers deliver sessions well and Apprentices can recall previous learning confidently.
- Good on-programme support provided to Apprentices which has been reflected in the employer feedback through the review process; employers confirm that apprentices make considerable contribution at work.
- Good employer feedback on the 'Find an Apprenticeship' service from 92 employer reviews.
- Good management of identifying End Point Assessment organisations and working with stakeholders to provide Apprentices with the most up-to-date information with regards to the End Point Assessment requirements.
- High-quality IAG provided to Apprentices at the point of enrolment. Skills scans and initial assessments are used to identify Apprentices starting points, enabling a clear plan to ensure distance travelled can be evidenced.
- The Curriculum is designed effectively to build Apprentices' confidence, knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- For a few apprentices the quality and frequency of reviews have not met the college's expectations, this was predominantly in relation to staff sickness.
- For a few apprentices the tracking of progress against the knowledge, skills, and behaviours has not been consistent
- Improving overall achievement rates across the college's Apprenticeship provision. With the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning standard the main affecting factor. Remedial action took place during 23/24 but not in time to show impact.

**Final Grade:** Good

## Type of Provision: Learners with High Needs

### Progress in 23/24:

- A continued alignment of the provision to meet local and national priorities by providing functional pathways to employment and skills for the High Needs cohort which is furthest from employment or training - these include civic, community and education links. This reduces social care costs by supporting young people with SEND to have active, independent adult lives, by helping to develop the skillset to contribute economically and have full and active lives.
- An ambitious curriculum which continues to have students achieving above national rate for several years, as well as retention and pass rates:
  - Retention –98.2% vs 93.3%
  - Pass – 99.7% vs 98.1%
  - Achievement – 97.9% vs 91.6%
- Successful second academic year with private sector provider Goldman Sachs in hosting a Supported Internship programme with UCG which is now a permanent ongoing partnership and provides valuable and aspirational employment prospects in the private banking sector.
- A full roll out of the SCERTS programme (Social, Communication, Emotional Regulation Transactional Support) where strategies were used by teachers and LSAs alike to support our students with self-regulation as an example.
- ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) took part in a 5-week programme to support learners with low level concerns. The ELSA's will continue to develop their skills with regular supervision sessions with a psychologist and work very closely with the Mental Health and Well Being Team triangulating learners and concerns to rapidly intervene, when necessary, in a timely and trauma informed way. With the positive outcomes UCG will continue to work with the Local Authority and invest in two more 5-week programmes over 24/25 to train up to 15 staff ensuring learners mental health and well-being remains a core focus and is accessible and rapid intervention takes place once disclosed.
- Students on the Employability Strand students develop strong understanding of the application and interview process through the mini-jobs scheme with 34 successful candidates securing paid roles as part-time college employees and being supported to develop the practical work skills and personal qualities needed to fulfil the roles and needed for future employment.

- An effective programme of CPD on the use and implementation of Assistive Technology (AT) to support SEN learners in class was delivered by P&Q team to the ALS teams at Paddington and Willesden. Learning Support Assistants are applying this training to in-class support and to support learners to develop their Assistive Technology skills and independence in exams.
- ALS Hubs established at main sites 5 days a week and fully staffed for all mainstream learners are well used by learners with High Needs with approximately 20 drop-ins per day. The hubs run social skills clubs supporting young people with ASD to make friends and form healthy relationships by equipping them with tools on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year.

### **Key Strengths:**

- A standardised and ambitious curriculum linked to EHCP's and meeting outcomes and Preparation for Adulthood-this provides an effective framework for students to make good progress in the development of independent living and employability skills. Annual Reviews are completed in a good time frame ready for the next steps to adulthood.
- Continued development to meet tailored therapies needs for the High Needs cohort including: Regular liaison with local authorities and health services and school to continually develop and improve provision at UCG to cater for learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex medical needs to offer an improved and meaningful curriculum with the collaboration of the above services along with adaptation of the facilities to meet individual needs.
- In house Speech and Language Therapists at Willesden and Maida Vale sites who provide recommendations and weekly training to all staff to meet needs of students including assistive technology as aids for communication, as well as writing up and recommending plans to enhance communication and access to the curriculum for our High Needs learners where applicable.
- Specialist approaches have been successfully implemented across the Independent Living and Complex Needs strands with teachers using active learning strategies, transactional supports, and the zones of regulation framework. This has resulted in higher levels of student engagement and participation, with students acquiring new skills more rapidly and is evidenced by the achievement rate of 97.6 which is above national rate by 6.3%.
- Excellent partnerships with Occupational Therapies whereby staff working with learners with Profound and Multiple learning disabilities have highly detailed knowledge of their needs, and deliver high quality, individualised physio programmes that maintain and develop students' physical well-being.
- CID High Need learners have improved their achievement by 4.3% (84.6%) in 23/24 compared to 80.6% in 22/23. High Need learners in Refrigeration and Air

Conditioning (RAC) improved their achievement by 13.3% (80% in 23/24 from 66.7% in 22/23)

- Well-established ZSL London Zoo Youth and Careers programme which includes a volunteering scheme to provide workplace opportunities for learners with more complex needs, and a horticulture team offering work experience opportunities across ZSL sites. Other projects which incorporate work based learning include a long standing relationship with include Petit Miracles, an upcycling furniture venture, and a gardening project at St Marys' Church in Shepherds Bush. Approximately 40 students took part in these activities.
- Deaf awareness and provision for learners with high needs has been developed effectively with hearing impaired learners making great strides in achievement and progress. Achievement for all ages improved from 73.3% in 22/23 to 85.9% in 23/24, an increase of 12.6%. Deaf hub sessions have been embedded at our Paddington Site where sessions range from academic to focusing on well-being and personal development. We had 14 Deaf Learners across UCG in 23/24.
- Excellent links with external agencies such as Local Authorities '*Teachers of the Deaf*' who in conjunction with UCG, have a well-established specialist Hub for students with hearing impairments which focuses on socialisation, along with academic support. This is supported by Brent and RBKC Teachers of the Deaf.

### **Key Areas for Improvement:**

- Despite the overall improvement in quality, a minority of lessons are not well planned and sequenced, with insufficient stretch and challenge and differentiation to meet individual needs. In a minority of practical lessons LSAs are over supportive, hindering students developing the level of independence needed for the workplace.
- Ensure more stable staffing by developing our own staff with an appropriate, tailored training support plan from the TLA team, including opportunities to enrol on the DIT teaching qualification as soon as possible.
- Response to meeting students' therapy needs can vary between sites, and there no direct commissioned Physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy services for students due to vacancies in these areas in the NHS.
- Despite increasing by +3.9%, 19+ achievement rate for mainstream learners with High Needs was -4.2% below the college 19+ Headline and -4.5% below 19+ learners without High Needs at 82%.

**Final Grade: Good**

## Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs

- UCG makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs. The college has developed a comprehensive curriculum offer that is well focused and includes significant provision at various levels in the sectors of Engineering Construction and the Built Environment (ECBE), Green Skills, Creative and Digital Industries (CID) and Health Wellbeing and Care (HWC). In addition, there is a wide offer with various starting points for English, Maths and ESOL courses improving essential skills needed to gain or improve employment. Priorities align with local, regional and national skills needs, as evidenced by the Accountability Agreement that responds to the London LSIP. UCG collaborates through LSIF funding to enhance its provision and partnership working with other local educational institutions.
- HWC, CID and ECBE all accessed the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) in 23/24 to develop their staff and improve the capital resources and course offer available to both young people and adults.
- Within ECBE, the LSIF has resulted in upgraded air conditioning, refrigeration, and heat pump equipment at the Willesden campus. We have also undertaken software development to carry out automated training needs analysis and employer analytics using Salesforce to better determine employer need, improve employer engagement and grow provision. ECBE staff were allocated time to take part in project activity, meet with stakeholders and analyse labour market information (LMI) to inform their curriculum. CPD has been provided to enable the team to align their practices reflective of latest industry standards
- In ECBE, skills forums enabled employers to inform the curriculum offer, highlighting the urgent skills needs within their industries. Each forum saw a range of employers, including Willmott Dixon and Mace Construction, input to the development of additional programmes to support employer demand and needs, particularly in Green Skills. This resulted in the rollout of additional bolt on sessions in carbon/climate literacy, sustainable construction and renewable energies for student such as electric vehicle charging, greywater recycling and heat pump installation. As a result, students from across London train and prepare for jobs in emerging and high demand green industries.
- Links with industry in ECBE have also led to the department gaining 'Centre of Excellence' status with CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers). This has enabled the provision of up-to-date industry training from external companies to bridge the knowledge gap between college and current working practices. This enhances learners' ability to gain meaningful employment within the building services industry.
- In ECBE there are excellent stakeholder participation/partnerships with British Gypsum, Weber & Carbon Energy. These provided train the trainer events in

new greener technologies within internal and external wall insulation enabling students to test and gain knowledge in the leading techniques within the greener construction industry. Partnerships provide an Industry steer into current working practices supporting the design and development of our curriculum.

- Links with organisations in ECBE such as the Construction Youth Trust (CYT), Morgan Sindall and Durkan construction, provide opportunities for students to participate in competitions such as a Construction Skills Day. Skills competitions and links enable learners to receive a learning experience that is rich and aligned to their relevant industry, preparing them for the world of work.
- For HWC, the LSIF enabled the development of a simulated hospital dementia ward at the Paddington Green campus that was co-designed with input from the NHS. This provided learners with a realistic working environment to apply their theory into practice. This facility has been made available for the NHS to use for their Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).
- In collaboration with other college LSIF partners and the Northwest London NHS Skills Academy, a Health, Social Care and Life Sciences employer forum was established to ensure two-way communication between colleges and NHS employers. This was introduced to enhance the curriculum and delivery of LSIF partners and ensure that students meet the skills needs of NHS employers.
- A skills forum in HWC was held in February 2024 with employers which enabled curriculum design to be refined to include modules to support pathways to and develop a better understanding of dementia care. Collaborative work took place with NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board to develop a pilot NHS Higher Development Award enabling the upskilling of allied health professionals and support staff. The first cohort is planned from September 2024.
- In CID, the LSIF enabled the upgrading of the TV studio at the Paddington campus allowing students to interact with a high specification industry equipment including 4K, augmented and virtual reality equipment. A skills forum enabled employers to review and develop the curriculum offer and involved a range of employers such as Microsoft, Fujitsu and Lenovo. Students continued to work on real briefs from employers and our links with London theatres enabled the development of the technical skills needed in employment.
- In CID, learners developed transferable skills related to the Deloitte Future Ready Workforce model. A greater emphasis on encouraging students to get involved in skills competitions resulted in a Web Technologies student, Mark Kiss, from the Willesden campus, being selected to compete in Team UKs squad for World Skills in 2024. Mark was awarded a Medallion for Excellence.
- UCG works with stakeholders, such as the Greater London Authority and the boroughs of Brent, Camden and Westminster as well as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Leaders provided sector-based work academy



programmes for unemployed adults in Construction, Security, English for Work and Digital Industries in conjunction with local authorities and the DWP. In 2023/24 staff provided progression support and feedback to the DWP through an online portal to manage job outcomes and impact from project interventions. This enabled the review of current practice and improved monitoring of KPIs to maximise learner outcomes.

- Residents from Brent, Westminster, Camden and from other communities in London benefit from a coherent, well-planned offer. This has resulted in the continued development, growth and success of our ESOL and English for work programmes for adults. Our free courses for jobs level 3 offer, targets the key priority skills sectors, such as Green Skills, Digital and Health, identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan for London.
- UGC has extensive links with local employers and a wide range of other stakeholders in most priority sectors with skills shortages and significant growth opportunities. The college has worked hard to identify opportunities on various local and regional initiatives. For example, UGC continues to collaborate with HS2 to develop courses across a range of construction and engineering occupations where there are skills gaps as well as working closely with the boroughs of Camden and Brent on implementing their retrofit programmes.
- Supported internships meet local priorities by providing pathways to employment for learners furthest from the jobs market and reduce social care costs by supporting young people with SEND to have active, independent adult lives. Programmes support the principles of Brent and Westminster SEND strategies and teams are active members of local authority supported employment forums, ensuring knowledge on trends in learner aspirations and skills needs are used to inform developments in provision. Supported internships are delivered as a partnership between the college, host businesses and a supported employment provider. Internships are hosted by Westminster City Council, Brent Council, Imperial College NHS Trust and Goldman Sachs.
- The involvement of employers and stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum has significantly improved in the areas of HWC and CID in 2023/24 building on the strong progress in other areas. However, there remains a minority of curriculum areas such as Science, Business, Art Design and Media where employers and other relevant stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in developing the curriculum. However, plans have been put in place to develop this in 2024/25.

**Skills Judgement: Strong**

## Appendix A – Headline Achievement Data 23/24:

	All Ages				22/23 National Average	Variance 23/24 vs NA
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24		
Starts	22024	23815	22072	21092		
Leavers	22023	23810	22071	20940		
Retention	90.5%	88.4%	88.0%	94.0%	92.7%	1.3%
Pass	89.3%	89.7%	90.4%	88.5%	92.0%	-3.5%
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>79.3%</b>	<b>79.5%</b>	<b>83.2%</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>

	16-18				22/23 National Average	Variance 23/24 vs NA
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24		
Starts	6390	5917	6129	6697		
Leavers	6390	5912	6129	6567		
Retention	85.2%	80.3%	83.7%w	93.5%	90.9%	2.6%
Pass	88.0%	86.7%	84.4%	80.8%	89.9%	-9.1%
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>81.7%</b>	<b>-6.1%</b>

	19+				22/23 National Average	Variance 23/24 vs NA
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24		
Starts	15634	17898	15943	14395		
Leavers	15633	17898	15942	14361		
Retention	92.7%	91.0%	89.6%	94.2%	93.6%	0.6%
Pass	89.7%	90.6%	92.5%	92.0%	93.0%	-1.0%
<b>Achievement</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>83.0%</b>	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>87.0%</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>

