

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

New College Swindon staff continue working hard to deliver improvement

New College acknowledges Ofsted's conclusions with the inspection grade aligning with our own most recent self-assessment. The report covers elements of the College's provision but not the major developments made in T- Levels, the Swindon & Wiltshire Institute of Technology or wider Higher Education. The context of the pandemic and its lingering impact has contributed to the College not having travelled as far as we had initially anticipated prior to first inspection. The monitoring visit in March 2022 highlighted the improvement at New College since merger, and inspectors have recognised continued progress in the intervening months. However, our overall provision does not yet consistently meet the Ofsted 'Good' criteria and does require improvement.

Carole Kitching, Principal and CEO said,

"We are pleased that Ofsted recognised our continued progress on our journey to build one new college for Swindon. Ofsted also recognised the unified ethos and development of a learning culture based on respect, inclusivity and positive interaction and that students feel safe & safeguarding is effective. They said that our teachers, often dual professionals, are well-qualified and plan their courses and techniques carefully, using their wide experience to bring content alive so that students enjoy their classes and develop the knowledge and skills they need. I'd like to thank all staff for their commitment and efforts"

The Ofsted process offered a valuable opportunity to moderate our existing plans and the professional dialogue with inspectors provided deeper insight on issues and possible approaches, based on their experience across many colleges. This has helped fine tune interventions and will accelerate our improvement work. With external challenges now beginning to abate, there is both internal and external belief, and expectation, that the improvement task is realistic and achievable in good time. Despite the progress seen, we are frustrated by the pace in achieving what we know needs to be done to reach our initial post-merger goal of 'Good'.

At a strategic level the College has engaged well with stakeholders to deliver significant investments to benefit students and business. We have a new Institute of Technology and T-Level hub both providing state-of-the-art facilities covering areas such as Engineering, Digital, Health, Social Care, Early Years, E-sports, Animal Management, and Film and TV. We are also working with key business bodies and our anchor employers to identify and respond to priority skills needs, especially in higher-level training. Our Adult Learning Centre was also praised for its responsiveness to local community needs.

Paddy Bradley, CEO of Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) said,

“We work well with New College Swindon. We are enthusiastic supporters of the Institute of Technology run by the College. Carole Kitching, Principal and CEO of New College is an active member of our Board and chairs the group overseeing our work on developing skills and talent in the area’s workforce.

An example of the work of this group is the early development of an approach to tackling the need to upskill people in existing jobs... to reach our Net Zero targets.

This work on green skills developed by the Skills and Talent group has been passed over to [Business West] who are responsible for developing the local skills improvement plan and both the LEP and New College continue to work with them”

The College has already reviewed and revised its plans following the inspection to ensure that immediate action is being taken that prioritises aspects in the report that shape students’ experience & success this academic year. Progress will be closely monitored to ensure that results are seen quickly. This is in parallel to more significant changes planned for next September. The College is fully focussed on overcoming these challenges and all staff are working hard to deliver the further improvement needed. We are also collaborating with colleagues from successful providers in the sector to support our efforts.