



Winstanley College
EXCELLENCE SUPPORT INSPIRATION



Wigan & Leigh
College



St John Rigby
College

Statement and endorsement from Wigan Council

We are delighted to be working in partnership with our colleges across the borough as they work to provide excellent education and training, which enables the young people of Wigan to fulfil their potential. Through this active partnership working, which aims to build strong relationships with employers, institutes of higher education, schools and community partners, we are working together to address the skills needs of employers and drive socio-economic growth in our borough. Through our Economic Strategy we want to grow an economy that works for everyone, building on strengths and creating opportunities for all our young people to thrive and grow. Wigan Council values the partnership that we have with all our colleges to achieve this shared goal.

Cllr David Molyneux MBE
Leader, Wigan Council

Statement from Wigan Colleges

Building on a long tradition of working in partnership, the Wigan colleges work together to ensure that we co-ordinate our work to offer high quality education and training to the young people of our borough which addresses the skills needs of employers locally, regionally and nationally, at all levels. Through this active collaboration and sharing of curriculum planning, we aim to ensure that we work successfully together and with Wigan Council in the delivery of the Wigan Economic Strategy and Greater Manchester LSIP.

Paula Nolan
Principal – St. John Rigby College

Anna Dawe
Principal – Wigan and Leigh College

Simon Lett
Principal – Winstanley College

ST JOHN RIGBY COLLEGE



PART 2 – THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

2025-2026

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

St John Rigby College is a Roman Catholic sixth form college established in 1972. The College is under the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and situated on a single campus four miles west of Wigan. The mission of the College is to meet the educational needs of students from its partnership high schools in Wigan, West Lancashire and Bolton. The College is a co-educational, open-access Sixth Form College and was the first Roman Catholic sixth form college to be established in England in 1972. It takes its name from, and is dedicated to, the memory of a local man who was martyred at Southwark in 1600. Central to the College's distinctive Catholic ethos are the values lived by St John Rigby: faith, courage, commitment, integrity and freedom. These values form the foundation of the College's mission. The mission informs the College's educational philosophy.

The College is dedicated to the education and development of the whole person and supporting all students to realise their full potential. As an outstanding learning organisation SJR will have a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to shared values within a Christian community. We will establish a unique, safe and challenging environment where every individual is valued, talents are recognised and nurtured, achievements are celebrated, and dedication is rewarded. To achieve this as a community we will:

- Welcome all students who are happy to be educated within a Christian environment
- Value the uniqueness and dignity of each individual
- Deliver the highest standards of teaching and learning
- All show a commitment to our work, to the Christian values of the College and to the safety of all in our community
- Provide equality of opportunity, with mutual respect and positive encouragement
- Build and further develop local, national and international partnerships

The College has a strong sense of civic leadership responsibility and the College's Strategic Plan sets out 6 clear objectives:

1. To embed a learning culture which meets the needs of all students and, in doing so, improves the standards of student achievement, raises aspirations and promotes excellence across the full range of the College curriculum. In addition to providing a safe environment, we will focus on three key areas of outcomes for learners:
 - i. *Establishing consistently high outcomes across all courses*
 - ii. *Raising student achievement rates and challenging all courses to exceed Sixth Form College national benchmarks*
 - iii. *Establishing a consistently high 'progress score' for all courses.*
2. To increase student recruitment and widen student participation, in partnership with other providers, through the offer of a comprehensive range of high quality courses that meet the needs of our students and support developments and provision within partner high schools.
3. To work collaboratively with groups within the College's local and extended community.
4. To further develop the estate to provide an outstanding, safe learning environment for the whole College community.
5. To sustain a culture where all staff are committed to SJR's core values, where continuous professional development is encouraged and organisational efficiency and effectiveness are achieved.
6. To maintain the College's financial stability in order to implement the College Development Plan.

The College has a clear vision for its curriculum offer and aims to provide an inclusive curriculum that enables students from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of prior attainment access to courses that are enjoyable, challenging and result in progression to positive and sustained destinations.

The College has the highest of ambition for each student. This is captured in the College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework which states 'there is no ceiling to achievement'.

All curriculum areas embed skills development and employability readiness into schemes of work and enable students to grow in confidence in written and verbal communication, oracy, and numeracy. It is the aim of the College that the curriculum best prepares students academically and personally for their next steps, be that employment, technical study, higher education or apprenticeships. This Accountability Statement reflects the College's long-term strategic focus on ensuring our learners are equipped for future employment, aligned with local, regional, and national labour market needs

CONTEXT AND PLACE

Wigan is a large borough within Greater Manchester, comprising 19 secondary schools (including 8 academies and 1 independent school), 6 special schools, and 1 alternative provision setting. The borough performs below the national average for Progress 8. The latest available data, from the 2022/23 academic year, shows that Wigan recorded an average Progress 8 score of 0.48, compared to the national average of 0.56 across all English local authorities. There remains considerable variation in performance between mainstream schools in the borough. In terms of attainment, 61.7% of students in Wigan achieved a grade 4 or above in both English and Maths GCSEs, compared to the national average of 65.1%. There remains considerable variation in performance between mainstream schools in the borough. The schools and colleges of Wigan serve a community in which 29% of learners are disadvantaged, compared to 26% nationally. Wigan also has a slightly higher proportion of young people aged 16 and 17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or whose destination is not known. In 2023/24, the borough's combined NEET and 'not known' figure was 5%, slightly above the national average of 4.9%.

At post-16, students in Wigan can choose from a range of providers, including St John Rigby College (a large general further education college), a selective sixth form college, two school-based sixth forms, and alternative provision for learners requiring tailored support. St John Rigby College's inclusive curriculum enables students to access a broad range of academic and vocational courses, including subjects that may not be available at more selective institutions.

Each year, the College typically enrolls over 1,450 full-time students. For 2024–25, there are currently 1,456 students enrolled, representing a small increase compared to the previous year. The vast majority of these students are following study programmes of 580 hours or more. At St John Rigby College, 1.2% of learners have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), while a further 5.6% are identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) but do not have an EHCP.

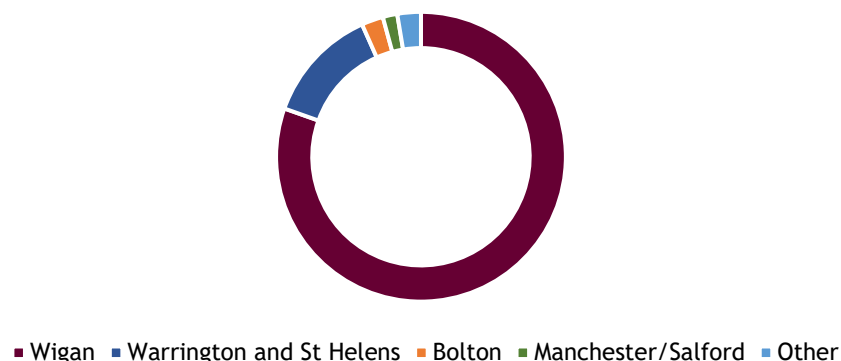
At St John Rigby College, 12% of students do not hold a grade 4 or higher in GCSE Mathematics and/or English upon entry. The college offers these learners the opportunity to re-sit these essential qualifications and achieves strong outcomes. In 2024, the national pass rate for GCSE resits was 22.7% in Mathematics and 33.1% in English. In comparison, St John Rigby College achieved significantly higher success rates, with 30.5% of students attaining a grade 4 or above in Mathematics and 46.1% in English.

For 2024-25, 57.1% of students are female and 92.4% of students have declared their ethnicity as White British. The College has a more diverse population than that of the Borough of Wigan which has a population record of 91.8% for White British in the last published ONS Census for 2021.

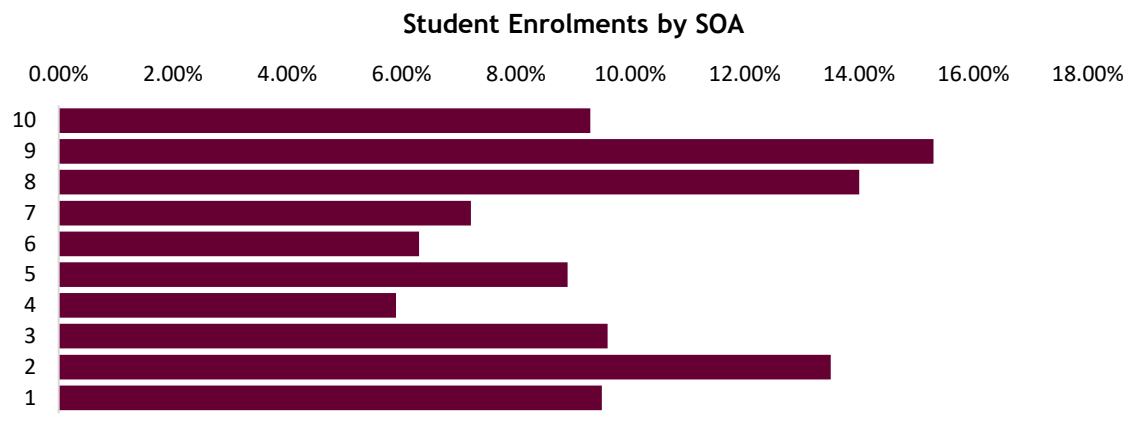
The majority of the student population reside in Wigan (84.2%), with a small number living in West Lancashire and a very small minority of students who reside in St Helens and Bolton. Wigan has several areas of high deprivation, with 29 neighbourhoods ranked among the 10% most deprived nationally. Wigan has a lower

proportion (25.8%) of residents qualified at Level 4+ or higher (degree or equivalent) compared to Greater Manchester's average of 31.9%, while the national average (England) stood at 33.9%.

Enrolment by Geographic Area



In 2024-25, 32.6% of students in College come from the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA) in the UK (using the overall ranking of IMD). The percentages of students at College from the most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA) are given below:



Wigan suffers from pockets of high deprivation, where 86/200 of the Lower-layer Super Output Areas fall into the 30% Most Deprived Overall in the country according to the Government's English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and 88/200 of the LSOAs fall into the 30% Most Deprived Overall in the country according to the Government's English Indices for Education, Skills and Training.

The College has a broad and inclusive curriculum, currently offering:

- 28 A Level subjects
- 23 Vocational Level 3 programmes (including 4 new AAQs)
- 2 Supplementary Level 3 Qualifications
- 5 T Level programmes
- 4 BTEC Level 2 programmes
- 2 GCSE resits (Mathematics and English)
- 1 BTEC Level 1 programme
- 17 Career Academy Programmes (Career focussed courses)
- A wide range of recreational and subject based enrichment opportunities

All students in College receive a weekly tutorial with their Progress Tutor and follow the College's 'Values for Living' programme which provides an opportunity for students to explore a wide range of topics including: the world around; moral and ethical issues; the choices we make in life - while also challenging students to reflect on their own faith and beliefs.

APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE ANNUAL STATEMENT

Strategic Context and Approach

St John Rigby College takes a proactive, evidence-led approach to curriculum design, ensuring close alignment with local, regional, and national skills priorities. Our strategy is guided by the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (GM LSIP), the Wigan Employment and Skills Strategy (2020–2030), and the Department for Education's Skills for Jobs White Paper. National qualification reforms, including T Levels and AAQs, also shape our curriculum planning.

This strategy ensures learners are equipped to succeed in a changing labour market and supports the long-term economic resilience of Wigan and Greater Manchester.

The College has drawn on the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (May 2023) to identify key regional priorities that inform this Annual Accountability Statement. These priorities have since been reviewed and updated in line with the findings of the subsequent Greater Manchester LSIP Progress Report (2024).

The College understands the role it has in the Wigan context and seeks to ensure that the curriculum offer aligns to the Local Authority's Employment and Skills Strategy for Wigan (2020–2030).

A large part of the decision-making process around our curriculum offer is shaped by both regional and national strategies, including the Department for Education's 'Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth' White Paper, which promotes stronger employer engagement and a more responsive technical education system. The College has also taken into account national qualification reform, such as the transition from Applied General Qualifications to AAQs and T Levels, and the evolving 16–19 course offer for the future.

Informed by guidance from the Sixth Form Colleges Association and in alignment with the Careers Strategy and the Gatsby Benchmarks, the College ensures that its curriculum supports clear progression to further study and employment. These strategic aims are complemented by ongoing dialogue with students, parents/carers, local high schools, universities, and local employers.

The College actively collaborates with key external stakeholders, including Wigan Council, DfE regional officers, employers (particularly within T Level, Applied General and Career Academy pathways), universities, local College Principals, high school Head Teachers, Heads of Year, and School Careers Advisors.

Our curriculum collaboration with schools and providers promotes coherent progression pathways, reduces barriers to participation, and prevents unnecessary duplication of provision, aligning closely with both local need and national education and skills priorities.

The College contributes to Greater Manchester's priority sectors—including the Frontier sectors (advanced materials and manufacturing, clean growth, digital and creative, and health innovation) and Foundational sectors—by aligning curriculum intent with labour market intelligence (LMI) and feedback from key stakeholders. Over 84% of the student population is from the Wigan borough, making it essential that the curriculum offer is tailored to meet the area's unique economic and social context.

According to local and national LMI, high-growth sectors include Business and Logistics, Construction, Health and Social Care, Manufacturing, Digital and Creative, Retail, Hospitality, and Low Carbon industries. These insights inform annual curriculum reviews and the introduction of new qualifications, such as Vocational, A Level, and Technical pathways that align with GM's identified growth areas.

Labour Market Intelligence and Data

The Wigan Local Authority Employment and Skills Strategy (2020–2030) further shapes the College's curriculum design. This strategy identifies priority sectors requiring targeted upskilling—advanced manufacturing, digital and tech, the creative industries, and the green economy. It also highlights socio-economic challenges, including low progression to higher education in Wigan's most deprived areas. In response, the College has embedded the following aims into its curriculum intent:

- Developing higher-level skills for professional and HE routes
- Strengthening employer engagement and local business partnerships
- Fostering entrepreneurial thinking and innovation
- Raising aspirations and improving social mobility
- Promoting lifelong learning and transferable skills development
- Supporting pathways into high-value sectors such as Digital and Engineering
- Strengthening functional numeracy, literacy, and digital skills
- Reducing barriers to apprenticeships and technical progression
- Enhancing CEIAG to ensure career relevance in study programmes
- Embedding digital innovation in teaching and learning
- Promoting core employability skills such as teamwork and communication

The College continues to align its strategic plan with the implementation of the GM LSIP and collaborates closely with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) and other stakeholders to ensure its provision remains responsive to evolving labour market needs.

GMCC has identified seven priority growth sectors based on local authority plans, GM LIS (2023) frontier sectors, and other strategic intelligence:

- Manufacturing and Engineering – especially in the Wigan-Bolton corridor
- Financial and Professional Services
- Digital and Technology – predicted to reach 95,000 roles and £7bn Gross Value Added(GVA) by 2029
- Creative, Culture and Sport
- Construction and the Green Economy – including 12,000 new homes and infrastructure in Wigan
- Education and Early Years – with critical shortages in STEM, English, and Digital teaching
- Health and Social Care – supported by innovation in life and health sciences

The evolving economic context, detailed in the 2024 GM LSIP progress report, further highlights a mismatch between employer demand and available skills. Although vacancy levels have declined since post-Covid peaks, 72% of businesses still report recruitment challenges—particularly for roles requiring specialist technical knowledge. Since the launch of Phase One of the Greater Manchester LSIP, the economic landscape has shifted significantly according to the 2024 progress report. While the UK was initially in post-Covid recovery, with record-high vacancy levels (1.2 million UK-wide, 170,000 in Greater Manchester in late 2022), vacancies have since declined (to 120,000 in GM by April 2024). Despite this drop, businesses still report recruitment difficulties suggests that the core issue is not general labour shortages but a mismatch between available skills and employer needs.

In Wigan specifically, 71% of businesses reported recruitment issues, with the greatest difficulties in technical and professional roles. Employers cited “specialist knowledge,” “understanding instructions,” and “product awareness” as common skills gaps. Soft skills such as time management, emotional regulation, and teamwork were also noted as critical shortfalls.

Training demand in Wigan is highest for functional business skills (27.7%), soft skills (25.2%), customer service (23.9%), and digital marketing (20.6%).

These priorities form the foundation of the College's strategy to deliver a workforce ready to meet the future needs of Wigan and Greater Manchester, while enhancing social mobility, productivity, and innovation across the region.

Sectoral demand has also shifted: while wholesale and retail remain the region's largest employers, vacancies have risen disproportionately in sectors like Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and Transportation and Storage. This underlines the importance of ongoing employer engagement and responsive skills provision to ensure training aligns with the evolving labour market. According to the latest GM data from April 2025, Manufacturing remains the most active sector for recruitment (21%), followed by Creative, Digital and Technology (15%), and Business, Financial and Professional Services (12%).

The Department for Education has outlined national skills priorities for 2025–26, shaped by the Skills England Report, the UK Industrial Strategy, and the Plan for Change. These focus on addressing high vacancy rates, long-term barriers to recruitment, and supporting economic growth and innovation in priority sectors. Providers are expected to demonstrate how their curriculum contributes to these areas, particularly by supporting pathways into green jobs, net zero, digital and AI, and creative and scientific industries. Nationally, skills development is centred on strengthening the UK's long-term economic resilience, innovation, and productivity.

The 10 National Priority Sectors Are:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Construction
- Health
- Clean Energy Industries
- Life Sciences
- Professional and Business Services
- Financial Services
- Digital and Technologies
- Creative Industries
- Defence

According to the *Skills England Report* and the *UK Industrial Strategy*, key priority areas include advanced digital and technology skills—particularly in artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and quantum computing—green and net zero competencies, and technical skills in health, construction, and engineering. These priorities align with cross-sector ambitions to drive regional growth and enhance global competitiveness.

The *Plan for Change* underscores the need for a more agile and employer-responsive skills system. This includes developing pathways that lead to high-quality employment, addressing skills mismatches, and promoting lifelong learning. National reforms—such as the rollout of T Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), and Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)—are intended to build a sustainable talent pipeline to meet current and emerging workforce needs.

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL PRIORITIES

National performance data supports the College's effectiveness in preparation of students for their next steps after completing their studies, such as moving on to university, apprenticeships, or employment. According to the Department for Education FE Provider Dashboard (2021/22), St John Rigby College achieved a +11.9 progression score (this is a value-added score showing how well students progress to "positive destinations" (e.g. higher education, training, or skilled employment) compared to students with similar prior attainment nationally) —well above the expected national range (average: -14.0 to +20.8). This placed the College 7th out of 316 providers nationally, and 3rd among sixth form colleges in the North West.

Additionally, 85% of learners achieved qualifications at their highest level of learning compared to the national average of 53.4%, placing the College 18th nationally. In 2023/24, 34% of learners gained qualifications in nationally prioritised sectors such as health, digital, construction, and engineering (national average: 22.3%), placing St John Rigby College 24th among 39 comparable sixth form providers.

The College's provision was rated as making a "reasonable contribution" to local and regional skills needs by Ofsted in its 2024 inspection. Inspectors praised the College's close collaboration with employers, including GMCC and Wigan Council, to shape curriculum in line with growth sectors like digital, science, health and social care, and engineering. Examples of good practice included the introduction of Level 3 Engineering, a complementary T Level offer, and employer-linked initiatives such as:

- Career Academies for Future Medics, Psychologists, and Software Engineers
- Health and Social Care workshops, including specialist breastfeeding education

- Chemistry enrichment through collaboration with university researchers on industry-standard lab techniques

In the current academic year, 165 students (11.3% of the student body) undertook work placements with 105 different providers. These placements spanned a wide range of sectors including Health and Social Care, Early Years, Business, ICT, and Veterinary/Medical. Many of these opportunities were facilitated through partnerships with over 35 employers, supporting curriculum areas such as Early Years (50 placements), Health (20), Business (15), Digital (3), and Legal (2).

Currently, over 50% of Year 12 A-Level students are participating in a bespoke careers academy, attending weekly sessions focused on developing employability skills and sector-specific knowledge. These sessions include personal and group projects, visits, guest speakers, and classroom-based skills training. They provide students with the opportunity to explore various job roles within their chosen sector—for example, Future Medics, Dentists, and Vets, Future Lawyers, and Future Entrepreneurs. There are currently 18 different career themed academies in total.

In 2023/24, St John Rigby College saw strong overall progression outcomes for its students. 66% of learners progressed to higher education, which, although slightly lower than the College's typical 70%+, reflects a reduced number of applications in this year. A notable 25% of those progressing to university secured places at Russell Group institutions or other high-ranking universities such as Lancaster and Loughborough, both consistently placed in the UK's top ten. In addition, 19% of students progressed to apprenticeships, highlighting the College's commitment to supporting vocational and technical pathways. A further 8% entered employment, while 5% continued in further education and 2% opted for a gap year. These outcomes reflect a broad and inclusive approach to progression, ensuring that all students are supported in finding the right next step for their individual aspirations.

Objective	Implementation	Targets	Timeline
To use GMLSIP/LA Employment and Skills Strategy for Wigan to help shape the College Curriculum	<p>St John Rigby College uses the Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (GM LSIP), alongside Wigan's Local Employment and Skills Strategy (2020–2030), to shape and continuously evolve its curriculum offer in the short, medium, and long term. These strategic documents provide essential labour market intelligence, employer insights, and regional development priorities, all of which inform the College's commitment to preparing students for sustained employment, further study, and successful careers.</p> <p><i>For St John Rigby College, key priorities in response to the GM LSIP and in particular, Wigan's growth priorities will aim to have a positive contribution on the following:</i></p> <p>Soft Skills for Work: Employers consistently highlight the importance of communication, time management, presentation skills, and workplace behaviours. These skills will be further embedded into curriculum delivery, careers education, and enrichment programmes, with enrichment being compulsory for Year 12 students for a minimum of two six-week blocks.</p>	<p>Building on existing delivery, the College will strengthen its integration of core soft skills in schemes of work (SOWs)—communication, time management, presentation skills, and professional behaviours—into curriculum, careers education, and enrichment activities.</p> <p>Complete teaching staff CPD – 'Sustainability in the Curriculum' and embed sustainability-themed units or projects into at least 80% of curriculum areas SOW across the College, aligning with Greater Manchester's 2038 Net Zero target.</p>	<p>December 2025.</p> <p>July 2026</p>

	<p>Digital fluency: increasingly essential across all industries. The College is dedicated to ensuring all learners develop practical digital skills, from using common applications to engaging with digital machinery.</p>	<p>Increase student participation in Big Green Week by 15% from the previous year.</p>	
	<p>Net Zero - The Greater Manchester LSIP highlights the urgent need to accelerate net zero skills development to meet the city region's ambitious 2038 net zero target. While there has been steady growth in net zero-related training across GM, the evidence suggests this must be significantly scaled up in the coming years to unlock further economic growth and drive sustainability-focused innovation. St John Rigby College is committed to embedding sustainability and climate literacy across all curriculum areas, ensuring that every learner is equipped with the awareness, knowledge, and behaviours required to contribute to a greener future. We have introduced a climate change plan and sustainability action group in 2024/2025.</p>	<p>Continue embedding digital fluency across all curriculum areas, ensuring all learners can confidently use common digital applications and tools relevant to their fields.</p>	<p>September 2025</p>
	<p>Leadership and management - Many employers highlighted the lack of adequate leadership management and supervisory skills both in their existing workforce and when recruiting for specific roles. Cross referencing with many of the 'soft skills' gaps highlighted, skill sets around time management, presentation skills and managing/motivating staff are missing in new recruits and existing staff.</p>	<p>Introduce the ICT AAQ as a course available to all learners, aimed at developing broad digital competencies that support wider curriculum pathways.</p>	
<p>Essential skills for work - The level of satisfactory literacy and numeracy levels coming into post 16 education is still a significant issue for many FE providers with a huge effort made and a lot of public money spent to ensure that shortfalls are made up. From our work with employers many still report issues around employees ability for example to write reports satisfactorily, writing good email communications to customers, basic numerical skills and a range of other work-related skill areas. Many employers see there being a set of essential work skills needed that takes core subjects such as Maths, English and Digital and a focus is made on the functional or application of these in a workplace setting.</p>	<p>Launch and actively promote the AAQ in Computing as an expansion of the College's digital offer, targeting students interested in deeper digital and technical skills.</p>		
<p>Sector Priorities in Wigan:</p> <p>Education – STEM and Digital teaching, supporting Teaching and Learning Health and Social Care – Nursing and in particular Mental Health Nursing is an urgent priority area Digital and Technology- Cloud Computing, Data Analytics and Emerging Technologies including AI are all high priority Professional Services – Sales and Business Development are high priority areas</p>	<p>Undertake a strategic review of the T Level in Digital to explore introducing a Cybersecurity specialism as an alternative route to better meet employer needs and student interests.</p>		
	<p>Explore wider digital skills development courses and projects accessible to all students, including enrichment activities and CPD opportunities for staff.</p>		
	<p>Complete a full relaunch and marketing campaign for the T</p>	<p>September to</p>	

	<p>Strategic Priorities from the GM LSIP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic IT/Digital Skills 2. Essential literacy, numeracy and digital skills 3. Leadership and Management 4. Net Zero/Sustainability 5. Basic, soft skills specific to the workplace 	<p>Level in Marketing/Digital/Legal Services, including updated promotional materials, school outreach, and employer engagement, to support first teaching in September 2026.</p> <p>Conduct a feasibility study on introducing a new Sustainability AAQ, including curriculum mapping, staffing needs, and employer alignment, in preparation for first teaching in September 2026.</p>	<p>December 2025,</p>
		<p>Strengthen employer engagement by increasing the number of employers offering work experience and industry placements from 105 to 130 by July 2026, ensuring alignment with the LSIP priority of structured employer encounters for all learners.</p>	<p>July 2026</p>
		<p>Increase the number of applications for T Level programmes in Digital, Health, Childcare, Legal Services, and Marketing by relaunching two of these routes with refreshed promotion and engagement strategies. The target is to secure a combined total of at least 100 applications across all five T Level courses</p>	<p>By January 2026</p>
<p>To reflect national skill priorities within</p>	<p>St John Rigby College is actively responding to these priorities by enhancing digital fluency, embedding sustainability across the curriculum, expanding</p>	<p><i>All targets related to the GM LSIP and the Local Authority Employment and Skills Strategy also align with national skills priorities. As above, but</i></p>	

<p>our curriculum design and delivery</p>	<p>technical provision in key sectors, and ensuring students develop both academic qualifications and practical skills to succeed in a fast-changing labour market.</p> <p>Strategic Priorities and National Sector Alignment The UK Government has identified ten national priority sectors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advanced Manufacturing 2. Health 3. Clean Energy Industries 4. Life Sciences 5. Professional and Business Services 6. Financial Services 7. Digital and Technologies 8. Creative Industries 9. Defence 10. Construction <p>The College's curriculum offer aligns to these national priorities in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health – Strong provision through BTEC Health and Social Care, A Levels in Sciences, and the new T Level in Health. Student progression into medicine and related fields is supported through the <i>Future Medics, Dentists, and Vets Career Academy</i>, along with meaningful employer engagement and structured placement opportunities. For example all learners studying the Extended Diploma in Health & Social Care received purposeful work placements, enabling them to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings. In addition to placements, students engaged in a range of enrichment activities designed to enhance their understanding of the sector, including a visit to Reflections Day Centre, a First Aid Awareness Course, and a trip to Liverpool Museum. These experiences are underpinned by strong employer partnerships and illustrate the College's commitment to developing students' confidence, compassion, and sector-specific skills. • Clean Energy Industries – Sustainability is embedded across the curriculum at St John Rigby College and promoted through a comprehensive enrichment programme. Initiatives such as Big Green Week and the student-led Climate Action Group play a central role in shaping the College's Climate Action Plan. These efforts reflect a whole-college commitment to environmental responsibility, aligning with national expectations for all educational settings to work towards net zero and climate resilience by 2025. Through curriculum integration, behaviour 	<p>with the addition of the national context—see below.</p>	
		<p>Secure the required number of industry placements for T Level students in Marketing, Digital, Legal Services, Childcare, and Health, based on confirmed application numbers for September 2026 starters. In accordance with new T Level delivery requirements, incorporating updated guidance on blended placements (including up to 40% remote working where appropriate).</p> <p>For the Health T Level specifically, ensure that at least 50% of placements are within</p>	<p>September 2026</p>

	<p>change, and student leadership, the College aims to foster lifelong environmental awareness and action. As part of its commitment to sustainability, St John Rigby College has hosted an annual Big Green Week, which raises awareness of environmental issues and encourages positive action across the college community. The Big Green Week, events included a lunchtime film screening of David Attenborough's A Life on Our Planet and a Meat-Free Monday in the campus restaurant. Students participated in the Great Big Green Walk, raising awareness of active travel and nature engagement. Complementing these events were weeklong sustainability actions including litter picks, morning prayers themed around stewardship, and the promotion of alternative transport. Together, these initiatives empowered students to engage with environmental issues in meaningful and practical ways. These events not only enhanced students' understanding of environmental challenges but also empowered them to contribute to real change within their community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Sciences – A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and the new Applied Medical Science (AAQ) support progression into medicine, nursing, biomedical science, and allied health degrees. These are further strengthened by relevant career academies and partnerships. For example, the science department works closely with Edge Hill University to provide learners experiences and insights into Biomedical Science and other Life science progression routes. • Professional and Business Services – A comprehensive suite of A Level and vocational courses in Business, Economics, and Criminology is supported by work experience and employer partnerships, including the <i>Future Entrepreneurs and Future Lawyers Career Academies</i>. Students have participated in a wide range of activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bar Mock Trial in Preston ○ A visit to UCLan University for Criminology students ○ Alton Towers as a business-based enrichment activity ○ Talks from solicitors and law professionals as part of team sessions ○ A visit to Holland Hall where an entrepreneur delivered a bespoke talk to Future Entrepreneurs. • Financial Services – A Levels in Business, Mathematics and Economics provide pathways into finance, banking, and accountancy. These are enhanced by employer input, such as Applied Finance, and co-curricular events within the <i>Future Entrepreneurs Career Academy</i>. For example students gained real-world business insights through employer-led 	healthcare settings that are route-specific.	
		Introduce the new AAQ in Music Production as part of the College's creative industries curriculum.	September 2025
		Complete a review of all small AAQs approved for funding with first teaching in 2026 and 2027, including but not limited to Mental Health & Wellbeing. (Please note that the 2025–26 offer already includes AAQs in Engineering, Medical Science, Health and Social Care, Childcare, ICT, and Computing).	March 2026 – depending on government funding information
		Where there is clear alignment with local, regional, and national skills priorities and the College has the necessary staffing, resources, and facilities, we will commit to introducing at least one new AAQ into the 2026–27 curriculum offer.	

	<p>enrichment, including visits to Holland Hall and talks from successful entrepreneurs like René Mallet. They developed key enterprise skills through practical challenges such as the Ice Lolly Sales project and an ongoing investment simulation. Additionally, learners enhanced their financial literacy and analytical skills through Excel training tailored to business applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and Technologies – The College offers a wide-ranging digital curriculum, including A Level Computer Science, AAQs in Computing and ICT, and the T Level in Digital. Digital enrichment opportunities include the <i>Future Technologists/Software Engineers Career Academy</i>. St John Rigby College is also proud to be a CyberFirst recognised institution, certified by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). This recognition underscores our commitment to delivering excellence in cyber security education and preparing students for careers in the digital and technology sectors. Recent initiatives include workshops with the School of Digital Arts (SODA) at Manchester Metropolitan University, supported by PlayStation Career Pathways, offering a summer programme for students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Students also accessed cybersecurity-focused opportunities through programmes such as the CyberFirst Bursary, CISCO Cyber Camps for young women, and the SANS UK national competition, where a student successfully progressed to the national finals in Birmingham. Additional enrichment included a Cyber Security and Investigations talk from Lancaster University, guest speakers from Bolton and Salford Universities, and student participation in the Cyber EPQ. These experiences illustrate the College's strong stakeholder partnerships and its commitment to developing digital confidence, technical knowledge, and progression pathways for learners in one of the UK's most in-demand growth sectors. Creative Industries – A rich offer in creative subjects includes A Levels in Media, Film, Fine Art, Photography, Acting, Music Production, and Music Performance, as well as the UAL Art and Design course. Creative enrichment is delivered through diverse opportunities, including the <i>Future Music Maestros and Future Artists Career Academies</i>. Defence – The BTEC Uniformed Protective Services Extended Diploma provides a progression route into the armed forces. UPS students benefit from a wide range of employer engagement, including careers talks and practical sessions from the Army, Navy, RAF, Police, Fire and Prison Services. Enrichment includes visits to HMS warships, Scotsman's Flash, and environmental activities like the Big Green Walk—developing sector knowledge, teamwork, and employability skills. Careers in defence and 		
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	public services are further supported through CEIAG and related courses in Criminology, Government and Politics, Engineering and Sciences.		
To provide outstanding inclusive education which enables comprehensive skill development across all courses including Technical, Vocational and A Level courses	<p>The curriculum consists of appropriate academic, technical and vocational qualifications at a range of levels. The Level 1 programme enables students to access vocational learning in a sixth form environment alongside development of skills for life and work. The Level 2 Transition programme affords students the opportunity to re-sit valuable GCSEs in Maths and English alongside developing their qualifications, self-confidence and maturity ahead of progressing to study a Level 3 Applied General programme, a T Level programme, an Apprenticeship or to go directly into employment with training. In the last academic year, 30% of learners successfully progressed from Level 2 to Level 3.</p> <p>Most students at the College follow Level 3 programmes of study as a pathway to their next stage of progression.</p> <p>The College offers a number of 'Career Academy' programmes which add depth to the curriculum offer. Students opting to engage with a Career Academy undertake this alongside their main programme. Career Academy programmes facilitate project based and work-related experiences on specific 'future' career routes. Through the Career Academy Programme, close relationships with industry experts not only develop students' knowledge and understanding but help to upskill teaching staff and provide employers with an awareness of educational language and assessment. This approach to contextualising learning has yielded significant success for these students.</p>	<p>Increase enrolment on the Level 1 and Level 2 Transition programmes by 10% compared to 2024/25 figures, through improved marketing of vocational pathways. Additionally, increase the progression rate from Level 2 to Level 3 courses at the College—including Applied Generals and T Levels to at least 60%, by strengthening academic support, CEIAG, and curriculum alignment.</p> <p>This will include preparing for the DfE's upcoming Level 2 qualification reforms, ensuring the College's offer remains relevant, high-quality, and responsive to both student needs and regional labour market priorities.</p>	September 2027
	<p>The College ensures that early university applicant students and those on the Honours Academy Programme are suitably supported through an extensive programme of experiences, skills development and support. The Gifted Student Programme forms the core of the Honours Academy experience. All Honours Academy students complete the Gifted Student Programme during Year 12. In addition, they can select from the following to personalise their Honours Academy experience: Debate Society; Advanced Mathematics and any Career Academy. In Year 13, Honours Academy students receive a continued tailored support package which develops critical and high order skills as they make their applications and prepare for university interviews and admission tests.</p> <p>The College continues to value learning outside of the classroom very highly. The College engages with a range of guest speakers throughout the year to ensure</p>	<p>Implement a standardised framework for capturing and applying employer and stakeholder input into curriculum design and delivery across all subject areas.</p> <p>This will include an annual curriculum review panel, involving relevant industry stakeholders, and the use of a curriculum consultation log to record and evidence impact. Progress will be reviewed termly,</p>	March 2026

	<p>students benefit from connections to industry, working professionals and specialists.</p> <p>The College supports progression by complementing its curriculum with opportunities for work experience. Many curriculum-based visits and visiting speakers take place to illustrate subject applications in the 'real' world and there is an equal emphasis on employment and apprenticeship opportunities as well as progression to HE within the careers guidance that students receive.</p> <p>While St John Rigby College demonstrates strong links with employers and stakeholders, Ofsted noted the need for greater consistency in how stakeholder input shapes curriculum design and delivery across all subject areas in their inspection in 2024.</p> <p>Each curriculum area is now expected to work with at least one external stakeholder to aid in the sequencing and design of the curriculum in ensuring that the development and contribution of sector relevant skills are planned for in curriculum delivery. This begins with the design of Year 10 events and school transition activities where there is a clear careers focus.</p>	<p>with the aim of achieving full coverage across departments.</p> <p>Expand the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) offer within Career Academy pathways, aiming to increase student participation by 20%, with a particular focus on supporting early university applicants and students in the Honours Academy Programme. EPQ content will be aligned to relevant themes to enhance subject depth, independent research skills, and progression outcomes.</p>	<p>September 2025</p>
	<p>Each curriculum department is now required to run at least one careers-related event each academic year and provide one meaningful encounter with an employer for all students. Given this, students on a 3 A Level/mixed programme will have a minimum of three employer encounters each year delivered through the curriculum. Students on a BTEC Extended Diploma will receive a minimum of two such encounters during their course. This allows students to see how their programme of study relates to a wide range of occupations and allows them to develop the skills needed for them to progress towards employment. During the meaningful encounter with an employer, the students are given the opportunity to ask questions that will be answered by the employer.</p> <p>The curriculum across College is extremely well planned and well taught as evidenced by our outstanding student outcomes. Students are challenged to develop high-level transferrable skills and these are mapped onto course schemes of work and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, time management, readiness to improve own performance • Career Pathways – encouraging the raising of aspirations and promoting access to subject specific career pathways 	<p>Introduce at least one new Career Academy pathway aligned with local and regional employment priorities i.e. Future Film/Media makers Academy and increase the percentage of Level 3 Year 12 students participating in Career Academies from 38% to 45% through targeted promotion, curriculum integration, and stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>September 2026</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team working – respecting others, coordinating, negotiating, persuading and contributing to discussions • Problem Solving – analysing facts and circumstances and applying creative thinking to develop solutions • Communication and Literacy – application of literacy and ability to produce clear, well-structured written work as well as oral literacy through listening, questioning, report writing and presenting, • Application of Numeracy – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and ability to apply to practical situations and scenarios • Application of Information technology – basic IT skills including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets and file management as well as effective use of the internet and remote learning platforms including MS Teams. <p>Enrichment attendance is closely monitored to ensure learners are actively participating in the wider college experience. Engagement levels are consistently high, with attendance rates averaging around 85%, reflecting strong student commitment and the value they place on these opportunities for personal and professional development.</p> <p>Engagement with universities starts for the whole of Year 12 in January when a number of universities are invited in to meet with each tutor group during the week to introduce HE. We also interact with HE when universities come into College during the Autumn Term to help students with their UCAS applications and personal statements. Curriculum areas have each built up strong links with different universities. We are encouraging departments to have close links with more than one provider.</p> <p>Students who are part of the Honours Academy are involved in trips to Oxbridge and students on Careers Academies have interactions with subject specific facilities in universities. All Year 12 students take part in a HE Fair in the Spring Term and visits to universities in the Summer Term. In addition, there is an Apprenticeship and HE Information Evening for parents/carers in the Summer Term.</p>		
To provide students with access to high quality information, advice and guidance as well as	Apprenticeship Club - This started in the summer of 2022 in recognition of the need to provide focused and specific careers advice and guidance for those seeking to move into employment and apprenticeships. Regular sessions run with some external input from employers and apprenticeship providers. The sessions	Leverage the College's recognition as a GM Good Employment Charter Member to strengthen non-HE progression pathways by:	2025/26 academic year

<p>support for non-HE pathways including Apprenticeships and further technical study</p>	<p>focus on providing students with the skills and knowledge to successfully progress onto apprenticeships and include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where and when students can search for and find apprenticeships • how to complete a successful application by identifying what employers are looking for • mock interviews – some of which take place in the employers' workplace • support in completing the application form and preparing for interview by identifying what the employer wants but also how to sell themselves. <p>In 2024/25, the Club brought together over 20 employers and training providers, offering insight, guidance, and direct support to students exploring apprenticeship pathways. Notable organisations involved included Asda, the National College for Digital Skills, Alliance Learning, Arnold Clark, MBDA, Sellafield Ltd, Vodafone, and the RAF, as well as key local stakeholders such as Wigan Council, GM Higher, and Greater Manchester Institute of Technology. Representatives from sectors including digital, engineering, healthcare, finance, and public services provided valuable employer input, mock interviews, and information sessions. This collaborative initiative enhances students' understanding of apprenticeships, demystifies application processes, and creates clear links between curriculum learning and real-world careers. The breadth and calibre of attendees highlight the College's strong partnerships and its proactive approach to preparing students for technical and vocational progression.</p> <p>Careers Fair - The College organises and contributes to two Careers Fairs each year, an Apprenticeship Fair and a HE Fair. The HE Fair is currently led by Wigan Council and a variety of post 16 providers are involved in the organisation and participation at this event. The Apprenticeship Fair was moved to the autumn term last year in recognition that several large employers start advertising roles from October. All students are able to attend this event and we also run this event into the evening to enable parents/carers to attend as we recognise the influence they have over their child's future career planning.</p> <p>Students at all levels benefit from the high-quality and unbiased careers information, advice and guidance they receive. In 2025 College was successful in its re-accreditation of the Matrix standard and maintained this quality standard award.</p> <p>The tutorial programme promotes opportunities for students to enhance their employability skills and the College hosts an annual Apprenticeship Fair and an annual Careers Lead Conference for all partner High School Careers Leads and local employer representatives.</p>	<p>Increasing employer encounters and talks related to Apprenticeships and technical careers by 25%,</p> <p>Expanding the Careers Team's resources to include a "Good Employer Network" list.</p> <p>Embedding at least three 'Good Employer' partner case studies into the Careers curriculum and tutorial programme to highlight quality employment pathways.</p>	
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	<p>The College invests in a yearly subscription for all students to Unifrog and this platform is used throughout the students' journey, including when students complete their personal statements. Unifrog's Careers Library and Know How Library contain enormous amounts of information about the full range of careers pathways and progression routes available. Here, students can also access up-to-date national and local Labour Market Information, including the most popular jobs within a career area and median salaries for any area of the UK. Students can access videos on Unifrog to support them in meeting the needs of employers, including health and safety in the workplace, and how to behave in the workplace.</p> <p>Support for students seeking employment continues to be developed with differentiated careers sessions for all pre-level 3 tutor groups. One-to-one career interviews take place and the College has an independent and very pro-active Careers Advisor whose focus in the College is on students requiring progression pathways other than the traditional Higher Education route. The Careers Advisor communicates job opportunities, higher apprenticeships and degree packages to specific cohorts of students that have been identified. The College is aware that there is a growing demand for progression pathways other than higher education and the continued development of this work remains a key focus, as evidenced by the Apprenticeship Club.</p>		
<p>To have key transferable skills development embedded into all curriculum and pastoral delivery</p>	<p>We recognise that, as a College with a high proportion of disadvantaged students, we have a clear duty to ensure our students are provided with the best possible opportunities to develop cultural capital, knowledge and key skills to enable them to be successful in their next steps. Our enrichment offer aims to enhance critical skills to support the development of the whole person, in line with our mission, and to meet the skills needs of employers. The range and organisation of these activities has been shaped by feedback from the Student Voice. Student feedback has resulted in a flexible approach with students being able to join activities throughout the year with "staggered" provision e.g., Duke of Edinburgh Award, An Introduction to Yoga, Film Club, Latin for Beginners, British Sign Language, a large and highly successful College production and the student run "open-mic" Thursday music and performing arts lunchtime concerts.</p> <p>The College's Values for Living programme is studied by all students in College and is designed to support personal reflection and development so that students have an improved sense of self-esteem and self-worth. All students participate in the programme and it is structured to differentiate between Level 1, Level 2 and</p>	<p>Explore and apply for external funding opportunities such as the Turing Scheme to support curriculum-linked trips and skills enhancement activities. The aim is to secure funding to enable one international opportunity for disadvantaged or underrepresented learners by December 2027, helping to widen participation and develop global, cultural, and employability skills.</p> <p>By July 2025, deliver a focused staff development INSET aimed at embedding independence-building strategies into</p>	<p>2026/27 academic year</p> <p>2025/26 academic year</p>

	<p>Level 3 students. It enables all students to explore their own faith and beliefs as well as those of others. The programme considers aspects such as equality, discrimination, healthy relationships, tolerance, forgiveness and other issues central to the College's mission. It addresses current concerns including mental health, and moderate and extreme views within religion and politics. The programme also enables the development of some important transferrable skills including literacy, teamwork, communication, articulating opinions, empathy, debate and discussion and creativity.</p> <p>As part of the tutorial programme, students have tutorial sessions including: How to Study, e-learning, Unifrog, Reviews, CV Writing, Employability, Careers Fair Prep, Careers Fair, What's My Vision? and Apply 2025 (Career Options, UCAS, Personal Statement, Work Experience), and weekly notices in the student SJR Weekly Newsletter which includes careers-based opportunities and Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Over the past few years, the College has developed its bespoke 'ASPIRE' programme for students. This programme is embedded into tutorial and curriculum schemes of work and aims to develop student confidence, independence and resilience alongside deepening understanding of successful study habits. The shared language provides a connection between curriculum and pastoral and provides a framework for skills development at sixth form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance – We always ensure that in College there is a celebration and praise of positive attendance. We share with students the direct impact of absence on their achievement using College and national data. • Study Skills – The section on study skills provides College with the opportunity to share strategies and systems that students can put in place to help themselves to achieve. • Progress – Students are required to monitor and take responsibility for their own progress over time. • Independence – Here we develop students' approach to their studies and independence is a skill that is developed over time. • Resilience – This section helps students to develop a growth mindset and also ensures that students fully utilise feedback and learn from mistakes in order to push on with improvements in progress. • Ememployability – Here we ensure that students understand the skills they are gaining which can be transferable to career pathways and that they have a good awareness of the different career opportunities available to them. 	<p>curriculum delivery, using the i270 framework as a guiding tool. This will support the planning and implementation of schemes of work (SOW) for the 2025/26 academic year, ensuring all departments explicitly promote the development of independent learning skills. The impact will be monitored through curriculum audits and learner feedback, with the goal of improving learner autonomy and readiness for progression.</p>	
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[College Website](#)

[GM LSIP](#)

[College Inspection Report](#)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

On behalf of St John Rigby College, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan as set out above reflects the agreed statement of purpose and aims and objectives as approved by the Full Governing Body at a meeting held on Wednesday 2nd July 2025.

This plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the next Academic year and can be accessed via the College website's 'Policy' section.

GLOSSARY

GMLPN – Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network

GVA – Gross Value Added

GMCC – Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

LSIP – Local Skills Improvement Plan

LSOA - Lower-layer Super Output Area - small geographical areas used by the UK government and Office for National Statistics (ONS) for reporting local data.