



Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2017 – 2018

1. Introduction

The report demonstrates how the College is meeting the public sector general and specific equality duties, and provides evidence that we show due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Fostering good relations between different groups;
- Advancing equality of opportunity.

2. Equality priorities

This section of the report provides a summary of the activities in support of the College's equality objectives and the effectiveness of the implementation of our equality and diversity policies.

Disability

The achievement of students with a declared disability is above the national rate for this group of students (by 4.1%). In comparison to the overall College achievement, the gap for students with a declared disability, learning difficulty or health condition is 2.8% (85.8% V 88.6%). The achievement rate for High Needs Students was lower by 6.3% compared with the overall College achievement (88.6%).

The staff profile in terms of declared disability is consistent with the profile of the Further Education sector. Most of the College's employees with a declared disability are achieving performance grades 1 and 2.

Ethnicity

The demographic profile of our students is broadly similar to the characteristics of the local population, which demonstrates the College's commitment to provide an inclusive learning environment and to serve the needs of the local communities. The overall achievement gap between groups of students for ethnicity is closing compared to the results in 2016/17 (for Bedford 17.8% and for Tresham 22.6%). Achievement gaps exist for a small number of ethnicities in comparison to the College outcomes, and for two groups in comparison to the National Rates for ethnicities e.g. Bangladeshi (by 1.4%) and dual heritage White and Black African (by 1.5%).

Our staff ethnic profile is more diverse than the Further Education sector and broadly similar to the ethnic profile of our student population. Within the overall staff headcount, there is under-representation of BAME staff in senior management positions.

Gender

There are no achievement gaps by gender, which is an improvement from the previous year and reflects the progress in traditionally male subject areas such as Construction. By provision, there were more women on Further Education programmes and considerably more men in apprenticeships, which reflects the low numbers of females in the biggest sectors – engineering and construction.

For staff, the gender mix is similar to the Further Education sector as a whole with more female than male staff. The gender pay gap (in favour of men) for Bedford College (pre-merger) was smaller than the average for the Further Education sector.

Other protected characteristics

The learners' views, which are monitored by a range of protected characteristics through college-wide learner surveys, indicate that overall the learners are being treated with dignity and respect while at College. An area for development is the analysis of bullying incidents by protected characteristics.

Regarding staff, the monitoring of recruitment, staff's profile and staff's views in terms of a wider range of protected characteristics is an area for development.

Performance against our equality priorities

Priority 1: To develop an effective and diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve

Action 1: We have rolled out LGBT Awareness training for all staff. Our governors completed online learning module on Equality and Diversity and British Values (refresher).

Action 2: We need to record and monitor our staff data in relation to the range of protected characteristics (i.e. religion, sexual orientation, and transgender) consistently.

Action 3: We have completed the gender-pay audit within timescale.

Action 4: We have collated staff's views (via the VIRTUAL staff focus group) in two areas: a) Multi-faith facilities (Dec 2017) and b) LGBT (Mar 2018), and have identified actions for improvement.

Priority 2: To integrate the promotion of equality and diversity, and the elimination of discrimination and harassment in our working practices

Action 1: We have improved the following areas of our College accommodation: a) lifts replacement in Tower block (Cauldwell Street); and b) a female toilet in engineering workshop (Brunel Road). We have made plans to refurbish all Reflection Rooms.

Action 2: We have taken a number of steps to ensure the embedding of equality impact assessment (EIA) in college-wide policies and procedures: a) our senior management team had EIA refresher; and b) EIA guidance and all policy EIAs are available on the staff intranet. As a result of EIAs, we have implemented the following changes: a) to monitor students' complaints in relation to protected characteristics; b) to incorporate inclusion and diversity questions in student focus groups; c) to make reasonable adjustments in disciplinary meetings for students with learning difficulties/disabilities; and d) to ensure that individual circumstances including disability in any student refused progression from FE to HE are considered by a panel of a Director and a Vice Principal.

Action 3: We have developed a good understanding of our learners' experience in relation to equality factors through the following: a) We monitor the complaints on 'Have your say' by equalities; b) We have gathered feedback from student focus groups on LGBT, disability and BAME; and c) We have analysed First Impressions and Spring student surveys for 'feeling safe' and 'being treated fairly and with respect' for the protected characteristics. As a result of the analysis, we have identified the following areas for improvement: to monitor all reported bullying incidents by protected characteristics; and to improve the professional development of staff in the areas of mental health and challenging inappropriate language.

Action 4: We have taken a number of steps in the area of making proactive arrangements to accommodate users with accessibility needs in college events: a) We have updated the campus maps to show the access parking and ramps;

b) We have updated the visitor booking procedure; and c) We have set up a room booking accessibility reminder.

Priority 3: To embed fully equality and diversity in teaching, learning, assessment, tutorials and enrichment activities, and maintain high achievement of all students

Action 1: Our learners have opportunities to develop their understanding of inclusion and diversity, and British values, in their induction, tutorials and enrichment activities. Our internal learner audits show an increase in learners' understanding of Prevent and British values.

Action 2: We use well the evidence from our walkthroughs and observations of teaching and learning to identify best practice in embedding of Equality and Diversity and British values in curriculum areas. The observed sessions in which Equality and Diversity was identified as strength have increased in comparison to last year's result (best practice in 2016/17 was 18% for Bedford, and in 2017/18 - 32.5% for Bedford College Group).

Action 3: We have established the in-year monitoring of retention and predicted achievement by equality factors at top level (classroom based) for ethnicity, gender, disability and for vulnerable groups.

Priority 4: To incorporate fully equality and diversity in our apprenticeship and work placement provision

Action 1: We need to improve the monitoring of apprentices' recruitment by gender, ethnicity and disability (overall and in the biggest sectors) to enable us to address potential disparities. The pre-interview support for apprenticeship candidates is embedded well in our recruitment process.

Action 2: We need to improve the in-year monitoring of apprentices' retention and predicted achievement by equality factors. The apprentices' sign-up process across the College Group has been standardised to improve the identification of additional learning support needs.

Action 3: We have engaged employers in the Foundation Department by launching the Disability Confident Level 1 accreditation with the aim to increase paid employment or long-term placements for students in the department. Ten employers signed up for the accreditation (7 charities and 3 commercial employers, two of which are paid placements). Overall, 14 Foundation students gained paid employment in 2017-18.

3. Embedding equality and diversity into the College

Our main documents for driving improvements are:

- Single Equality Scheme that sets out the College's equality priorities and the manner in which it assesses its performance in this area;
- Single Equality Scheme Action Plan;
- Self-Assessment Reports and Quality Improvement Plans.

The Governing body and the Executive team monitor the College's delivery against the priorities in the Single Equality Scheme. The College has a cross-college Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee chaired by the Vice Principal (Quality) to hold managers to account for performance against the College's equality priorities. Two Diversity Groups (Bedford and Tresham) with representatives from staff and students support the Committee. A VIRTUAL staff focus group continues to be an additional forum for engaging with staff on inclusion and diversity topics via short online surveys.

This year we collated staff's views on the topics of the multi-faith facilities in the college and LGBT issues, and as a result, we are planning to improve the support in these areas. We have developed a Religion and Belief policy and a Trans policy with guidance for staff on supporting a trans student or a student who is transitioning. This year we have introduced a staff award Inclusion Champion to recognise outstanding individuals who have made a real difference in the area of inclusion and diversity.

The College provides training opportunities and provision for staff development with a focus on inclusion and diversity. Equality and diversity related training and support have been tailored to the needs of groups of staff, for instance, for new members of staff ('Positive about Equality and Diversity'), for Personal Tutors (in Tutor Essentials), for new teachers (in Teacher Toolkit), for Apprenticeship delivery team, for Observers of teaching and learning, and for curriculum teams (in Golden Hour). The monthly diversity calendar on the staff intranet and in the staff newsletter reminds staff of key diversity dates and disseminates links to relevant resources and news articles. The feedback from staff training (verbal, evaluation forms and as recorded on Moodle) indicates that the resources and professional development with a focus on E&D has had a positive impact on teachers' confidence and awareness for inclusive teaching practice and embedding of E&D. The evidence from observations of teaching and learning show that there has been an increase in the sessions in which equality and diversity have been identified as strength (E&D best practice in 2016/17 for Bedford was 18%, and in 2017/18 for Bedford College Group - 32%). This year the College is Stonewall school champion and as part of its commitment to be an inclusive LGBT education provider we are delivering a mandatory LGBT awareness training for all staff. Our governors benefited from a custom-made equality and diversity online module and case study discussion.

Our students have opportunities to develop their understanding of diversity and inclusion issues in a complex multi-cultural society. Our learners get familiar with Equality and diversity, British values, Prevent and safeguarding at their induction and in the tutorial programme. The Fresher's Fairs at all campuses offer students the opportunity to obtain health and well-being information, discover volunteering opportunities and sign up to the enrichment clubs and societies. Key dates from the diversity calendar were celebrated through enhancement activities, displays and curriculum projects across the College e.g. Black history month, LGBT history month, women's international day, autism and deaf awareness weeks, mental health awareness, and safer internet day. The support and well-

being groups such as The Q Agenda (LGBTQIA), Transform (Trans support) and the student-led Black Culture club had weekly meetings. The LGBTQIA+ group produced a research report into LGBT+ young people's access and the barriers to sport activities, which was presented at a national conference and shared with partner Colleges. The Sports England funded a project focusing on mental health, which included 55 sessions with over 330 students across the College Group. The tutorial sessions are adapted to suit individual departments, for instance, the Creative Arts students had a CAMHS speaker with the aim to address students' mental health concerns.

Equality and diversity projects were completed in individual subject areas, such as The Elephant in the Closet, an LGBTQ+ installation by Production Arts Level 3 students and were visited by approximately 300 people that included students, staff, family and friends, and people from the wider community. The Student Participation team organised activities for students with inclusion and diversity themes, including working with external partners such as Canine Partners, Mind, The Samaritans, Sight Concern, Young Carers, and Headway. Deaf students took part in a range of activities to raise the profile of Deaf people during Deaf awareness week in May, for instance, Deaf students worked with staff in local coffee shops to introduce signing to staff and customers, and met with local MPs to discuss difficulties experienced by Deaf people in everyday life. The 'Hear me out' conference, which was attended by young people from the College, mainstream and specialist schools from across the local area, covered topics such as understanding your EHCP and Access to Work/support from your Job Centre. The Equality and Diversity month provided students with opportunities to develop their understanding of diversity and to celebrate the cultures and a wide range of backgrounds represented in the College and the local community. Three cross-college audits of students' understanding of British Values, Prevent and safeguarding showed improvement in students' awareness and understanding of the core values of British society, radicalisation, protecting oneself and available support.