

### **SECTION A Context**

A.1 The Equality & Diversity lead in College is the Assistant Principal, Quality Improvement who chairs a Committee which meets three times a year and whose membership includes a governor, principalship, teaching and support staff and two student representatives. Minutes from these meetings and any key reports are discussed and policies impact assessed by the College Leadership team. The Curriculum & Quality Committee of governors also receive these documents. Equality and Diversity and student issues are standing items at the weekly Curriculum Operational Group meeting.

A.2 This report summarises the key areas of work considered by the Committee in 2015-16 and assesses the impact of this on the life of the College, the work of our staff and the achievements of our students.

### **SECTION B The College**

B.1 The Equality & Diversity Policy was significantly revised in 2015-16 to ensure that it aligned fully with the Equality Act 2010 and our new Prevent duties including the promotion of British values. A key priority for staff development this year was to ensure that all staff were fully trained in these new legal duties and felt confident discussing equality and diversity issues, including British values with students. Our Public Sector Equality Objectives for 2016 to 2020 were established and mapped across to the College's strategic priorities and to our new Mission Statement.

B.2 The College consulted staff and students during the year on the development of a new Mission Statement. This was built around three key words which capture our commitment to equality, fairness and opportunity. "Aspire, Invest, Respect" have been extensively used with students during enrolment and induction, by the Principal and Academic Coaches, to emphasise the core values of the College, and they have been integrated into the College Enrolment Contract so that all students have specifically and formally committed themselves to this culture. This approach has also informed the development of the College's position on the national Prevent agenda which is set out in the position statement "Promoting Resilience: Preventing Vulnerability". Again all staff were consulted on the development of this statement, and it strongly reflects a methodology for Prevent rooted in a positive and empowering E&D approach.

B.3 Whole College events for prospective students and their parents/carers are important opportunities to showcase our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Visitors are overwhelmingly positive in their evaluations, with the friendly and warm welcome received from staff and students frequently commented upon. The College seeks to recruit student guides and subject ambassadors who reflect the diversity of the study body.

B.4 Teams continued to evaluate their student results against national averages where these exist, and identify any achievements gaps. Teams are held to account through the main Quality and Exams meetings at the start of the academic year and their progress in closing any gaps is monitored by the leadership team and governors. A new Aspire wheel which sets out the key areas of focus, including equality and diversity, was introduced to teams and used as a quality improvement tool in Health Check meetings throughout the year. 2016-2017 plans to close any performance gaps identified through this process will be brought to the Equality & Diversity Committee for further scrutiny.

B.5 Planning for Learning and Lesson Observation guidance were updated this year to ensure that teachers take opportunities to explore equality and diversity issues when they arise in lessons.

B.6 The College supports staff and students who wish have time with their families to celebrate important religious events and endeavours to make reasonable adjustments wherever possible. This year the internal examinations coincided with Ramadan. The College spoke to staff and looked to the awarding bodies for guidance. As a result, internal exams for subjects with large cohorts were moved into the morning sessions and the afternoon exam sessions were brought forward.

B.7 The College was successful in its bid for funding from the Government for improvements to the building condition via the Condition Improvement Fund. The monies granted will be used to update the fire alarm system in Blythe, Brueton and the Sports Hall during 2016-17 taking into account the requirement to meet the needs of all members of the College community including visitors.

## **SECTION C Staff**

### Staff Profile

C.1 The College applies its Equality & Diversity Policy in all areas in the employment process including the recruitment of new staff. Copies of the policy are available to applicants for employment at the College and all advertising promotes the College's commitment. We are a disability symbol employer and all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for a post will be offered an interview. We will endeavour, when vacancies arise, to recruit suitably qualified staff and governors

who better reflect the diversity of the College's student population with regard to protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

C.2 In 2015-16 the number of staff employed at the College was approximately 190, of which about 51% of staff were on part-time contracts. There were significantly more female members of staff than males. The majority of female staff were employed on a part-time basis whereas the majority of male staff are employed in a full time capacity. The College offers a greater amount of flexibility to staff due to changes in legislation and our policies, including support for those who wish to phase their retirement and are therefore recorded as part time. We have also advertised for more part-time staff than full-time in recent years. Our new timetable which incorporates half day teaching blocks now makes it possible for part-time staff to work elsewhere alongside their contact here.

C.3 The age profile of staff overall is increasing each year, reflected in the main in the low turnover of staff at the College. There is a spread in the age of staff from 18 to over 65.

C.4 18% of staff at the College in 2015-16 were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), which is significantly higher than the Borough and the national average of teachers in England. However, it is well below the diversity amongst our students. Around 15% of our staff have declared a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

### Staff Development and Training

C.5 The first staff development day in October 2015 was a compulsory day for all staff, including cleaning, catering, security and sessional staff, and focused on the College's new Prevent duty which requires us to consider the vulnerabilities of students with protected characteristics being drawn into terrorism. The day started with two key note speakers who shared their personal journeys as mentor and mentee. The key note address provoked strong responses from staff. Many described this session as 'excellent' and 'thought provoking'; however some staff felt uncomfortable with the content presented and a few questioned whether all of the content was relevant to the Prevent agenda.

C.6 The second staff development day in January 2016 built on the previous training day, introducing another aspect of our Prevent duty which requires us to exemplify British values of democracy, individual freedom, respect and the rule of law in our work with students. The first part of the morning was led by members from the Equality & Diversity Committee who highlighted the opportunities to explore equality and diversity issues and promote British values in lessons. A similar session was attended by support staff, looking at these values across the whole College.

C.7 All curriculum teams, coaches and the Student Development Officers received a Diversity calendar for their workrooms. Teachers and Coaches also completed an activity on promoting British values through their work with students and teachers updated their schemes of work in light of the morning activities.

C.8 The third staff development day focused on the importance of literacy, in particular vocabulary building and the 'two tier language' needed for writing, and was well received by staff; this year a small group of staff are completing two different action research projects on this theme. This day also included 'Nano' presentations from a selection of curriculum areas, sharing their work on equality and diversity; this led to a market stall event over lunch in which all curriculum teams displayed examples of equality and diversity and/or British values in their curriculum. Support and academic coaching staff who had requested more training on supporting our Islamic students also benefited from an introductory session on Islam from the Chair of the Academy Council at Lyndon School.

C.9 The final staff development day in July 2016 involved compulsory refresher training for all staff: Level 1 Safeguarding and Prevent training, where issues such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) were addressed. Staff also received updates on the new Public Sector Equality Objectives and the SEND agenda, including 'Quality First' teaching.

C.10 Supporting students with mental health issues featured as a priority for the College. A number of teaching and coaching staff benefited from in-house training, led by one of our College counsellors and the Study Plus Co-ordinator, on supporting students with mental health issues, and several staff attended the sessions provided as part of the CENBASE joint training day in June. A training session for staff on promoting their own positive mental health and well-being from an external training provider was also well received.

C.11 To support our work with transgender students, a member of the Student Development team attended a transgender and identity awareness day in May at a training provider in the East Midlands. This year the organisation is offering a new Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBT) Network for staff which we will be participating in.

C.12 In the summer term two members of the College Leadership team visited Franklin College to investigate the Investors in Diversity award and discuss their work on equality and diversity. As a result of the visit a number of initiatives have been introduced and will be reviewed by the Committee in 2016-17. The College has also decided to work with the National Centre for Diversity towards achieving their award by 2018.

## SECTION D Students

### Student Cohort

D.1 Overall there were slightly more female than male students enrolled in the College in 2015-16. However, this was not the situation on BTEC courses with a majority of male students.

D.2 The College remained very diverse in terms of ethnicity, school background and postcode. Around 52% of students described themselves as White British, White Irish or White (other), around 3% less in 2014-15. Approximately 23% of students live in B10-B15 postcodes whilst 32% of students come from B90-B94 areas.

D.3 Around 20% of students received the bursary and/or free meals at the start of the academic year and this figure remained steady at 21% by March 2015. Priority for bursary fund was given to vulnerable students – those in care, care leavers, students living independently and in receipt of Income Support, disabled students in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and students registered as carers. In addition, discretionary awards were made to students whose total household income fell below a threshold of £20,000 per annum. The levels of award were proportionate to the levels of income. Additional emergency awards were made during the year to students in crisis as a result of referrals from staff.

D.4 9% of students were initially identified with additional learning support needs at the start of the academic year; however this figure increased to just fewer than 13% by March 2016. This increase reflects that the fact that some students choose to inform us after they have enrolled and also staff are proactive in referring students to the team if they suspect they may be a need which as yet has not been identified.

### Student Societies and Groups

D.6 The Student Development Officers promote student societies and groups to new students during our Welcome to College day in the summer term and as part of a Fresher's event during induction in the autumn. A range of societies have continued to flourish; this report highlights just a few.

D.7 Student **Health Ambassadors** who are recruited by the Student Development Co-ordinator have the opportunity to work with a range of external agencies and providers who promote the health and wellbeing of young people. This group of students are recruited from a range of A level and BTEC backgrounds, including those from the BTEC health and social care course. Some Health Ambassadors are active members of the local NHS partnerships forum, ensuring that the views of young people are listened to. They also received training on a range of issues, for

example from Loudmouth, a visiting theatre company, who delivered a performance on Teenage Partner Abuse and Urban Heard, a health education team facilitating Mental Health awareness and promoting opportunities for paid work with the organisation. Health Ambassadors are trained to provide peer education and awareness raising campaigns to fellow students, for example, they used what they learnt from the Loudmouth performance as motivation for health campaigns of their own throughout the year, and they worked with Urban Heard to talk with students about mental health issues during the mental health awareness week in May.

D.8 Over 20 students joined the **LGBT society** this year. A thriving group, this student case study illustrates the benefits to students and importance of the group in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment:

“I joined because I thought it would be nice to meet new people and be open about myself with others that are more or less in the same position as me. From being in the society, I have become more confident with myself when I’m around new people and proud of my sexuality because I’m not the only one. I would definitely recommend The LGBT to others because everyone is really friendly, it’s easy to make friends and we always have a lot of fun talking to each other about different things.”

D.9 The **Gender Equality Society** and the **Debating Society** were set up as a result of student interest. An ex-student and graduate from Kent University came in to talk about the issues in Syria; he tackled the pros of intervention in Syria and the contrasting views held by the ‘Stop the War Coalition’, showing the debating society members both sides of the argument.

D.10 The **Islamic Society** and the **Christian Union** group proved popular with students this year. Supported by staff and two external volunteers, these groups met regularly for prayer and worship. The student leaders of both societies each attended a meeting of the other society and discussed differences and similarities between their religions.

D.11 Students have demonstrated their commitment to supporting communities through their charitable fundraising including the ‘big sleep out’ in support of St Basils, a local charity which aims to prevent youth homelessness by providing support and accommodation. Other fundraising work included:

- Cakes sales in support the education of young children in a Gambian school
- Friday pyjama day in aid of St Mary’s Hospice, Birmingham
- Operation Christmas Child, filling 13 boxes with children’s gifts toys and toiletries for Samaritans Purse-Operation Christmas Child.
- ‘Wear a Christmas jumper’ day to raise funds for the ‘Text Santa’ campaign
- The Islamic Society bake sale for Saba Relief

- Funds raised for the Young Carers centre from a loose change collection

D.12 In February 150 students voted for candidates to the Youth Parliament and on the issues they believed were the most important for elected members to campaign on. The choice of issues was: sexting, child sexual exploitation, cyber bullying, radicalisation, intervention with the police, addition and autism. Students at this College voted for autism as the key campaigning issue.

D.13 As a result of student and staff voice, the washing facilities in the men's toilets in Meriden building used before prayer were improved. Participation in Friday prayers is growing and remains popular. We will need to keep this provision under review so that we can continue to maintain this service to staff and students.

### Praise

D.14 The number of commendations awarded in 2014-15 showed a further increase on previous years. In terms of gender, slightly more females than males received commendations. White British students were more likely to receive a commendation although the gap narrowed. The variation between subject teams in awarding commendations was the most striking feature of the report and is an area for improvement in teams' developmental plans. The 2015-16 report will come to the Equality and Diversity Committee in November 2016.

D.15 Further analysis showed that there was a propensity by staff to award cups and commendations to students in the highest GCSE band. This was raised at a staff briefing and staff were encouraged to reward effort as well as performance. We will continue to monitor this through the Quality Health Check meetings.

### Student Destinations

D.16 The number of students progressing onto positive destinations from the College remains incredibly strong, including on to Higher Education despite increases in student costs. We are very successful in getting our students into university as a result of the enriched learning opportunities we provide whilst they are with us and the tremendous amount of personalised guidance and support we offer. In 2015, compared to national statistics, we have a higher percentage of successful students placed in Higher Education; however although a small cohort of students, we recognise that more work is required to support our Black Caribbean students, particularly those on BTEC courses.

D.18 The College works hard to ensure that students from widening participation postcodes access the support arrangements available to them. The College is involved in all three locally available access schemes: the A2B scheme at

Birmingham University, Leap from Leicester University, and the Aston scheme. In 2015, 100 students applied through these schemes and approximately a third of those students were successful.

D.19 In terms of gender, in 2015 there was a slight difference in favour of the number of female students securing places in Higher Education, with six more female students securing university places. This slight difference reflects the trend seen over the last four years.

D.20 A full report on student destinations in 2016 will be presented to the Committee in January 2017. However, it is worth noting the comprehensive support and guidance given to a large number of students aspiring for the most competitive of courses and universities including Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Vet Science. This support includes:

- Specialist Academies offering a range of tailored activities and opportunities such as the Pre-Medical School and the Shakespeare Academy
- A Gifted and Talented programme and summer school including visits to Oxford and Cambridge
- Individual guidance and support from the Principal, Vice-Principal and Assistant Principal including support on personal statements, course and university choices, preparation for university tests and practice interviews
- Meetings for parents and carers.

D.21 In August 2016, 12 students gained places on Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine degree courses with a 50:50 split in terms of gender. In terms of ethnicity, 58% of students were White British, with 42% of students of Asian heritage. In terms of wider participation, two students come from B10-B15 postcodes, three students come from B25-B29 postcodes, three students come from B30-B39 postcodes and four students come from B90-B94 postcodes. We are incredibly successful in supporting our students onto a range of prestigious wider medically related degree courses irrespective of gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background.

**Sonia Wood**

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**November 2016**

**For website**