

SECTION A: Context

A.1 The Equality & Diversity lead in College is an Assistant Principal who chairs a Committee that meets three times a year. Membership includes Principalship, teaching and support staff and up to two student representatives. Minutes from these meetings and any key reports are discussed and policies impact assessed by the Senior Leadership Team. Equality and Diversity and student issues are standing items at the weekly Senior Leadership Team meeting. The Chair of the committee also sits on the Summit Learning Trust's Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Steering Group.

A.2 This report summarises the key areas of work considered by the Committee in 2020-21 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 College is part of Summit Learning Trust. It is one of the largest level 3 education only Sixth Form Colleges in the region and provides A Level and level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma courses predominantly to students from Solihull and Birmingham.

B.2 The College's Mission is built around three key words, which capture our commitment to equality, fairness and opportunity, "Aspire, Invest, Respect". The Principal and Academic Coaches use the College's Mission with students during enrolment and induction, to emphasise the core values of the College. So that all students have specifically and formally committed themselves to this culture, the core values are also written into the Enrolment Contract. This approach also informs the No Platform policy and the College's position on the national Prevent agenda, which is set out in the position statement "Promoting Resilience: Preventing Vulnerability". This statement reflects a methodology for Prevent rooted in a positive and empowering Equality and Diversity approach.

B.3 The College's Equality & Diversity Policy aligns fully with the Equality Act 2010 and our Prevent duties including the promotion of British Values. Our Public Sector Equality Objectives for 2020 to 2024 map across to the College's strategic priorities and to our Mission Statement and that of the Trust.

B.4 The College was inspected by Ofsted in February 2020. In their report, Inspectors commented that students 'rightly feel valued and well supported by teachers in class. Students develop positive attitudes towards their learning. They work within a calm environment where they feel safe. They access good learning resources. Students feel that if they have any concerns, these will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly by staff'.

The report also acknowledged the improvements since the last inspection: 'Leaders have raised staff expectations of students. Consequently, staff are ambitious for students and ensure that they have access to a challenging curriculum. The majority of students participate in a broad enrichment programme which supports them in developing their broader skills'.

B.5 An Anti-Racism Group was established during the year. The group is an independent steering group which will advise and make recommendations to SLT on Anti-Racism policy, structure, process and training. The Chair of the group sits on the Equality and Diversity Committee and provides updates on actions to the committee.

B.6 The college Health & Wellbeing Group was fully established this academic year. A number of staff have been trained as staff Mental Health First Aiders. Two members of the group also sit on the Trust Health and Wellbeing Board.

B.7 A new role was created for a Mental Health Lead to work both proactively and reactively with students supporting concerns relating to mental health to start in September 2021.

B.8 A strategic review of enrichment was undertaken with enrichments mapped against the NHS Five Strands for Wellbeing. A number of new enrichments are planned for September 2021, several with a specific E&D focus such as the STEM Programme and Mentors in Violence Protection.

B.9 The College continues to monitor and close the gap between different student groups.

B.10 The College was successfully reaccredited with the Investors in Diversity Award from the National Centre for Diversity (NCFD) in December 2019. The reaccreditation process will commence at the start of the 2021-22 academic year.

B.11 The College holds British Dyslexia Association's Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark which recognises the College's dyslexia-friendly practice. The College will have to apply for re-accreditation in the 2021-22 academic year.

B.12 The Student Development Officers have continued to help raise awareness of Equality issues and celebrate Diversity across the college including in the Refectory and the plasma screens around College.

B.13 Whole College events for prospective students and their parents/carers are important opportunities to highlight our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The College seeks to recruit student guides and subject ambassadors who reflect the diversity of the study body to support these events. Visitors are overwhelmingly positive in their evaluations, with frequent comments made about the friendly and warm welcome received from staff and students. We endeavour to meet the needs of our diverse student body and have formalised arrangements to provide prayer facilities for visitors including parents and carers.

B.14 The College's 'Planning for Progress' guidance encourages teachers to take opportunities to explore equality and diversity issues when they arise in lessons so that cross college themes including E&D are explicitly and consistently signposted by all curriculum teams.

B.15 Teams continue to evaluate their student results to identify any performance gaps. Key assessments give both students and teams valuable information about progress and allow subject teams to identify areas for development and take action.

B.16 The College timetable includes scheduled intervention sessions. This dedicated time has allowed teachers to spend time with students to close gaps at an individual or small group level.

B.17 The Academic Coaching programme was updated to include sessions on diversity, consent and additional sessions on mental health.

B.18 Students have access to a confidential health advice and support via Chat Health, an anonymous text service run by the school nursing team.

B.19 The College continues to support staff and students who wish to have time with their families to celebrate important religious events and endeavours to make reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

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 There are more female members of staff than male. The majority of female staff are employed on a part-time basis whereas the majority of male staff are employed in a full-time capacity.

C.3 The age profile of staff overall is about the same each year and there is a spread in the age of staff from 18 to over 65.

C.4 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.

Staff Development and Training

C.5 Work in partnership with Diverse Educators for the academic year started for E&D training. Two members of SLT were part of DEI Leadership training; one member of SLT received one to one coaching; and other staff across college were part of facilitated coaching groups with colleagues from across the Trust focussing on a range of E&D aspects.

C.6 A Trust training day 'Unity in Diversity' was held in April. Staff could choose two of ten workshops and there were two keynotes: Understanding Intersectionality and Challenging Ableism.

C.7 Training was open to staff to join through the Trust Professional Learning Institute.

C.8 SLT and students met with an anti-racism expert from the University of Birmingham to further enhance the momentum we are seeking to generate in moving towards becoming an anti-racist College.

SECTION D Students

Student Cohort

D.1 The number of students has increased by approximately 500 since 2019 when the College designation changed from Requires Improvement to Good.

D.2 The number of students from Birmingham postcodes has increased slightly to 71% of cohort, with 27.5% coming from Solihull postcodes.

D.3 There are slightly more male students than female students – 52% vs 48%.

D.4 The College continues to have a diverse population in terms of ethnicity. The single largest student group remains White British followed by students from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African heritage.

D.5 The number of students in receipt of bursary and/or free meals saw no significant change in 2020-21. Priority for bursary fund is 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 are made to students whose total household income fell below a threshold. Additional emergency awards were made during the year to students in crisis after referrals from staff.

D.6 Students with additional learning needs continue to be well supported, including over the remote learning period by the Additional Learning Support team. As well as disclosures on application, some students choose to inform us after they have enrolled and staff are proactive in referring students to the team if they suspect there may be a need, which as yet has not been identified. Support for students continued throughout the remote learning period through Tyber, email and phone.

D.7 Over lockdown and the remote learning period, regular contact was made with vulnerable students to ensure their welfare. The Academic Coach team were also in regular contact with their students, helping to reduce barriers to learning. The LRC remained open to not only vulnerable students and children of key workers but also to those with technology issues at home to allow them to effectively continue with their studies.

Student Societies and Groups

D.8 The Student Development Officers promote student societies and groups to new students. Despite the restrictions and lockdown brought about by COVID, societies have continued to flourish.

D.9 The BAME student society organised a panel of excellent speakers over two evening events in March, who spoke about their experiences and career pathways from the perspective of a person of colour. They gave particular attention to their own work with social inclusion, as well as giving the students advice for their future careers.

D.10 Student Health Ambassadors are recruited by the Student Development Co-ordinator and 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. Health Ambassadors are trained to provide peer education and awareness raising campaigns to fellow students. For example, alcohol awareness, domestic violence and stop smoking.

D.11 Facilities for prayer were popular amongst our students. When risk assessments due to COVID allowed, Friday prayer remained popular and is supported by staff. We continue to keep this provision under review so that we can continue to maintain this service to staff and students.

D.12 Despite COVID restrictions on activities, students have demonstrated their commitment to supporting communities including raising the highest amount of money in a single event at the college which was given to Birmingham Children's Hospital.

D.13 Links with Solihull Carers Trust and Young Adult Carers were strengthened with awareness events over the year to promote the support available for those students who may be in a caring role, as well as drop-in sessions being available for students who are young carers. The Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support was achieved in October. An Academic Coach with significant experience in working with vulnerable students leads on young carers.

D.14 The College celebrates national events such as Black History Month, Eid, Diwali, Diversity Day, British Dyslexia Awareness week and Mental Health Awareness week to raise awareness and encourage discussion.

Student Destinations

D.15 Students seeking apprenticeships or full-time employment are supported through targeted Careers/Employability one to ones and Academic Coaching sessions.

D.16 The College works hard to ensure that students from widening participation postcodes access the support arrangements available to them. The College is involved in locally available access schemes such as The A2B scheme at University of Birmingham, Routes to the Professions, Pathways to Birmingham and the Aston Progression Pathways scheme.

D.17 The College offers comprehensive support and guidance to a large number of students aspiring for the most competitive of courses and universities including Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science. This support includes:

- Specialist Academies offering a range of tailored activities and opportunities such as the Pre-Medical School, the Psychology Research School and English Academy.
- The college provides a Stretch and Challenge Summer School for students applying for competitive courses and includes a range of talks, activities and visits from key universities including Oxford. There are also sessions on test preparation and personal statements.
- There is a discrete Oxbridge support programme offering test preparation, mock interviews and support with applications. Curriculum Areas will also provide subject specialist support to throughout the process.

D.18 The data for 'All SSFC UCAS Applicants' (i.e. Year 13 plus "gap year") on the '2021 UCAS Progression Report', indicates that the "Acceptance Rate" for males and females is virtually identical for 2020.

D.19 College data suggests that there is a fluctuation year on year but the national picture for 18-year-olds suggests that overall, males and females perform very similarly when securing HE places.

D.20 On the 'UCAS Progression Report' the college's overall application data can be compared to national figures for 18 year olds. This data is presented in the form of broader, more general, ethnic groups than those used internally by the College. The percentage of all ethnic groups – Asian, white, black and mixed applicants – placed in HE is above national figures.