

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.

A.2 This report summarises the key areas of work considered by the Committee in 2018-19 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. Students are invited to enter a competition during the year, producing a creative piece which captures these values. 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 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 2016 to 2020 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 January 2018. In their report, Inspectors commented that students have a good understanding of the importance of equality, and they value the diverse community in which they learn. They also stated 'Leaders and managers place particular importance on equality. Senior leaders clearly set out expectations in terms of respect and non-discriminatory behaviour. They ensure that staff and students participate in appropriate training. Staff and students treat each other with respect. As a result, leaders and managers have developed a safe and harmonious learning environment, which staff and students value.'

However, in terms of areas for improvement, Inspectors commented that the variations in the achievements of different groups have not closed sufficiently. This was a key focus for College leaders in 2018-19.

B.5 At the end of 2015-16, the College worked with the National Centre for Diversity (NCFD) to achieve the Investors in Diversity Stage Two Award. The reaccreditation process will commence at the start of the 2019-20 academic year.

B.6 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 June 2020.

B.7 The Student Development Officers have continued to help raise awareness of Equality issues and celebrate Diversity through the use of monthly calendars placed strategically on the inside of toilet doors as well as using the plasma screens around College.

B.8 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.9 The College's 'Planning for Progress' guidance encourages teachers to take opportunities to explore equality and diversity issues when they arise in lessons. Planning documentation has since been strengthened following the outcomes of the College's own lesson observation and Ofsted Inspection, so that cross college themes including E&D are explicitly and consistently signposted by all curriculum teams.

B.10 Teams continue to evaluate their student results to identify any performance gaps. A key priority for 2018-19 has been a focus on value added measures to bring about improvements in student progress. Regular key assessments were introduced giving both students and teams valuable information about progress. Key assessments allowed subject teams to identify areas for development and take action.

B.11 The College timetable was changed to include timetabled intervention sessions either before or after a lesson on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This dedicated time has allowed teachers to spend time with students to close gaps at an individual or small group level.

B.12 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 In 2018-19 the number of staff employed at the College was approximately 190 and about half of the staff are on part time contracts. Staff who work a full week but are term time only are included in the part-time figures. There are significantly more female members of staff than males. 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 In terms of ethnicity, 16% of staff at the College are 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. About 15% of our staff have declared a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

C.5 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.6 Twilight sessions for teaching staff included sessions on the psychology of learning focussing on cognition, assessment, differentiation, metacognition & reflection to enable staff to plan and support students to reduce cognitive load which is particularly important for students with dyslexia or slow processing.

C.7 A number of staff have attended training sessions on mental health. This ranged from mental health and wellbeing in schools to mental health training for senior managers delivered by the Trust.

C.8 Internal training sessions have been delivered on software which allows staff to identify progress between different groups.

C.9 Staff LGBT 'allies' continued to attend the LGBT network through EMFEC.

C.10 A number of teaching and support staff attended sessions on achieving academic performance, getting students organised, using data to improve outcomes, fitness to study, and staff well-being at the CENBASE Joint Training day in June 2019.

C.11 Staff wellbeing was part of the staff development day in April 2019 giving all staff the opportunity to opt into a range of wellbeing sessions.

SECTION D Students

Student Cohort

D.1 The number of students from Birmingham postcodes has stabilised at 68% of cohort, with 31% coming from Solihull postcodes.

D.2 The percentage distribution of students at College continues to be about the same with the percentage of female students is about 51%. There is one student who describes their sex as non-binary and there are four trans students.

D.3 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 Indian heritage.

D.4 The growth in the number of students in receipt of bursary and/or free meals continued in 2018-19. 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. The levels of award were proportionate to the levels of income. Additional emergency awards were made during the year to students in crisis because of referrals from staff.

D.5 Students with additional learning needs continue to be well supported as recognised through the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark. 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.

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 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. Health Ambassadors also received training on mental health and attended a lecture from the Antony Nolan Trust to help them improve their knowledge to encourage other students to sign up.

D.8 The LGBT society created an awareness events and fundraised for Stonewall.

D.9 Facilities for prayer were popular amongst our students. The Meriden building continues to be used as a quiet space for prayer and reflection. Friday prayers remains popular and is supported by staff. Prayer times are discussed with and communicated to students. We continue to keep this provision under review so that we can continue to maintain this service to staff and students.

D.10 Students have demonstrated their commitment to supporting communities through their charitable fundraising including:

- Bake sale in support of Macmillan
- 'Wear Pink' in support of Breast Cancer Awareness
- Tombola raising money for Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Fundraising activities for Children in Need
- Festive Silly Sock Day and bake sale in support of Autism West Midlands
- Christmas Jumper day for Save the Children
- Cancer Research bake sale
- Chocolate hamper and donations for Comic Relief

D.11 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.

D.12 Academic Coaches referred students for group anxiety support sessions run by a Student Development Coordinator.

D.13 The College celebrates national events such as Diversity Day, British Dyslexia Awareness week and Mental Health Awareness week to raise awareness, encourage discussion and promote positive role models who have successfully overcome the barriers they may have faced.

D.14 Student Council facilitated the Student Conference which gathered feedback from students on a range of aspects of life at College.

D.15 End of year celebration for Year 13 was organised by Student Council, ensuring that the celebration was accessible for all students.

Student Destinations

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 and the Shakespeare 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 number of students progressing onto positive destinations from the College remains incredibly strong, with the majority progressing on to Higher Education despite increasing student costs. We are very successful in getting our students into university and higher apprenticeships because of the enriched learning opportunities we provide and the tremendous amount of personalised guidance and support we offer.

D.19 In 2019, destinations were collected for Year 13 completers and positive destination figures are in keeping with DFE value. Higher Education acceptances are consistently higher than UCAS national figures for all applicants, with excellent progression for BTEC students. A substantial number of students are securing places on apprenticeships and in direct employment.

D.20 Data for 'All SSFC UCAS Applicants' (i.e. Year 13 plus "gap year") on the '2019 UCAS Progression Report', indicates that, for the first time since 2013, the acceptance rate for males exceeds that for female students.

D.21 Data from the the 'UCAS Progression Report' shows the College's overall application data compared to national figures. This data is presented in the form of broader, more general, ethnic groups than those used internally by the College. 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.

D.22 The proportion of students entering either apprenticeships or full-time employment has risen since 2018. These students are supported through targeted Careers/Employability one to ones and Academic Coaching sessions.