



Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2016 – 2017

1. Introduction

This 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.

The report, which is produced by the College's Equality and Diversity Group, includes data for 2016-17 and provides evidence on progress towards the College's equality priorities. The scope of the report is the activity in Bedford College prior to the merger with Tresham Institute in August 2017.

2. Equality priorities: progress report

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 overall achievement gap for **classroom based students** with declared disability has reduced and the achievement rate for high needs learners was higher compared with the overall achievement for the college. The smaller proportion of learners with a declared disability in **apprenticeships** and **HE** indicates that it is necessary to review the mechanisms for identifying and supporting learners with additional needs and health conditions in these areas. In comparison to students with no disability, significantly fewer learners with a disability progress into HE or employment.

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

Ethnicity

Our learner profile in **classroom provision** is broadly similar to the overall for the College and the demographics of the local population which represents our commitment to be representative of the local community. In **apprenticeships**, similar to the national position, the learners from BAME background are under-represented which requires targeted interventions in recruitment and working with employers.

In terms of outcomes, the **FE learners** from Mixed race background and Black students underachieve compared with the highest performing group of White Other. In apprenticeships, the achievement of Black learners is below any other ethnic group, although all ethnicities except White British have had a small proportion of enrolments in the last three years.

The **staff** ethnicity profile, which broadly reflects the make-up of the local community, is more diverse than the national position for the FE sector. In comparison to the student ethnicity mix, there is fewer staff who identify as being from a Black, Asian or minority

ethnic (BAME) background, including White Other. BAME staff are under-represented in senior management. Regarding performance grades, more BAME staff are at grade 3 and 4 than the College ethnicity split.

Gender

Our overall student population has a gender balance similar to the local population. There are some differences by provision, and specifically, a) more women are on **classroom-based courses** and b) significantly more men are in **apprenticeships** which reflects the low numbers of females in the two biggest sectors – engineering and construction.

In **FE**, female learners performed better on average than males, including for basic skills maths and English where the overall achievement gap is significantly larger. In **HE** and **apprenticeships**, the achievement for male and female students was comparable.

The overall **staff's** gender mix, which is significantly more balanced than the sector as a whole, has remained largely unchanged for the last three years. In both management and senior management roles there are more females than males. In terms of performance grades, at grade 1 the gender split is similar to the College as a whole, whereas at grade 3 there are more males than the gender split for the College.

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 monitoring the nature of complaints and bullying incidents by protected characteristics.

3. Performance against our equality priorities

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

Objective 1: The mandatory Equality and Diversity training for staff is fully embedded in probation which ensures that all new employees understand the principles and their responsibilities in terms of Equality and Diversity. Addressing the Equality and Diversity training gaps for existing staff is set as a priority for 2017-18.

Objective 2: The recording and monitoring of staff data in relation to all protected characteristics has been inconsistent and in particular for marital status, religion, sexual orientation, and transgender. The next step is to standardise the system for collating staff data related to protected characteristics and lead a campaign to encourage staff to update personal details including the 'prefer not to say' option.

Objective 3: The equality monitoring of staff by job roles and performance grades is fully established. The priority for 2017-18 is to embed the equality monitoring of staff recruitment and development opportunities.

Objective 4: Staff's views on equality and diversity issues is collated via termly surveys (VIRTUAL staff focus group) and used for equality target setting. An area for development for 2017-18 is to review the system for staff exit interviews so that issues specific to protected characteristics are flagged up and reported to the Equality and Diversity Group.

Priority 2: To integrate the promotion of equality and diversity, and the elimination of discrimination and harassment in our working practices so that we meet our legal obligations as required under the Equality Act 2010

Objective 1: The signage for accessible toilets has been updated to accommodate Trans users and people with hidden disabilities. Accommodation refurbishment and plans for new infrastructure did not undergo equality impact assessment consistently. A priority for 2017-18 is to have the Director of Estates and Facilities as a core member of the Equality and Diversity group to ensure regular updates on accommodation works and improved access to premises and services.

Objective 2: The system for assessing the equality impact of college-wide policies and procedures is not fully embedded in the policy review process. The focus for 2017-18 is to utilise the new staff intranet as a focal point for all current policies and procedures and the equality impact assessment guidance, and to embed equality impact assessments in the policy tracking process.

Objective 3: Data of student surveys and student voice forums are systematically reviewed for better understanding of the learner experience in relation to equality factors. A priority for 2017-18 is to develop the system for monitoring complaints in relation to equality factors.

Objective 4: Proactive arrangements are made to accommodate users with accessibility needs in college events, for instance open days and professional development programmes. The embedding of 'Access Avenues' guidance in the College's room booking system and other corporate communications is an area for development in 2017-18.

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

Objective 1: The student induction, tutorials and enrichment activities systematically create opportunities to develop students' understanding of Equality and Diversity themes, including the core values of British society. The focus for 2017-18 is to implement internal learner audits for timely understanding of students' awareness of Equality and Diversity issues and British Values.

Objective 2: The support for teaching teams on the embedding of Equality and Diversity including core British Values is good. The data sets for monitoring Equality and Diversity in walkthroughs and observations of teaching and learning on ProObserve are incomplete. Training all observers to identify best practice and areas for development for inclusion and diversity and to record it consistently on ProObserve is a priority for 2017-18.

Objective 3: The in-year monitoring of retention and predicted success by equality factors is not fully embedded in the departmental quality improvement process. The focus for 2017-18 is to develop the system for live data reports to key stakeholders and to carry out systematic departmental reviews of learner outcomes by equality factors.

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

Objective 1: The equality monitoring of apprentices' recruitment is used to implement strategies for addressing disparities in recruitment. As a result, the conversion proportion of candidates with a declared disability is similar to those with no disability, and there is improvement in the conversion proportion of candidates from BME in comparison to those from White ethnic background. A priority for 2017-18 is to monitor the conversion proportion for disability, ethnicity and gender in the biggest sectors for apprenticeships and to improve the recruitment support for candidates.

Objective 2: The in-year monitoring of apprentices' retention and achievement by equality factors is not fully incorporated in the departmental quality improvement process. The focus for 2017-18 is to develop the system for live data reports to key stakeholders and to complete systematic departmental reviews of apprentice outcomes by equality factors.

Objective 3: Equality and Diversity checks are included in the assessment of employers and work placement providers. 'Good Practice Guide - Equality and Diversity in the Workplace' is used to raise SME employers' awareness of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. A priority for 2017-18 is to support employers to achieve the Disability Confident accreditation with the aim to increase paid employment or long-term placements for students in the Foundation Department.

4. 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 Equality and Diversity Group is chaired by the Principal and has cross-college representation. In 2016-17 the Group was focused on implementing the objectives in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan and met termly to review progress against the equality priorities. The College's equality priorities dovetail with its wider strategic objectives relating to reflecting fully the profile of our community, improving outcomes for all students and identifying approaches for offering advice to local employers on the business benefits of diversity, as set out in the Strategic Plan 2021. The Governing body monitors the College delivery against the priorities in the Single Equality Scheme.

Student-led equality groups such as Black Culture and Transform champion positive images and attitudes towards fellow young people which helps create a more inclusive and accessible College for all. The newly launched VIRTUAL staff focus group provides feedback on issues affecting staff and students in order to inform proposals for change on inclusion and diversity topics.

The College provides training opportunities and provision for staff development with a focus on inclusion and diversity. The staff probation includes a college customised online course on Moodle 'Positive about Equality and Diversity'. Sessions on the promotion of Equality and Diversity and British Values in teaching and learning were delivered for curriculum teams, PGCE groups, and newly employed teachers and tutors (in Teacher toolkit and Tutor essentials). A CPD Moodle module 'Educate for Equality and Diversity' is available for all professionals who are involved in teaching and learning. Sessions on inclusion and equality legislation were delivered for staff working towards the Certificate of Professional Development for Supporting Learners with Additional Needs. Equality and Diversity focused walkthroughs were completed in subject areas and feedback was provided to Heads of Department and Advanced Practitioners to support them with the development of strategies for improving staff's competence and confidence for the embedding of inclusion and diversity in teaching and learning.

A range of resources and guidance were developed and made available to staff; for instance, a College diversity calendar 2016/17, a diversity diary with an option for embedding it in Outlook and monthly diversity updates in the staff newsletter. In conjunction with Student Services, a range of resources for students were developed: college branded materials for the promotion of British Values, a British Values e-learning course on Moodle for the enhancement element of study programmes, and British Values and Equality and Diversity resources for the standardised learner induction. Feedback from staff (verbal and as recorded on Moodle) indicates that the resources and professional development with a focus on Equality and Diversity has had a positive impact on teachers' confidence and awareness for inclusive teaching practice and embedding of equality and diversity.

Student tutorials and enrichment activities include equality and diversity topics within the context of personal, social and employability skills. The tutorial curriculum promotes Equality and Diversity and British values, using naturally occurring opportunities such as the general election and election of student representatives. The Fresher's Fair and the Equality and Diversity month provide 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.

5. Progress since the establishment of the Bedford College Group

The management of equality and diversity was reviewed to ensure effectiveness and a smooth transition after the merger in August 2017. As a result, the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee** has been established which is operational in nature and has a core membership of Directors and Heads of Department from across the College Group. The EDI Committee is supported by two **Diversity Groups** (one in Bedford and one in Kettering) with representatives from staff and students. A **VIRTUAL staff focus group** continues to be an additional forum for engaging with staff on inclusion and diversity topics via short online surveys.

