***The* HENLEY College**



**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORT**

**Investors in Diversity Stage 2 Award**

**(May 2013)**

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**BACKGROUND**

The Henley College caters primarily for students from Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire aged between 16 and 19. Henley is a prosperous town on the River Thames in Oxfordshire; it is a very desirable place in which to live and property prices are high. The town is primarily populated by white, middle class professionals and The Henley College has historically followed this demographic, despite this the College has always been determined to be accessible to all and has vigorously encouraged a philosophy of inclusiveness by widening access and participation in education, vocational training and community activities. To assist with this in 2011 the Senior Leadership Team decided to work towards the prestigious Investors in Diversity standard. This standard provided the College with an all-encompassing approach to managing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and effectively assisted the College to take a structured and planned approach to embed equality and diversity throughout the College whilst providing a simple framework within which to work.

In April 2011 the College achieved Level 1 standard and at the beginning of 2012 began working towards Stage 2. To achieve this standard the College had to satisfy the National Centre for Diversity that we fulfilled the criteria of the four Investors in Diversity strands:

**Strand 1**

**Committing:** Your organisation is working towards creating or developing a truly inclusive organisational culture in which diversity is genuinely valued.

**Strand 2**

**Learning:** (i) Your organisation develops as a learning organisation which continuously and proactively self-assesses. It is able to plan and adapt in order to improve how it manages diversity.

(ii) All are encouraged to improve their own and other people’s diversity related awareness, knowledge and skills.

**Strand 3**

**Developing:** (i) As an organisation, we are becoming more proactive in developing and sustaining the diversity of our workforce.

(ii) Through the provision of support and services, the organisation promotes diversity within.

(iii) Your organisation seeks to influence its wider partners to be positive about diversity.

**Strand 4**

**Improving:** Your organisation adopts or creates a range of self assessment measures to assess development, new opportunities, the extent of culture shift and any improvement in the feeling of ‘inner well being’ within your organization.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Manager and the College Steering Group has provided the focus for the EDI initiatives undertaken by the College. A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Student Focus Group has been established in this academic year and there are plans for a Carers Student Focus Group in the 2013-2014 academic year.

In April 2013 the first EDI College event was held at which Ben Quilter, Paralympic bronze medallist, was the keynote speaker. In June 2013 the staff training day will have an EDI focus, with particular emphasis on the performance of ethnic minority groups highlighted in the previous EDI Reports . The academic year will be rounded off with a Celebrating Identity and Difference photographic and art competition.

In April 2013 the National Centre for Diversity confirmed that the College had met the requirements of the standard and awarded The Henley College Investors in Diversity at Stage 2. For your information the Stage 2 Investors in Diversity Report forms the next section. The full report including the survey data and results can be provided on request by the Director of HR & Professional Development.

**THE HENLEY COLLEGE INVESTIORS IN DIVERSITY STAGE 2**

**Date: 30/03/13. Advisor: Joyce Dargie**

Number of sites, branches, locations: 2

Total number of staff: 280

Number of staff interviewed: 17

Total number of Board Members: 12

Number of Board Members interviewed: 2 (1 Governor, Deputy Principal)

Number of customers: 10 out of approx. 2000

Number of suppliers: 1

Total number of people interviewed:30

**Date of IiD Induction: April 2012**

**Re-accreditation date: April 2015**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

**Strand 1 – Committing**

**Summary**

The Henley College is a tertiary college, based in the town of Henley-on-Thames on two sites. The college has a very wide catchment area, bringing in students from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. It began its journey towards Investors in Diversity in 2011, achieving Level 1 in April 2011. A year later, work began towards Stage 2 culminating in the Full Review in March 2013. The organisation is an Ofsted Grade 2 provider and holds Beacon status.

The equality, diversity and inclusion statement appears on the college’s website, alongside several other documents such as the EDI information leaflet, report and action plan. These clearly define equality, diversity and inclusion and its meaning to the organisation, also making reference to how the organisation values its staff and students as both an employer and an education provider. It is impressive that the college website has an entire section devoted to EDI, also including news items

and the Single Equality Scheme in addition to the above.

The Board made the original decision to work towards IiD and there is Board representation on the EDI Group. A Governor, who is also a member of the EDI Group, has substantial experience of working in the EDI field and has provided leadership at Board level and great support to the Director of Human Resources and Professional Development who leads on EDI for the college. One successful initiative by the college has been to recruit Governors from a wider range of backgrounds than before and to widen recruitment of staff from under-represented groups.

During interviews, I was told several times that “since Beryl took over EDI, the issues have a much higher profile”. In the last 2½ years, interviewees told me that messages about EDI have been much more effective; for example, making use of newsletters, standing agenda items in meetings, displays in the college, improvements to the website and the organisation of events. Specific focus

groups have been established, such as the LGBT group which students described positively. College marketing materials show more diverse images than previously and these are being continually improved.

Practical commitment is demonstrated and was described during interviews with people at all levels and in a most consistent way. Events have been organised: for example, Black History Month; LGBT History Month; the Love Rock Hate Racism concert was organised by the Students Union last year; Scott Moorhouse, a former student and javelin Paralympian, opened the new sports hall; and speakers have been invited, such as Norman Finkelstein and a staff member from the Israeli

embassy to ensure balance. The catering supplier, Caterlink, also provides a range of meals to suit different health and religious needs, as well as to celebrate specific dates and provide themed meals. Several staff spoke warmly of the flexible working arrangements offered by the college and how these have helped them to continue working in difficult personal circumstances. Teaching and learning observations include an EDI measure and EDI is supported and monitored through the performance management cycle. Many more examples of practical commitment are described in the following sections of this report.

The IiD steering group includes a wide range of staff, managers and Board representatives. Importantly, the group includes the Property and Estates Manager, the lead Governor for EDI, the Head of Marketing and School Liaison, as well as HR Director and teaching staff and managers. Action planning and implementation have been effective and different versions of the action plan have been seen, showing actions completed and new actions agreed. It is clear that the group has been active and effective, with new initiatives planned and under way.

**Survey Data**

98 people (out of 280) completed the survey for internal stakeholders. Of these, 81% strongly agreed or agreed that the organisation is positive and proactive about how it carries out its legal duties. 91.6% agreed that the organisation has a culture of accepting all people whatever their background and 63% could describe things that the organisation has done to improve understanding between groups, although only 47.5% could give examples of new things introduced because of the diverse experience of people who work for them or with them.

Of external stakeholders, only 3 completed the survey therefore the results are open to interpretation. There was some agreement that the college takes EDI seriously and that the college had made clear that EDI is as important to the supplier as it is to the college.

166 students completed the learner survey. Awareness of the college’s efforts are limited amongst students with 49% aware of the college’s practical efforts and 40% able to describe how the college is improving understanding between different groups. 88%, however, feel that there is fairness for all in the college and 78.1% believe that tutors take EDI seriously, which is a slight improvement since the survey in April 2011 when the figure was 77%.

**Quotes and Interview Feedback**

A student commented: “I had health problems and the college adjusted my timetable, so that I did fewer subjects. They were very understanding about missed deadlines. ”

A supplier commented: “The college is very committed and we have our own policies and procedures. We serve a variety of food and will be holding EDI week after Easter when we will be promoting world foods.”

An Assessor from Henley Training Company commented: “Communication has improved. We are much more involved and part of the college. There is a better understanding and we are not a Cinderella service. Learners use the college facilities much more and this is part of their induction. ”

A Head of School commented: “The building is much more accessible. We adapted the science labs but there is still an issue of travel between sites. We have been able to relocate some lessons to minimise travel for those with difficulties.”

“The catchment area is very wide geographically and the college takes in students from the state system and public schools. My daughter came here from a sheltered public school and had a very good experience. She became aware of the world in a safe place. ” (Parent and Governor)

**Recommendations**

The college has made great progress in communicating its EDI strategy and involving people at all levels, yet many learners are unable to describe what the college is doing to raise awareness and improve understanding between different groups of people. I would recommend that the steering group explore this finding further and promote the practical aspects and behaviours expected of students.

**Strand 2 – Learning**

**Summary**

The steering group has worked effectively to highlight the benefits of EDI to the college and its community. During interviews, staff and learners were confident in discussing the business case and were able to give specific examples of the benefits gained by the college: for example, the organisation is promoted as a supportive employer and education provider, which enhances its reputation in the community and makes it more attractive to future students and staff from under-represented groups. One of the barriers to this, as explained by the Deputy Principal, is the town of Henley itself, which has a very white middle class image and property prices are high. These factors can be off-putting to prospective students and staff. Despite this barrier, the Board is working hard to be more inclusive at all levels, including its own membership.

The IiD diagnostic questionnaire and the college’s own questionnaire have been used during 2012 to assess the views of all stakeholders and to inform the action planning process. Several versions of the EDI action plan, updated to show distance travelled, have been presented as evidence in the assessment process. The college is particularly diligent in using data to highlight any differences in retention and attainment between student groups. The Administrator for EDI gave examples of how such differences have been identified and then addressed through the action planning process. One current example is that Asian males have been found to be underperforming in relation to their peers. A case study approach is being taken to identify possible causes and solutions. She believes that the process is very effective and that when she identifies a problem in the data, the college listens and takes action.

The college inducts staff and learners in EDI and provides update training for staff and managers regularly. Beryl Richardson has also delivered training to the Board and is instrumental in leading training events throughout the college. Teachers are encouraged to include EDI in schemes of work and lesson plans, which are taken account of during teaching observations. The tutorial system includes awareness raising and discussion of topical issues with learners. These approaches and the

events, such as those described earlier under Strand 1, together contribute to a culture of informal and formal learning for leaders, staff and students alike.

The college is beginning to have an impact on people and organisations outside, through its own efforts to improve culture. One example is through training of the Board of Governors, which has had an impact on individual members who in turn apply the values to their own organisations outside of the college. The college is also beginning to reach out to community organisations and build partnerships with groups, such as the Afro-Caribbean community and Sikh community. Other

examples of paradigm shifts include the LGBT group, which has empowered students and I was told that there is increasing acceptance of the way people dress and express themselves. Students with disabilities also commented on the improved access for them, such as a new training kitchen and electric doors, which are expensive in a listed building. I gained a real sense from the interviews of the college’s commitment to continuous improvement and inclusive practice.

**Survey Data**

88% of staff think that their line managers take EDI seriously and 84% think senior managers value EDI. 89% think that line managers treat them with respect. 98-99% say they understand the terms “equality of opportunity” and “diversity”. 73% have completed training in EDI in the last two years, compared with 80% of staff in the previous survey. 38% say they do not need any further information, training or support and 32% would like further training in mental health issues and 23% on the Equality Act.

In terms of groups of people the college could do more to include, the highest percentages are for people of different race, colour, nationality or ethnicity (16.2%) and for disabled people (10.3%). These responses very closely link to the statements of the people I interviewed, who told me that this is what the college is working towards.

Students say that 78% of their tutors take EDI seriously, compared with 64.6% of their peers and 47.2% of their parents. 40.5% believe the college has given them time and opportunities to find out more about diversity and only 39.6% consider that EDI is discussed in their lessons (and 39.6% think it is not discussed).

**Quotes and Interview Feedback**

A senior manager commented: “The college calendar includes multi-cultural events and these go into the tutorial calendar. Staff development has raised awareness amongst staff and we are encouraging staff to embed EDI in lesson plans and schemes of work.”

A Programme Leader commented: “We have a very inclusive approach. Everyone is involved in sport in some way, from involvement in elite programmes to development squads to enrichment activities.”

Teachers: “We find a way to include EDI in lessons, such as promotion of female scientists in chemistry lessons”; “I raise awareness of debates in government and politics”; “the geography students planted trees with the Pathways students”; “we look at the role of women, for example, and concepts of madness in literature”; “we brought in a female football coach to encourage the girls to play”.

Childcare Assessor: “If a learner is dyslexic support is provided, such as a digital recorder. We use Upgrade for additional support and they are very supportive.”

New staff member: “My induction was very thorough. I am the youngest staff member here, but I don’t feel treated by colleagues differently because I’m young.”

**Recommendations**

Some excellent examples of learning and improving practice are described above. Survey results too, are generally impressive in relation to this standard. The college appears genuinely to be a learning organisation and is making measurable progress in embedding EDI in all aspects of its activities. It would be useful to explore further student awareness of and involvement in EDI activities, as there is a difference between staff and student perceptions here.

**Strand 3 - Developing**

**Summary**

The college has a very supportive culture and several interviewees (staff and students) described the culture as one where they feel listened to. The Governor interviewed believes that the college has progressed from a “tick box” culture to one where EDI is embedded. She is currently working with the Director of HR to build links with community organisations and firmly believes this will help the college to attract under-represented groups. Widening participation at Board and staff level is a

slow process as turnover is low, however plans are in place to work towards a more representative Board and workforce.

Initiatives are underway to provide greater support to some student groups. The LGBT group has already been described; however there is a move to provide a forum for students who also have caring roles at home. This will need to be done sensitively as young carers may not want their circumstances made public and consultation with them on the type of support they want is underway. Students who self-harm have also been identified as a group with support needs and advice is being obtained on the best approach. The college is developing a mix of ambassadors, who show prospective students and parents around. The aim is to have a representative group to demonstrate the social mix of students, which already exists.

The Student Union is active and following the very successful Love Rock Hate Racism concert last year, they are now planning an event to raise awareness against slavery and modern trafficking this year. Ben Quilter, a Paralympic athlete, has been invited to give a lecture at the college this April.

The commitment to accessibility is strong in this organisation, both physical access and social access. The college is split on two sites and includes listed buildings, which causes accessibility issues. Access audits are undertaken by the Property and Estates Manager for the premises and adaptations have been made and specialist equipment purchased. This is an on-going programme within the constraints of the buildings. Family friendly and flexible working practices were complimented by the people I interviewed. One example was given of a staff member with a serious illness returning part-time and another changing her hours following the birth of her

children.

The college is influencing external organisations through its EDI activities. The lead Governor for EDI has described how awareness raising with Board members has influenced individual Governors, who in turn have introduced initiatives in their own organisations. Suppliers are required to have EDI policies and comply with college requirements. The catering manager I interviewed told me that she meets regularly with key people to plan meals for special days and themes in the college. She

believes the college is very committed and has influenced her organisation.

Students told me that there is a clear procedure in instances of bullying and harassment, which is displayed on posters, in the newsletter and on the website. The steering group states that there is zero tolerance to bullying and that issues are dealt with swiftly.

The tutorial system, the Safeguarding Committee and Student Union all have a part to play in prevention of and response to complaints.

**Survey Data**

68% of students believe the buildings and facilities are accessible to students. 49% think the college is good or outstanding in preventing bullying and harassment and 42.5% think it good or outstanding in dealing with it, if it does occur. This must be set against 27% and 30% who are unaware of bullying and harassment taking place or simply don’t know. 67.2% would know where to go for help.

Amongst staff, 76.3% agree or think the college would look positively at flexible working arrangements if these were requested. Many examples of this are given in the comments section. 66.6% of staff believe accessibility is good. 20.5% of staff have witnessed bullying and/or harassment in the last 12 months and 17.9% believe it was handled well. 97.3% of staff would know where to go for help.

**Quotes and Interview Feedback**

A Programme Leader commented: “Students with physical disabilities join in other lessons and we need to keep promoting awareness of students’ needs.”

“There is very good support for staff.” – Teacher.

“There is awareness raising and zero tolerance, right from enrolment.” - Student Support Assistant

“The college’s view on bullying is in the newsletter, on posters and the website. It’s very clear.” – Student.

**Recommendations**

The student group I spoke to believe that communication could be improved, as some students lack the confidence to speak up. They suggested that the offer of support should be promoted at enrolment stage, so that everyone is aware from the beginning. They also had concerns about the student car park being used by local residents, which causes a lot of stress on exam days. The students were complimentary about other improvements to access, such as the new training

kitchen and the installation of electric doors.

Communication with staff appears to be very effective, as many have a clear sense of the new opportunities being embraced by the college and how the college is influencing change within and outside in the community.

**Strand 4 – Advancing**

**Summary**

The college makes very effective use of data and the Director of HR produces an annual report, analysing retention and achievement statistics by gender and ethnicity. This process has been carried out since 2008, thereby showing trends in retention and achievement over time. Case studies are included, as are achievements and actions. One example of an issue arising from this monitoring process is under achievement by Asian males. This has become the focus of further

work to identify the causes and potential solutions.

Direct comparison with previous IiD survey data is limited, as many of the survey questions have changed since the Level One report. One example of an improvement is in the perceptions of internal stakeholders about flexible working conditions. In April 2011, 67% of internal respondents felt that the organisation would make adjustments compared with 76.3% in 2013. Of those people interviewed, all believed that the college had raised the profile of EDI amongst students, staff and

Governors. I had a sense of a vibrant place for students to learn and staff to work in, with a clear sense of what the college plans to do next to improve EDI.

EDI is embedded in the business plan and throughout all organisational processes. There is a single equality scheme in place, which is included on the website. Recruitment of staff, managers and Board members from under-represented groups is underway and managers realise there is much more to do in this area. They acknowledge that progress will be slow, as turnover is low. EDI is included in the performance management cycle for staff and is part of the criteria for teaching

observations. Some subjects lend themselves more easily to this than others and this is acknowledged. Students and staff spoke warmly of the events organised throughout the year, the links being forged with outside organisations and the support available for all who need it. There is a real sense of embedded practice from the Board to the classroom.

Communication of outcomes is a continuous process and the college has effective communication channels, which have already been described. EDI activities are well known throughout the college and interviewees were able to describe these enthusiastically. Consultation with students will continue in May 2013 and a staff development day is planned for June 2013 to focus on the Equality Act and issues relating to student underperformance in retention and achievement. The college’s

work on EDI looks certain to continue beyond the assessment for IiD.

**Survey Data**

The internal stakeholder survey results show that 81% believe that the organisation has an equality and diversity strategy and policies that are in place, understood and followed. 68.4% rate the organisation as good or outstanding at promoting equality of opportunity.

Students believe there is fairness in the college for all (87.9%), yet are less confident in describing what the college is doing to promote EDI (49.3%) and how the college is improving understanding between groups (40.3%). It appears that this is an area worthy of further investigation.

**Quotes and Interview Feedback**

The EDI Administrator commented: “The data being revealed is very interesting and an action plan arises from this. When I find a problem, the college listens and takes action.”

One Head of School commented: “The analysis of data has a higher profile now. There is an issue with Asian males which we are going to look at in more depth.”

The Deputy Principal commented: “Teaching observations show improvement. The college has invested resources in EDI, such as Beryl and Sue, and they have a key role in ensuring EDI has an impact on students, staff and the wider community.”

**Recommendations**

Use of data by the college is exemplary, as the statistics provide information on achievement and retention gaps which need to be addressed. These gaps become new actions for the college to work towards and this leads to a very effective monitoring cycle. At present, student disability and staff data are not part of this analysis and may be a constructive addition to the process.

Managers appear to have a clear view of the improvements yet to be implemented. The current action plan includes all of these improvements and I believe the commitment to continue the IiD journey is strong.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

**Having conducted the full review of The Henley College, I am convinced that they meet the requirements of the national standard of Investors in Diversity. I recommend that they should be recognised at Stage 2. The next review will take place by April 2015. This report summarises findings and general observations from the visit, including areas of strength and good practice, followed by suggestions for continuous improvement. There are many areas of strength at the College and I trust that I have done justice to these.**