

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2024

<b>Approved by:</b>	Local Governing Body
<b>Date Ratified:</b>	17/10/24
<b>Review Date:</b>	September 2025

### Introduction

The College strives to ensure that all students are provided with an equal opportunity to flourish and succeed; that diversity is celebrated and promoted; that we are inclusive in all our activities; and that discrimination, intolerance and hate are combatted. In doing so we are mindful of our duties under the Equality Act (2010) towards those with protected characteristics and our responsibility more generally to promote the interests of all those who face disadvantage.

In addition to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the College, we are also aware of our duty to prepare students for life in modern Britain and to ensure that they make a positive contribution to society as citizens of the future.

In pursuit of these aims the College undertakes, through its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to:

- Develop an awareness of equality and diversity issues amongst all staff, students and users;
- Encourage the promotion of equality and diversity in all aspects of College life;
- Ensure that all members of the College community are valued equally;
- Combat discriminatory practices and stereotyping;
- Prevent oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment;
- Monitor equal opportunities and investigate any issues which arise;
- Comply fully with the requirements of the Equality Duty, the College's Equality Statement, and all other relevant legislation;
- Eliminate all unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, and people who do not share it.
- Recognise and value diversity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic as outlined above and those who do not share it.
- Contribute to positive relationships between members of the College community and prepare our students to engage in positive relationships in the future, contributing towards social cohesion.

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In September 2021, the College adopted revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion College objectives.

These objectives are as follows:

- 1) To embed the promotion of equality, diversity and Inclusion themes (including neurodiversity) across the curriculum explicitly through teaching and learning.
- 2) To ensure that students with protected characteristics have equal access to appropriate mental health support.
- 3) To raise awareness of the issues facing LGBT+ students, and to continue working with them to ensure they feel valued and succeed.

## Progress towards the Meeting of Equality Objectives

### Objective 1

- A Neurodiversity Group has been established within the Student Association to give a voice to students who face potential barriers to learning as a result, for example, of their social preferences, ways of communicating and ways of perceiving their environment. These students include those with autism and other development and learning conditions. This group has identified issues relating to the student experience for further discussion and action by staff and by the Student Association. These issues concern, for example, the classroom environment, teaching strategies, approaches to communication and relationships between students.
- The Learning Support team and James Stubbs, Quality Lead, have delivered training to teaching staff relating to neurodiversity. The training outlined strategies for promoting and responding to neurodiversity, linked to the Quality First Teaching Framework.
- Health and Social Care students have supported this work by producing videos which communicate neurodiversity issues to students and staff.
- The College continues to mark Neurodiversity Celebration Week in March. A 'Neuroinclusion at QE' resource has been created and shared with staff.

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## Objective 2

- Additional counselling capacity has been sourced by TA which a view to catering for the needs of the widest possible range of students, including those with protected characteristics.
- Guidance staff have attended a Diversity course to find out more about how we can support students with protected characteristics. TA has used this training to create child on child abuse workshops relating to the protected characteristics.
- Students who request and access counselling services are tracked, so that analysis in terms of protected characteristics can be undertaken. An MIS tool to facilitate this analysis is being constructed.

## Objective 3

- The College's LGBTQ+ student group remains active and visible, building on the successful acquisition of a Rainbow Flag Award in 2021-22. This award was reissued in March 2024 following rigorous reappraisal. The College passed each section and appraisers commented as follows:
  - *"It is fantastic to see that you have continued to do some great work to ensure that your college is an LGBTQ+ inclusive space. It's clear that your students are really passionate about supporting with this and they have had a number of opportunities to do so. The ideas raised by students are clearly taken seriously and actioned by staff wherever possible."*
- A student survey undertaken as part of the Student Association's planning for priorities demonstrated that the LGBTQ+ Group is the best know student-led group in the College.
- LGBTQ+ campaigning activities included the organisation of a Christmas fundraiser event to provide gifts to a local women's refuge.
- LGBTQ History Month was marked through College-wide displays and activities. These activities included a Pride Day on 7 March 2024, the setting up of a LGBTQ+ Book Group and a talk on LGBTQ History through Medicine.
- The LGBTQ+ group maintains an active social-media feed, sharing many aspects of its work.
- A fundraising campaign to support homeless LGBT people was conducted by the LGBTQ+ Group and supported widely.

## Additional Activity to Support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Building on the success of Culture Day 2023, the College's Anti-Racism and Equality Society (DARES) which operates within the Student Association, hosted a College-wide Culture Week in February, to celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity. The week included activities such as:
  - Bubble Tea
  - Henna painting
  - Saree workshop
  - Drumming workshop
  - Bollywood Dancing
  - Food and Drink showcase

Culture Day itself celebrated food, traditions, clothing, music and dancing from over 30 cultures, each represented by College students. The event was attended by over 600 students and local dignitaries including the mayor and MP.

- The College hosted Darlington's Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration on 24 January. Students from a wide range of backgrounds, including those who had participated in the Lessons from Auschwitz project, led the event, sharing reflections and offering musical performances.
- Black History Month was marked in October, as in previous years, through promotional displays, tutorial activities and through teaching and learning.
- A Disadvantaged Students Strategy was delivered over a two-year period from 2022-24 through whole-college action plans. The strategy aimed to identify students to be designated as disadvantaged; to refine teaching, learning and assessment strategies to maximise support for disadvantaged students; and to improve access to financial and other forms of support for disadvantaged students. The strategy has led to a narrowing of gaps in outcomes and to increased uptake of the Free College Meals scheme in particular. Continued support for disadvantaged students will this year be driven through the College's Quality Improvement Plan in the form of an EDI priority.
- A series of actions relating to EDI has been established through the College's Quality Improvement Plan for 2024-25.
- EDI issues continue to be addressed through staff induction, staff development, teaching and learning, the tutorial programme and through quality assurance processes.

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## Analysis of Disaggregated Data

Summer 2024 Examinations

a) Gender

Table 1: Gender (L3VA – Using 2019 L3VA Benchmarks and Entries)

A Level	L3VA
	<b>Gap</b>
<b>2019</b>	Male 0.22
<b>2020</b>	Female 0.08
<b>2021</b>	Female 0.23
<b>2022</b>	Male 0.03
<b>2023</b>	Female 0.02
<b>2024</b>	Male 0.01

The 'progress gap' between male and female students, which was significantly skewed towards boys before COVID and towards girls during the TAG and CAG years has, in terms of A Levels, shrunk considerably. For the last three years there has been no significant difference in the progress made by males and females.

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*Table 2: Gender (pass rate, high grade rate, top grade rate)*

A Level	Pass rate			High Grade Rate (A*-B)			Top Grade Rate (A*-A)		
	Female	Male	Gap	Female	Male	Gap	Female	Male	Gap
2019	99.7%	99.5%	<b>Female 0.2%</b>	58.4%	53.0%	<b>Female 5.4%</b>	28.3%	26.0%	<b>Female 2.3%</b>
2020	100%	100%	=	69.4%	64.3%	Female 5.1%	38.7%	34.8%	Female 3.9%
2021	100%	100%	=	68.6%	58.6%	Female 10%	37.7%	27.8%	Female 9.9%
2022	99.1%	98.1%	Female 1%	62.9%	57.9%	Female 5%	33.4%	30.2%	Female 3.2%
2023	98.7%	99.2%	Male 0.5%	59.6%	48.4%	Female 11.2%	28.6%	21.3%	Female 7.3%
2024	98.9%	98.8%	<b>Female 0.1%</b>	55.6%	48.7%	<b>Female 5.9%</b>	24.9%	22.9%	<b>Female 2%</b>

Girls, who have higher average GCSE point scores on entry, outperform boys consistently in terms of raw results. There has, over recent years, been considerable volatility in the size of these gaps, particularly in 'high grade' and 'top grade' measures. It is pleasing, therefore, to note that results appear this year to be narrower and to reflect very closely those obtained in 2019.

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## b) Ethnicity

*Table 3: Ethnicity (L3VA – Using 2019 L3VA Benchmarks and Entries)*

	<b>L3VA</b>	<b>EMG % Entries</b>
	<b>Gap</b>	
<b>2019</b>	=	8.9%
<b>2020</b>	-0.05	8.7%
<b>2021</b>	=	8.5%
<b>2022</b>	0.24	7%
<b>2023</b>	-0.13	10.0%
<b>2024</b>	-0.07	15.0%

Students from minority ethnic backgrounds tend to make a little less progress than the cohort as a whole. However, there is, within this disaggregated group, considerable variation. Further analysis, exploring the performance of distinct groups and heritages, may be worthwhile, though the size of cohorts are small and generalisations therefore risky. It is encouraging to note that the progress gap is generally small and, this year, is insignificant.

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Table 4: Ethnicity (pass rate, high grade rate, top grade rate)

A Level	Pass rate			High Grade Rate (A*-B)			Top Grade Rate (A*-A)		
	EMG	College	Gap	EMG	College	Gap	EMG	College	Gap
2019	100%	99.6%	<b>0.4</b>	51.0%	56.0%	<b>-5.0</b>	28.0%	27.3%	<b>0.7</b>
2020	100%	100%	=	60.9%	67.1%	-6.2	37.4%	37.0%	0.4
2021	100%	100%	-	67.9%	64.1%	3.8	35.9%	33.3%	2.6
2022	99.3%	98.6%	0.7	62.6%	60.7%	1.9	33.3%	32.0%	1.3
2023	99.5%	98.9%	0.6	55.6%	54.7%	0.9	29.1%	25.4%	3.7
2024	98.0%	98.9%	<b>-0.9</b>	49.0%	52.5%	<b>-3.5</b>	24.2%	24.0%	<b>0.2</b>

There has been some variation over time in the results obtained by minority ethnic students relative to the cohort as a whole. In 2024, this group performed slightly less well at A\*-E and A\*-B but, as in previous years, outperformed the cohort as a whole at A\*-A.



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## c) Disadvantage

*Table 5: Disadvantaged Students (L3VA, pass rates, high grade and top grade)*

A Level	Pass rate			High Grade Rate (A*-B)			Top Grade Rate (A*-A)			L3VA
	Dis	Coll	Gap	Dis	Coll	Gap	Dis	Coll	Gap	Gap
2019	99.0%	99.6%	-0.6	43.7%	56.0%	<b>-12.3</b>	21.4%	27.3%	<b>-5.9</b>	<b>-0.03</b>
2020	100%	100%	=	55.9%	67.1%	-11.2	23.3%	37.0%	-13.7	0.05
2021	100%	100%	=	56.5%	64.1%	-7.6	24.3%	33.3%	-9	-0.06
2022	97.1%	98.6%	-1.5	50.5%	60.7%	-10.2	26.5%	32.0%	-5.5	-0.15
2023	97.9%	98.9%	-1.0	45.0%	54.7%	-9.7	18.6%	25.4%	-6.8	-0.04
2024	97.0%	98.9%	-1.9	43.7%	52.5%	<b>-8.3</b>	14.8%	24.0%	<b>-9.2</b>	<b>-0.07</b>

The gap between those students who are disadvantaged and those who are not is significant across all phases of education and tends to widen over time so that, nationally, disadvantaged students achieving an average 3.5 grades lower than non-disadvantaged students at A Level. Moreover, disadvantaged students are likely to have suffered more adverse impact from lost learning earlier in their education. It is therefore pleasing to note that while our disadvantaged students perform less well than the whole cohort, the gap has narrowed in terms of high grades. And that the progress made by disadvantaged students remains in line with that made by all students.

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## d) SEND

Table 6: SEND (L3VA, pass rates, high grade and top grade)

A Level	Pass rate			High Grade Rate (A*-B)			Top Grade Rate (A*-A)			L3VA
	SEND	Coll	Gap	SEND	Coll	Gap	SEND	Coll	Gap	Gap
2022	98.1%	98.6%	-0.5	58.6%	60.7%	-2.1	27.0%	32.0%	-5.0	0.14
2023	98.2	98.9%	-0.7	48.3%	54.7%	-6.4	20.4%	25.4%	-5.0	0.11
2024	98.7	98.9%	-0.2	45.9	52.5%	<b>-6.6</b>	21.5	24.0%	<b>-2.5</b>	<b>0.08</b>

Students with special educational needs or disability perform extremely well, given the additional challenges they face, being just as likely to achieve their qualification and, over the last three years, making more progress than the cohort as a whole.

## e) Applied General Summer 2024

- Female (0.09) students made slightly more progress than Male students (-0.01); Females made 0.10 grades more progress on average.
- SEND (0.14) students made slightly more progress than Non-SEND (0.01) students; SEND made 0.13 grades more progress on average.
- Disadvantaged (0.01) students made progress in line with Non-Disadvantaged students (0.06); Non-Disadvantaged students made 0.05 grades more progress on average.
- Students from Ethnic Minority groups(0.03) made progress in line with White British students (0.06); White British students made 0.03 grades more progress on average.

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## Student Characteristics

Table 7: Student characteristics  
18.12.23 and 1.10.24

	All		First		Second	
	% College		%Cohort		%Cohort	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Male	43.4	40.4	42.6	<b>38.0</b>	44.5	43.8
Female	56.6	59.6	57.4	<b>62.0</b>	55.5	56.3
WB	86.7	85.3	87.3	84.4	86.0	86.3
EMG	13.3	14.7	12.7	<b>15.6</b>	14.0	13.7
SEND	17.6	11.8	10.8	2.7	24.5	21.2
Dis	17.7	16.5	19.2	16.9	16.2	15.9

The table above offers a comparison of the student population by key characteristic between the beginning of October this year and the end of the first term of the last academic year. The most salient information here is the growing divide in the recruitment of boys and girls and the increasing ethnic diversity of the College over time.

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## Retention

Table 8: Retained students by 1.07.24

	% Retained
All	87.4
Male	88.1
Female	86.9
EMG	92.7
Disadvantaged	79.0
SEND	91.6

There is some variation in patterns of retention between groups of students with key characteristics. Female students are slightly more likely to leave their courses early than male students. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to stay than white British students. SEND students are also more likely to be retained, which underlines the impact of the support they receive. Meanwhile, disadvantaged students are significantly less likely to remain on their programmes of study than others, suggesting that it is retention, rather than achievement, which should be the focus of our strategies to support this cohort.

## Attendance

Table 9: Attendance (Curriculum and Tutorial) 2023-24 (3.7.24)

	% Attendance
All	89.8
Male	90.7
Female	89.0
EMG	90.3
Disadvantaged	86.1
SEND	86.9

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## Destinations

*Table 10: Destinations of 2023 leavers*

Destination Category	College	Dis	SEND
Higher Education	62.8%	61.2%	58.8%
Deferred Higher Education	5.7%	3.9%	7.7%
(HE Combined)	68.5%	65.1%	66.5%
Gap Year	6.8%	7.2%	6.9%
Apprenticeship	5.2%	5.3%	5.0%
Further Education	0.9%	0.7%	1.9%
Continuing existing programme of learning	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%
Returning for New PoS	2.1%	2.0%	3.1%
Full time employment	9.5%	10.5%	11.2%
Part time employment	3.5%	4.6%	2.3%
Self employed	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Unemployed	0.9%	1.3%	0.4%
Other	1.0%	0.7%	1.9%
Destination Unknown	1.0%	2.0%	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Progression patterns, disaggregated by disadvantage and SEND, are broadly in line with the cohort as a whole, particularly when immediate and deferred progression to HE is combined. While these two groups are a little less likely to progress to higher education than their peers, the gap is small.