




Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Report

2022



Welcome

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A joint message from our Chief Executive Officer and the College Principal

As one of the largest and most dynamic College's in the country, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College supports the hopes, dreams and ambitions of many thousands of people, each with their own culture, character, and history. To ensure that we can provide the best possible education and support to all of our people, we must understand their unique needs and those of our local communities; as these are at the very heart of everything that we do.

Through our Mission, Vision, Strategic Priorities and Curriculum Strategy, our ultimate objective is to become a College that is focused on equity, and one which is genuinely inclusive. Our doors are always open and we want everyone who walks through them to feel that they don't have to change, that they don't have to be someone else to reach their maximum potential; and, if they don't already possess the tools necessary to meet their specific needs and goals, they can have confidence that the whole College community is here to support them in the acquisition of those tools.

Like our peers, our College is on a journey from awareness and commitment, to action. We are proud to say that we are different and that our commitment to equity and inclusion is stronger today than at any time in our history. We understand that diversity of thought and experience fuels our innovation, and helps us to support our staff, our learners and our wider community by attracting the best talent. But, despite being extremely proud of our progress so far, we know there is still more work to do.

Kevin Hamblin
Group Chief Executive Officer & Executive Principal

Sara-Jane Watkins
College Principal

Our Ethos

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College will act in all that it does with honesty, respect, responsibility and care, and to the highest standards of responsible business conduct. We aim to provide an outstanding experience for learners from all traditions and cultures from the age of 14, and will sustain our financial viability to enable us to achieve this mission.

Our Strategic Priorities

1. To be recognised as an outstanding college.
2. To be visionary and innovative in providing educational opportunities by anticipating and meeting demand.
3. To enhance the quality of the experience we provide for our learners and our staff.
4. To develop responsive partnerships with all our learners, employers and stakeholders.
5. To ensure we have the necessary resources to support our Plan.
6. To provide an educational and training environment which is equipped for the delivery of high-quality learning.

Being you @ SGS

It is our mission to help all individuals to find their place in the world, we stay true to that mission by celebrating the things that make us different.

We know that the world is a better place when we can accept our differences, include, value, trust, and be kind to one another.

We hope that all our people will share our values and we want to know more about them, their values, traditions and culture.

We know that full potential is only realised when we bring our full and authentic-selves to work and study @ SGS.



Coronavirus

Within our 2020-21 annual Self-assessment, the College's Chief Executive Officer, Kevin Hamblin, and the College Principal, Sara-Jane Watkins paid tribute to the enormous efforts of colleagues and learners to continue to adapt to new ways of working during the pandemic, and to continue to advance the College's mission, teaching and administration, amid new and challenging circumstances. They particularly thanked staff on the front line, whose work is too often as invisible as it is invaluable, including cleaners, IT staff and all others in support roles. They also celebrated learner satisfaction rates, 10% above the sector benchmark, and strong progress towards both the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the West of England Combined Authorities Education and Skills Plan.

The College Principal also highlighted many areas of achievement which have helped the College to be more inclusive and diverse, including new investment in digital resources and gained experience of remote teaching and learning; the wider use of adapted-assessment; providing welfare services and careers guidance remotely; tackling digital poverty, identifying and addressing accessibility needs; and facilitating more flexible and productive working practices for all staff and students, post-pandemic.

The College also ran a wide-ranging communications campaign (SGS ProtectED and SGS ParentAID) along with a comprehensive support programme for new and progressing learners, called SGS PreparED. The College maintained contact tracing, effective self-isolation, and supported the NHS by accommodating both testing facilities and onsite vaccination clinics.

These initiatives, along with the regular publication of data and transmission statistics, gave our community confidence and reassurance that overall case numbers were low, with no signs of transmission between staff and learners.

Digital accessibility

Our College is committed to providing an accessible digital presence that offers full access to College information about teaching and learning, courses and activities to members of our wider community and the public. Additionally, the College secured wide access to IT equipment, safe and reliable WIFI, Covid-secure learning spaces and remote support for all staff and learners, including those who are disadvantaged or suffering from digital poverty.

Outreach work continued to support unfettered access to College learning programmes and our enhanced digital capacity created new virtual versions of existing access programmes, interviews and virtual open events.

SGS College complies with the Public Sector Bodies, Digital Accessibility Regulations (2018).





Staff Reward and Development

All College employees were given additional days of annual leave during 2020-21 as a gesture of appreciation for their commitment and hard work during the pandemic. Similarly, the College's Corporation also approved an all staff pay award.

Once more, the College proudly published its annual Gender Pay Gap report in March 2021, despite the Government having suspended the requirement to do so, because of the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2021 the mean gender pay gap in hourly pay fell by 2.54% to 7.33%. This success builds further upon an almost 3% reduction in the previous year, meaning the College's pay gap is now well below average for the Education sector (which is 25%) and the overall UK national average which is 17.3% for all employees.

During 2021-22 we approved over 93% of all requests for professional development, and all staff received an additional six self-directed development days; to focus on improving their professional practice, heightening their subject content knowledge, as well as working to gain higher levels of pedagogical content knowledge and an appreciation for diversity and inclusion.

Once again, we continued to raise smiles by recognising the brilliant work of our staff and students. All staff and students are encouraged to regularly nominate their brilliant colleagues. Examples include:

- Supporting LGBTQ+ learners to access on-going support with their journey towards improving their self-esteem; and with problems such as stress, anxiety, depression or lack of sleep.
- Supporting World Mental Health Day through improved access to colour therapy; the feel-good quiz; getting creative; mindfulness yoga and Friday tea and talk.
- Working with learners to design and launch a new anti-bullying charter.
- Partnering with Wheels to Work, to provide free access to bikes for staff and students living in South Gloucestershire.

Raising awareness

At the outset of 2020-21 the College recommitted to a theme of inclusion for all outreach and professional development activity, recognising the achievements of individuals and teams in helping to create a more inclusive culture, diversifying participation and promoting awareness of equality and diversity.

Our tutorial and enrichment programme SGS+, has four core aims, these are:

- To ensure that all our learners have the information they need to keep themselves and others safe whilst studying with us here at SGS.
- To ensure that our learners are prepared and able to step into society once they leave SGS.
- To ensure that learners have the skills required to succeed once they leave SGS; and,
- For learners to look back fondly on their time at SGS with memories filled with fun and inclusively enjoyable experiences.

The College continues to reaffirm, through its policies and tutorial activities, its unequivocal abhorrence of, and opposition to, racism against Black and Minority Ethnic people and discrimination in all its forms. The College is vocally committed to working to ensure an environment where there is zero tolerance for racist comments or behaviours by staff or students.

In response to 'Everyone's Invited', new tutorials were introduced for all students, with the aim of building a better understanding around consent, respect, boundaries and positive intervention; thereby continuing to tackle harassment, bullying and sexual violence.

Finally, the College once again raised the Rainbow Flag and marked the annual Pride celebrations with a virtual event. SGS College also continued its long association as a sponsor of Bristol Pride©, helping to provide a space for smaller organisations doing vital inclusion work across our region.

Voices are critical to our diversity, equality & inclusion advancement

Our Inclusion Networks are an integral part of our diversity, equality and inclusion strategy. They are stakeholder-led, college-recognised groups, formed to act as a resource for both our staff and students and to be a thought leader for our community.

Our core Inclusion networks are:

SGS Inclusion Committee
SGS Parents forum

REACH (Racial equality and cultural heritage) forum
SGS Student Parliament

LGBTQ+ forum
SGS Staff forum

Our College in numbers

Ethnicity

Our ethnically diverse learner population



24.5%

The GFE average ethnically diverse population



22.6%

The ethnically diverse population within South Gloucestershire¹



5%

Our ethnically diverse staff population



11%

Our ethnically diverse governance and management population



3%

The proportion of ethnically diverse individuals who contribute to the leadership of our College*



7%

GFE Average ethnically diverse staff population (All staff)²



16%

1. The figures from South Gloucestershire are primarily drawn from the 2011 census but have been updated in line with the mid-2021 population estimates. However, it remains likely an underestimate, because ward boundaries changed in 2018. Applying 2011 census data to the new wards, Stoke Park & Cheswick, Filton, Bradley Stoke North and Bradley Stoke South. The true ethnically diverse population is likely to be closer to between 12% and 16%. In Bristol the population is 22% and in Gloucestershire, 16%.

2. Further Education Workforce data for England (Education and Training Foundation) March 2020

Gender

Our female learner population (16-18)



44.9%

Our female learner population (19+)



67.2%

GFE Average female population (16-18)³



46%

GFE Average female population (19+)³



60%

Our female staff population



62%

GFE Average female staff population⁴



62%

4. Over the last year, the FE sector has seen a slight increase in the proportion of female staff, from 60% to 62%. However, when considering middle managers, the proportion of females has decreased over time, from 67% to 62% in SIR 27 and in line with the general share of women in the FE workforce. At SGS however, the proportion of middle managers who are female is 68%. 60% of the college's Executive Team are female and 41% of the College's Governors and Senior Leaders are female.

3. Association of Colleges annual College Key Facts data release 2020-21

Real change is not only in the numbers,

At SGS, we're a community of unique individuals...

We understand that recruitment doesn't just impact our results, but it impacts our culture.

Through our People Strategy, we're committed to enhancing our culture and our community by attracting, recruiting and retaining a diverse range of staff that have the relevant skills and experience and are also reflective of the diversity of our student body and the communities which we serve.

We want to recruit for teams, not roles; because we know that a diverse workforce outperforms all other workforces by around 25%.

Therefore, we've trained our recruiting managers on how to spot the best talent, and inclusion questions are now a mandatory part of our recruitment process.

We understand that we're still a work in progress, so we've committed to illuminating our blind spots.

We've done this by developing an 'inclusion in practice programme'. The programme, which more than half of our staff have already completed, is designed to address unconscious bias, and aims to embed a culture of inclusion and appreciation of the benefits of a diverse workforce.

We've signed up to the Bristol Equality Charter, but we're committed to going further, having also joined the South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network.

We build leaders from the ground up. We recognise that our leadership team doesn't yet fully reflect our whole community. But we're extremely proud of that community, which is one of the most diverse in our region. We also recognise that leadership exists at all levels and have therefore empowered a diverse group of individuals to contribute to leading the College through our Inclusion Networks. *

Through SGS+ and our Academies provision, we support our learners to develop their leadership skills and build inclusive leadership behaviours. As a consequence, many individuals take on additional responsibilities as College ambassadors, elected officials, inclusion officers and student representatives.

First at SGS

As a community of individuals, SGS doesn't 'group' people. Individuals don't describe their ethnicity as BAME or BME, and neither do we.

As any individual would proudly do, we'll only ever refer to an individual by respecting their heritage and using their unique ethnic identity.

We're fully committed to fostering an inclusive environment. Collectively, we promote a culture where everyone has a space to be themselves.

We're building innovative solutions for differently-abled people. We already have technological solutions to translate into the Makaton language and we've invested in our own Speech and Language Team, to further support or staff and students.

Our internal and external websites are accessible to people with visual impairments and almost twice as many individuals, with visual impairments, achieve their qualifications at SGS, compared to nationally (Source: National Centre for Social Research)

We already hold the Positive about Disabled accreditation (previously the '2 ticks' Scheme)

First at SGS

The College's 'Total Support Guide', operates to ensure that all students receive the support they need to achieve their full potential.

In 2020-21 every student with a visual impairment, speech or communication needs or severe learning difficulties, successfully achieved their qualification.

The proportion of disadvantaged students, entering the workforce, was 20% higher at SGS than the all England average.

We're committed to improving literacy and numeracy and have invested in technological solutions to support our staff and students with hearing and sight impairments and other difficulties.

We're working hard with our partners and our Local Authority to increase access to education and work for differently-abled individuals. Differently-abled staff and students have been the catalyst for many of our greatest innovations and remain the driving force behind how we develop our systems and learning tools. Different abilities are a strength, and it is imperative we continue to actively work to recruit differently-abled people to bring their expertise into our processes and culture at every level.

We're passionate about physical activity and sport in all its guises. For this reason, we encourage all our staff and students to get up and stay healthy. Through our ActiFIT programme, every single day and for every single ability, we offer a range of activities from walking, to yoga and boxercise to help our people improve their physical health and wellbeing. All staff and students can also make use of the College's gyms and outstanding sporting facilities.

One in every six people suffer from a mental ill-health (according to the NHS Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey and the Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020) and for this reason the College provides a dedicated counselling service and has **invested in a safe, online community where people can support each other anonymously, to improve their mental health and wellbeing.**

We understand that there is a greater prevalence of mental ill-health for ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ people. As the Mental Health Foundation points out, challenges such as racism, stigma and inequalities all affect mental good health.

Through our staff and student codes-of-practice and Inclusion Policy, we take a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, extremism and prejudice. We're committed to creating and maintaining an environment where everyone is welcome and free to be their authentic self. **We want all our people to work and study with pride.**

We make sure our curriculum represents the diversity of our students. By continuing to decolonise our curriculum, students uncover unconscious biases and broaden their intellectual vision to include diverse ethnic, racial, social and cultural perspectives; and become more prepared to lead in an increasingly diverse world.

Through SGS Library+ staff and students can access a wide collection of resources, novels, non-fiction books, DVDs and music which represents and celebrates the diversity of our community.

First at SGS

It remains policy at the Education and Skills Funding Agency not to collect every funded learner's accurate gender identifier and correct pronoun.

At SGS, from first application, all staff and learners can correctly identify their actual gender identity, regardless of historical record; and, all members of our community can now proudly record their preferred pronouns.



South Gloucestershire
and Stroud College

STUDY WITH

PRIDE



SGS E-sports Tutor, Nikki Livingstone, has recently been selected to become an ambassador for the Women in Games programme.

According to the 2021 CIPHR Workplace Discrimination Report, the most common form of workplace discrimination is age discrimination, with more than 1 in 10 adults in the UK saying that they've experienced workplace discrimination because of their age.

We understand that the age of an individual, combined with additional factors including other protected characteristics may affect their health and social care needs. Therefore, we are committed to supporting all of our people through the provision of reasonable adjustments, purposeful education, professional development, and access to peer-observation, work shadowing and mentoring. These services are freely available to all staff because we know that the quality of teaching and learning could suffer if we lose experienced educators.

We recognise that caregiving as a major part of life for many of our staff and students. Our policies are designed to accommodate all kinds of family structures and divisions of labour. Our goal is to give our people the opportunity to be present, at their best, engaged, and balanced for all the moments that matter at home and at work. When people, regardless of their gender, have the opportunity to work flexibly or take paid leave; it can help counteract caregiving stereotypes and improve the dynamics that mitigate women feeling they need to be the only ones to prioritise family.

As a Microsoft Showcase College, we're able to facilitate flexible working to help to mitigate technology access inequities, especially those associated with setting up a workspace at home.

We're passionate about improving 'allyship'. As we spend so much of our lives working alongside our colleagues and friends, we believe that positively practicing allyship, empowers people as much as empathy and curiosity does.

First at SGS

In 2021, 500 members of staff gathered for our annual Conference Day. The day was focused on advancing inclusive teaching and learning, mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and ultimately celebrating identity, ability and culture.

This included learning more about how best to support out Transgender, Gender Non-conforming and Gender Non-binary (TGNCNB) staff and students



ALBERT UNIVERSITY
SGS DEO
EE & UNIVERSITY

We're here to learn, but we're wise enough to know that getting things wrong is a key component of learning.

As Alexander Pope wrote: To err is human; to forgive, divine. And therefore, we want to support our people to stop trying to be good people, and instead be real people. Naturally, we understand this means that mistakes will be made, and sometimes people may do or say the wrong thing— but we also know that mistakes generate more brain activity (and learning) than getting things right or avoiding certain topics.

As an institution of learning, we're curious about our mistakes and, since 2012, we've been working with our staff and students to develop the growth mindset.

We want to embrace our mistakes and encourage learning to flow from them. A community where it's okay to make mistakes is one where it's equally okay to point them out.

As one of our newly qualified teachers put it: "Teachers can facilitate healthy debate and discussion, and encourage learners' to be mindful of their language and their actions. Clear ground rules set out at the beginning, mean that learners know discrimination and intolerance will be challenged; and therefore, learners will feel empowered to challenge these behaviours themselves."

At SGS we understand that some individuals might need time to find their voice. Therefore, we'll never rely on individuals to lead change or fix problems. We're committed to doing that together as a diverse community of individuals, a team.

- ☹️ 36% of UK adults have reported experiencing workplace discrimination.
- ☹️ In the UK, over a third of LGBTQ+ staff (35%) have hidden their identity at work for fear of discrimination.
- ☹️ More than a third (37%) of ethnic minority workers, in the UK, report having been bullied, abused or singled out at work.
- ☹️ Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the UK population have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in their lifetime. (The top three reported sexual harassment behaviours were: sexual jokes, staring or looks, and sexual comments)

The Little Voice Inside...

Many of us have experienced a moment when the little voice inside says: *'don't get involved, just ignore that tactless comment'; 'say nothing, when others are reduced to stereotypes'; or, 'it's not a big deal when someone's opinion isn't valued'.*

At SGS, we're different... We're all striving to be better teachers— we want to make our learning spaces, our workplaces and our community one which is more welcoming for everyone. We all have a responsibility to create an environment in which we can feel safe to speak up for others and ourselves.

So, at SGS, we're challenging all our people (and everyone else, willing to join us), to ignore that little voice. Instead, we want our people to find their voice, and speak up for inclusion.





Progress towards our Inclusion Objectives

Equality objective 1: To improve the capability of SGS College Governors, leaders, staff, students and other stakeholders to understand and address our legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and duties to reduce inequalities introduced by the Equality Act 2010.

Progress to date:

- 98% of staff have now completed the SGS capability programme, ensuring a shared understanding of diversity, the importance of equality, and our shared desire to achieve inclusivity.
- 96% of learners have now completed our equality, diversity and inclusion capability programme.
- In the end of year survey, 97% of respondents confirmed that because of SGS+, they know more about equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Throughout 2020-21, we improved the relevance and impact of our equality and diversity training, with the support of our internal and external stakeholders. Over half of all staff have now completed our inclusion in practice programme to address unconscious bias.
- How to address unconscious bias has been added to our Assessment Policy; and every teacher, charged with determining teaching assessed grades in 2020-21, have also completed unconscious bias training.
- The Corporation reapproved our revised People Strategy, recognising that our staff are central to the delivery of our mission and that it's important to attract, develop and retain staff who are passionate about their role in supporting the SGS Group to succeed.
- Our gender pay gap report demonstrates positive progress towards pay equality.
- For the second consecutive year, inclusion was the core theme within our approach to engagement and development and our annual Conference Day— focused on advancing inclusive teaching and learning, mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and celebrating identity, ability and culture.

Equality objective 2: To reduce the barriers experienced by individuals and specific groups of people who engage with the College, with specific reference to identifying how to address issues in relation to inequalities in educational attainment.

Progress to date:

- SGS has developed strategies to harness technology to improve literacy, including digital literacy, and numeracy to remove barriers to learning and improve learner progression and employability.
- Our innovative use of learning technology, combined with our review of provision for those with difficulties and disabilities has improved the recruitment, engagement and retention for the most vulnerable people within our community.
- The College's Governing body continues to support rigorous oversight through the HR function to ensure the removal of barriers in any recruitment, selection or career promotion process.
- There is no significant attainment gap between differently-able individuals (who achieved a pass rate of 98.1%) and that of their peers (97.5%). Individuals with Education and Health Care Plans, achieved a pass rate of 100% compared with a pass rate of 97.6% for all other learners.
- The pass rate gap between individuals entitled to free-college-meals and their counterparts has shrunk to 2%.
- Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds achieved a pass rate of 95%, just 2.5% below that of learners identifying as white British.

Equality objective 3: To continue to improve the representation and experience of LGBTQ+ stakeholders.

Progress to date:

- SGS College continued its long association as an official Pride Partner, committed to supporting smaller community groups to advance their own reach and impact.
- SGS College amended its application forms to allow individuals to correctly identify their pronouns.
- Our LGBTQ+ networks continue to foster good relations with our LGBTQ+ community, developing our collective understanding of issues affecting LGBTQ+ people; and therefore, making SGS a safe place where LGBTQ+ people can pursue their education, interests and ambitions.
- SGS College is one of the first in the country to enable and encourage individuals to accurately identify their gender or lack thereof.



Our 2022-24 Inclusion Objectives

1

diversifying our talent

We will continue to enhance our community by attracting and recruiting a diverse range of students and staff— those that have the relevant skills and experience and are also reflective of the diverse community that we serve.

We will continue to encourage engagement and contribution to the leadership of the College; through our incredible Inclusion Networks; and, work tirelessly to continue to illuminate unconscious bias.

2

accelerating change

Building on the good work already done, we will continue to promote a culture where everyone has the confidence and space to be themselves at SGS, by building inclusive leadership behaviours.

We will achieve this by eradicating the fear of making mistakes and support all of our people, to fearlessly hear, and act upon the voices of others.

3

embracing neurodiversity

It is estimated that around 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent. Therefore, we will support our staff and students to embrace neurodiversity and understand how neurodivergent individuals may think and learn in a different way to others. We will create a more inclusive and neurodivergent friendly College and improve the experiences of neurodivergent people.



Communication Access UK

Inclusive communication for all

In January 2022 SGS College was granted the UK Communication Access Symbol, to recognise our work towards becoming communication accessible, by adopting recognised national standards of support for people with communication difficulties.