



An Excellence Gateway case study

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## **Leicester College: Diversifying the workforce through positive action and advancing race equality**

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### **Outline the aim**

The aim of the Project was to contribute to the College's work for the LLUK Equality Framework as well as its own annual equality objectives.

The Project brought together a number of positive action strands in a cohesive strategy and contributed to embedding race equality across organisational systems and culture, making race equality a reality within the workforce and supporting the creation of diverse leaders and teachers for the future.

### **The challenge**

Leicester College had a Positive Action Strategy in place prior to this Project to try and diversify its workforce to better reflect the demographics of its student population. The College had some limited success but in the light of funding and recruitment restrictions it was felt that a more creative approach to positive action was needed.

Through the Project the College sought to:

- Support the promotion, participation and staff development of BAME staff.
- Enable a wider range of BAME applicants to be successful in applying for work at Leicester College.
- Increase the College Managers understanding of positive action and their cultural competence.

- Improve the understanding of barriers and issues relating to race equality that can impact on BAME learners and their success rates.
- Review HR Policies and processes relating to recruitment and selection.
- Increase the number of BAME people joining the sector as teachers.

## Partnership organisations

The College worked with a number of external partners in the delivery of the Project as well as its own BAME staff forum and Teacher Education Department.

The external partners included:

- Black Leadership Initiative
- The Race Equality Centre
- Kaine Management

All partners were members of a project steering group and attended regular steering group meetings to monitor and feedback on the progress of the Project.

Partners were also involved in the following areas of project activity:

- The Black Leadership Initiative supported the project through the delivery of leadership training, a career development workshop and a job search workshop.
- The Race Equality Centre undertook an initial review of the College Recruitment and Selection processes and statistical information relating to recruitment activity at the College during the previous 12 months.
- Kaine Management undertook a project with black learners and consultation with BAME staff.
- The College Teacher Education Department delivered a Positive Action PTLLS course for BAME people within the local community.
- The College BAME Staff forum was consulted and provided valuable feedback throughout the Project.

## The outputs

The main outputs of the project were a number of training, workshop and consultation events. These are summarised below:

- Positive Action PTLLS Course leading to a level 4 qualification). This course was offered to BAME people at a subsidised rate. The normal course fees are £300 on this occasion delegates paid a nominal fee of £50 to cover materials.
- Job Search Workshop. The College wrote to all BAME job applicants who during the last 6 months had not passed the short-listing stage (200 in total). These people were invited to a twilight workshop run between 5 – 8pm. 21 people attended the workshop. Follow up support on an individual basis was also offered.
- Leadership Programme. A 3 day programme run over a period of 6 weeks was offered to 12 BAME staff who had some supervisory experience. The programme covered a range of management disciplines and was accredited to ILM level 2.
- Career Development Workshop. Following consultation with the BAME staff forum this workshop was offered in addition to the leadership programme as a number of BAME staff indicated that they would value support in moving their career forward and preparing for interviews. 20 places were offered to staff on a one day workshop.
- Teacher resource on race equality. This resource was developed following a research project exploring how learners and staff can work towards improved achievement, recruitment and retention of African and Caribbean heritage learners. Written guidance and a DVD were produced for use by teaching staff.
- Positive action and managing a diverse workforce training for managers and team leaders. This course was run as a half day session and aimed to increase the cultural competence of those attending by providing an overview of positive action and looking in detail at race equality issues relating to staff within the College. Staff attending the course were also encouraged to think about what positive action measures they could take within their own departments.
- Consultation took place with a small number of BAME staff through focus groups, telephone interviews and questionnaires. The aim of the consultation was to find out whether BAME staff within the College perceive there to be any barriers to their progression within the organisation.

## **The impacts and outcomes**

The main impacts and outcomes from the Project at the time of writing the report has been the feedback received from those who have attended the events listed above.

Both the Positive Action PTLLS Course and Job Search Workshop achieved high levels of community engagement. 27 people enrolled onto the PTLLS

course of these 25 are expected to pass. Feedback from delegates has included:

“The College is providing excellent services to the community”

“This course has helped me progress my job prospects”

“Leicester College has gone the extra mile in encouraging ethnic minorities into teaching”

The Job Search Workshop also proved to be popular with the local community. The following comments are from those who attended the workshop:

“The workshop was fantastic I learnt so much”

“I now feel much more confident applying for jobs”

“I now find it *much easier to fill in an application form*”

The Leadership Programme proved to be of most benefit to those in more junior management positions. Staff in more senior positions found that some of the programme covered areas they had previously studied in other management programmes and did not stretch them enough.

The Career Development Workshop received high approval ratings from delegates with 67% rating the course as excellent. Feedback included:

“It has really made me want to do something about developing my career”

“I will put into practice the advice received”

“Has encouraged me to take the next step in my career”

The Find Your Voice Research Project allowed Black learners to share their views on a variety of topics including race, identity, marketing, challenging perspectives and thinking of solutions to some of the issues raised. Initial findings include the need for closer pastoral links between learners and staff. Factors affecting learning within this group included financial problems, low self esteem and lack of black teaching staff. Some areas the College also need better understanding of different cultural groups.

Positive action and managing a diverse workforce training for managers and team leaders received high satisfaction ratings from those who attended. Further training sessions will take place during 2012/13 as not all College managers or team leaders have attended the training to date. Of those who have attended 72% rated the training as outstanding or good.

Overall approximately 50 staff took part in the BAME staff consultation exercise. Feedback from the consultation included the following recommendations:

- More bespoke training is needed which focuses on leadership training, mentoring, secondment opportunities and work shadowing.
- Line managers should measure and build on BAME staff confidence, through work shadowing and mentoring.
- Increasing the publicity and awareness of work around race equality.
- The College should increase its partnership work through external services to support BAME staff.

The review of HR recruitment policies and processes found that the College has sound processes in place that support legitimate and fair practice. Some minor recommendations were made to ensure, for example, that within an assessment centre format scoring was consistent and took account of the priority of different selection activities.

We have achieved some of the outcomes from the Project through the feedback provided by delegates that have attended a number of events and training courses.

Most of the main impacts of the Project will be realised over a longer period of time through the targets set to measure the outcomes of the project; these include:

- An increase of at least 5% in the % of BAME applicant to the college in 2012/13
- An increase of at least 2% in the % of BAME staff and managers in 2011/12
- An improvement of at least 5% in the satisfaction ratings of BAME staff (evidenced in the E and D survey 2012/13)

The Find Your Voice Research project culminated in the production of a teaching resource for teaching staff to use in relation to Black learners.

This Resource therefore has the potential to impact on all Black learners within the College who represent approximately 9% of the student population.

### **Working relationship with LSIS**

The funding provided by LSIS made it possible for this Project to take place and for the College to develop its Positive Action Strategy and build upon the positive action initiatives it had already undertaken. Margaret Adjaye of LSIS has provided the College with ongoing support throughout the Project.

### **Good value for money**

The Project was good value for money as much of the administration and some of the training was provided in house at no cost to the project. In addition much of the management cost (e.g. the Project Manager time) has been absorbed in the organisation so that the maximum amount of funding

was used for project delivery. The College also provided venues and meeting rooms for the events and training activities.

In addition to the above the Partners provided good value for money as they are all relatively small organisations without expensive overheads and bureaucratic ways of working.

Through the Project we were able to offer low cost teacher training to the local community and a free to attend Job Search Workshop.

### **Senior managers involvement**

The Project Steering Group was chaired by the Director of Human Resources and regular progress reports relating to the Project were made to the College Senior leadership Team and Governing Body. The Project was also monitored through the College Equality and Diversity Committee which is attended by a number of senior managers and chaired by the Principal.

### **Stakeholder involvement**

The College BAME staff and learners were involved throughout the project. Community networks were involved in promoting the Project, in particular the positive action PTLLS course.

### **Learner involvement**

The Find Your Voice Research Project directly involved learners in the development of a teacher's resource and DVD. 10 peer researchers were recruited and trained from the student body. The peer researchers were involved in devising a questionnaire and conducting interviews with 50 learners and 10 members of staff.

### **Raising awareness**

The Project and its outcomes will be shared through the range of networks that the College is involved with including LSIS Regional E and D network, EMHE network, EMFEC etc. It will also be publicised through our website and our published information. It is envisaged that, as the project could be transferable across other sectors, there will be work with the REDP (Regional Equality and Diversity Partnership) to publicise it e.g. with local authorities and community sector.

The College's Annual Report on EDI (next year to be our published information) will be widely available and will include information about the Project.

### **Continuity of project, after LSIS funding**

The Positive Action Steering Group will continue to meet to plan and implement initiatives that address the College's EDI targets and objectives.

## **Did you experience any difficulties in implementing the project and how did you overcome these?**

The consultation with BAME staff of the College did not achieve the anticipated levels of engagement from College staff. Numerous means of communication with staff were used including focus groups, 1:1 interviews, telephone interviews and questionnaires.

## **The lessons learned**

As mentioned previously in the report we believe the project could be repeated in other sectors or by other providers not only in the context of race equality but also could be applied to other protected characteristics, for example disability.

Were we to run a similar project in the future we would focus more on individual coaching and mentoring rather than a structured leadership programme (one size fits all).

## **Sustainability – lasting legacy**

The Project will be sustained through the continuation of the Positive Action Steering Group (which will include BAME staff representatives and external partners) and the development of a new Positive Action Strategy with actions incorporated into the Equality Objectives for 2012/13. It will also be monitored on an ongoing basis through the BAME Staff Equality Forum and Equality and Diversity Committee.

## **Demonstrating impact – evidence of short and long term impact**

As a result of the project we hope to see:

- An increase in the % of BAME applicants to the College in 2012/13 (evidenced in annual report on workforce)
- An increase in the % of BAME staff and managers in 2011/12(evidenced in annual report on workforce)
- An improvement in the satisfaction ratings of BAME staff (evidenced in the E and D survey 2012/13)
- An improvement in managers' understanding of race equality, cultural competence and positive action (evidenced through staff development evaluations)

BAME people trained to join the sector as teachers through the PTLLS programme (attendees on positive action PTLLS programme to be tracked)

### **Additional comments**

We very much appreciate the opportunity to carry out this important project with the funding that LSIS have been able to provide us and look forward to working with them again in the future

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