



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Report 2024-25

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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the 2024-25 East Sussex College Annual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Report.

East Sussex College is a values-led organisation with the principles, protections and promotions of diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging at its core. It is our mission that everyone in our community is able to reach their potential and that there are no barriers to anyone fulfilling their goals.

We have added 'belonging' to the title of this report and to our agenda more broadly. This emphasises the importance we place on proactively creating a culture of unity.

Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging goals will be the focus of the work of the college's DEIB Committee. We will also focus on promoting and supporting connectivity and action for our LGBTQIA+ staff and students. We will retain a clear focus on support for the mental health and wellbeing of our college community, and we will continue to celebrate our diverse and amazing communities in East Sussex.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. Please do [contact us](#) if you have any feedback or ideas as to how we can better promote our DEIB agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Conroy".

Rebecca Conroy
Principal & CEO

DEIB STATEMENT

East Sussex College values diversity and recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences enhance our college community. We strive to ensure that these differences are celebrated. All members of the college community are expected to work together to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and listened to, regardless of their backgrounds.

Our college values support the principles of equity in opportunity and oppose discrimination. We will strive to challenge inequality for all members of our college community including those with protected characteristics (age, sex, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity). We recognise that discrimination may occur for other characteristics, such as a person's socio-economic status, which are not explicitly protected by the Equality Act 2010 and will strive to address this.

East Sussex College will take every possible step to ensure that staff, students and prospective staff and students are treated equally and fairly. All policies and practices will conform with the principles of equal opportunities, particularly in terms of recruitment, admission, selection and discipline.

The college will ensure that it meets its statutory requirements as a minimum and will always seek to exceed and enhance our DEIB work through learning from best practice and establishing our own excellent practice standards.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

Diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging underpin our college values. This report provides information on how East Sussex College is meeting its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster or encourage good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 place specific duties on public authorities to publish:

- Information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually
- Equality objectives at least every four years

The Equality Act 2010 applies in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

East Sussex College is committed to ensuring that:

- All colleagues, students and visitors should experience a supportive and nurturing environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Inappropriate behaviour and discriminatory practice are always challenged.
- Colleagues, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors and other persons in contact with the college are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Fair and equitable practices and procedures are designed to help members of our community to feel comfortable, and where individual differences are recognised and valued.
- Support is provided to colleagues, students and our partners to help them understand and meet their equality and diversity responsibilities and share the college's responsibility to embed equality, diversity and inclusion through the provision of its services and function.

PROUD VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

The college consulted with staff and students when it reflected on its culture and this included a review of core values, what they really mean and how we can be a genuinely inclusive college. Extensive work has been undertaken on our values and behaviours and they are widely publicised within the college and externally as part of the college's ethos.



DATA COLLECTION

It is important for the college to understand the DEI characteristics of its staff and students so that it can align its priorities, resources and energy with its demographic drivers. Since merger in 2018, there were gaps in data collection for both staff and students. Work has been done to significantly improve this position.

The following table describes the type of data collected, and how:

Protected Characteristic	Staff	Students
Age		Application form
Disability		Application and enrolment form
Gender reassignment	Equal opportunities form on Talos & MyView	Application and enrolment form (<i>term used: Gender Identity</i>)
Marriage or civil partnership		Not asked
Pregnancy and maternity	Via staff disclosure	Not asked
Race		Application and enrolment form (<i>Term used: Ethnicity</i>)
Religion	Equal opportunities form on Talos & MyView	Enrolment Form
Sex		Application and enrolment form
Sexual orientation		Enrolment form
Deprivation	Not asked	Application and enrolment form*

*Areas of deprivation can be identified via analysis of postcode; this is how the Tuition Fund is identified for students.

The data collected from staff and students is increasingly used to inform and support the college's strategic priorities and to ensure that the college is as inclusive and representative as it can possibly be.

STUDENT VOICE & DEIB

The college's Student Voice framework continues to play a vital role in shaping an inclusive and responsive culture. Students are encouraged to share their views openly, and leaders act on this feedback to strengthen provision, remove barriers, and enhance the overall student experience. A diverse and representative Student Voice body ensures that perspectives from all campuses, curriculum areas and learning types, including those of students with high needs funding, EHCPs, and adult students, are consistently reflected in decision-making. As a result, students feel listened to, valued, and involved in shaping their college experience.

Structured, termly campus-based Student Council meetings provide clear channels for discussion and action. Each course elects two Student Representatives, ensuring wide participation and balanced representation. Student Reps receive training to develop confidence and communication

skills, enabling them to raise issues constructively and work collaboratively with managers. This partnership model strengthens the sense of belonging and shared responsibility across the college community.

During 2024-25, the college has further embedded its PROUD values across all aspects of college life. These values are now integral to tutorials, enrichment, and the Code of Conduct, promoting a culture where respectful behaviour, inclusivity and high expectations are the norm. The *Living the PROUD Values* tutorial programme and campus-wide campaigns have reinforced these principles and helped to cultivate an environment in which students feel safe, confident, and proud to belong.

The continuation of free breakfast and soup provision has reduced financial barriers and supported attendance, engagement, and wellbeing. This initiative promotes equality of opportunity by ensuring all students can access healthy food without stigma, particularly supporting those most affected by cost-of-living pressures.

Following a comprehensive review, the college's tutorial programme has been fully redeveloped to include refreshed, level-appropriate content on diversity, inclusion, intersectionality, digital wellbeing and anti-racism. This ensures that all students engage meaningfully with contemporary social issues and understand the importance of respect, empathy, and active citizenship.

Mental health and wellbeing remain central to the college's personal development strategy. The dedicated Wellbeing team continues to offer proactive support, early intervention, and signposting to external agencies when required. Initiatives such as *Togetherall* and the *My Student Life* digital platform ensure that all students can access help and resources when needed. Enrichment sessions and awareness campaigns promote resilience, self-care, and peer support, helping students to maintain positive mental health and stay engaged in their studies.

The college has expanded its Level 1 and Level 2 provision as the first phase of a longer-term strategy to build coherent progression pathways from Level 1 to Level 6. This multi-year development, embedded within the college's Curriculum & Skills Master Plan, is designed to ensure that every student, regardless of starting point, has a clear and purposeful route through study, skills development and progression to higher-level learning or employment. New and redeveloped programmes such as Employability Skills, Pathways and the Level 2 to A Level Bridging Programme are early examples of this work, providing structured routes that strengthen student confidence and readiness for advanced study. Over the next two years, this model will be further expanded through the development of Level 3-6 vocational and higher technical pathways, aligning closely with local skills priorities and higher education progression routes. This sustained, inclusive approach is central to the college's ambition to address skills gaps, enhance social mobility, and ensure that education remains a transformative force for students and communities across East Sussex.

The college's approach to inclusion and student experience delivers lasting impact that extends beyond the classroom. Learning environments across all campuses are intentionally designed to be inclusive, accessible, and inspiring, enabling every student, including those with SEND, ALS and high needs, to participate fully and achieve success. The curriculum and enrichment offer promote belonging and collective responsibility through the PROUD values, while also embedding sustainability and social responsibility across study programmes. Students are encouraged to consider their role in shaping a fairer, greener future through projects, enterprise challenges, and community engagement initiatives. In line with the college's Strategic Plan, curriculum pathways

reflect the socioeconomic priorities of East Sussex by addressing disadvantage, supporting progression into employment or further study, and contributing to local workforce and regeneration needs. As a result, students develop the knowledge, confidence, and civic awareness needed to make a sustained positive impact on their communities and on society as a whole.

Student perception data continues to demonstrate the positive impact of these initiatives. In 2024-25, 94% of students reported feeling safe at college, 94% agreed that the college provides a respectful and inclusive environment, and 93% felt they are treated fairly by staff. These consistently high outcomes confirm that students experience a culture of inclusion, respect, and belonging that supports both their personal development and academic success.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Achievement across all programmes was 82.6% in 2024-25, with 16,086 students completing programmes a 3.8 percentage point improvement from 78.8% in 2023-24. Adult students drove this improvement, achieving 88.0% (up 9.2%), while 16-18 achievement remained stable at 78.9%.

Most groups perform within a 3-4% margin or above this benchmark, but persistent gaps exist for specific populations.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Free School Meals students** - 75.3% achievement (8.2% below peers), rising to 83.3% (-3.5% below peers) when E&M and Pathways excluded.
- **Disadvantaged postcodes** - 80.9% achievement (2.4 points below peers), rising to 86.2% (-0.7% below peers) when E&M and Pathways excluded.
- **Learning Difficulty/Disability** - 80.8% achievement (3.0% below peers) with 6,299 leavers (1,250 increase from prior year).
- **High Needs students** - 87.3% achievement, outperforming peers by 4.9%.
- **Looked After Children** - 81.9% achievement, nearly matching peers (0.7% gap).
- **Gypsy/Irish Traveller students** - 58.1% achievement (62 leavers), 24.5 points persistently below average, driven by severe retention and pass rate issues requiring urgent targeted intervention.
- **Trans women students** - 61.1% achievement (18 leavers), declined from 80.8% in 2023-24, with critical retention challenges requiring immediate pastoral support review.

Achievement gaps concentrate in Functional Skills English & Maths and Pathways provision, not across most mainstream programmes. When these are excluded, vulnerable groups perform comparably to peers. The college remains committed to ensuring that no student's background, identity, or circumstance limits their success.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY DEPRIVATION (FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM) ELIGIBILITY)

All data		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.1%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.7%	6,781	81.6%	6,545	88.0%
Does Not Receive Free School Meals	All Ages	12,751	83.3%	13,951	80.6%	14,261	83.5%
	16 - 18	6,441	79.9%	7,289	79.7%	7,811	79.7%
	19+	6,310	86.9%	6,662	81.6%	6,450	88.1%
Receives Free School Meals	All Ages	1,172	74.4%	1,310	74.4%	1,825	75.3%
	16 - 18	1,090	74.2%	1,191	73.6%	1,730	75.0%
	19+	82	76.8%	119	83.2%	95	80.0%

Adjusted data removing E&M and Pathways		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	10,711	85.9%	11,987	82.8%	12,042	86.5%
	16 - 18	4,824	83.5%	5,619	83.1%	5,997	83.5%
	19+	5,887	87.9%	6,368	82.5%	6,045	89.5%
Does Not Receive Free School Meals	All Ages	10,061	86.3%	11,194	82.9%	11,055	86.8%
	16 - 18	4,239	84.0%	4,930	83.5%	5,096	83.4%
	19+	5,822	88.0%	6,264	82.4%	5,959	89.7%
Receives Free School Meals	All Ages	650	80.2%	793	81.1%	987	83.3%
	16 - 18	585	80.2%	689	80.0%	901	83.6%
	19+	65	80.0%	104	88.5%	86	80.2%

Analysis

In 2024-25, students receiving Free School Meals (FSM) achieved 75.3% (1,825 leavers), where non free school meal peers achieved 83.5% (14,261 leavers), maintaining a consistent gap of over -8.2%, driven by their over-representation in lower-performing Functional Skills English and Maths (E&M) and Pathways programmes, compounded by low attendance and variable teaching quality, particularly at the Hastings campus.

When excluding E&M and Pathways, FSM achievement rises to 83.3%, closely with their peers of 86.8% and non-FSM students (86.8%). This indicates that high-quality provision enables FSM students to perform comparably, highlighting the need for targeted improvements in E&M and Pathways, alongside enhanced attendance and engagement strategies, to close the gap and ensure equitable outcomes.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY DEPRIVATION (DISADVANTAGE UPLIFT)

Full Data		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.1%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.7%	6,781	81.6%	6,545	88.0%
Not applicable or not provided	All Ages	9,604	82.8%	10,595	80.4%	11,401	83.3%
	16 - 18	5,340	80.0%	6,101	80.2%	6,895	79.9%
	19+	4,264	86.2%	4,494	80.7%	4,506	88.4%
From deprived area - postcode on LSC file	All Ages	4,319	82.2%	4,666	79.4%	4,685	80.9%
	16 - 18	2,191	76.8%	2,379	75.5%	2,646	76.2%
	19+	2,128	87.8%	2,287	83.5%	2,039	87.0%

Adjusted data removing E&M and Pathways		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	10,711	85.9%	11,987	82.8%	12,042	86.5%
	16 - 18	4,824	83.5%	5,619	83.1%	5,997	83.5%
	19+	5,887	87.9%	6,368	82.5%	6,045	89.5%
Not applicable or not provided	All Ages	7,453	85.8%	8,446	82.3%	8,702	86.6%
	16 - 18	3,539	84.2%	4,220	83.2%	4,531	83.6%
	19+	3,914	87.1%	4,226	81.3%	4,171	89.9%
From deprived area - postcode on LSC file	All Ages	3,258	86.4%	3,541	84.0%	3,340	86.2%
	16 - 18	1,285	81.7%	1,399	82.6%	1,466	83.1%
	19+	1,973	89.4%	2,142	85.0%	1,874	88.7%

Analysis

Students from disadvantaged postcodes achieved 80.9% with a significant uplift in the number of leavers slightly below their peers at 83.3%, driven by over-representation in lower-performing Functional Skills English and Maths (E&M) and Pathways programmes. When excluding E&M and Pathways, disadvantaged students' achievement rises to 86.2%, nearly matching the adjusted college average of 86.5%, with 16–18s (83.1%) closing the gap to -0.4% and 19+ students (88.7%) performing comparably to peers (89.9%).

This confirms that curriculum concentration in E&M, not inherent ability on main programmes, drives the gap, supported by confirmed retention and engagement challenges. The college's focus on high-quality provision, targeted mentoring, and improved tracking has narrowed disparities, with ongoing enhancements in E&M and Pathways critical to ensuring equitable outcomes for disadvantaged students.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY DISABILITY (LEARNING DIFFICULTY OR DISABILITY)

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.1%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.7%	6,781	81.6%	6,545	88.0%
LLD - Yes	All Ages	4,471	78.9%	5,048	79.8%	6,299	80.8%
	16 - 18	2,910	77.1%	3,282	78.2%	3,885	76.6%
	19+	1,561	82.1%	1,766	82.7%	2,414	87.6%
LLD - No	All Ages	9,450	84.4%	8,829	82.4%	8,777	83.8%
	16 - 18	4,621	80.2%	5,026	79.4%	5,299	80.7%
	19+	4,829	88.3%	3,803	86.4%	3,478	88.5%
LLD - Unknown	All Ages	2	0.0%	1,384	66.3%	1,010	83.0%
	16 - 18	0	n/a	172	75.6%	357	76.8%
	19+	2	0.0%	1,212	64.9%	653	86.4%

Analysis

Students with a declared learning difficulty or disability (LLD) achieved 80.8%, slightly below their peers at 83.8% leaving a gap of 3.0 percentage points but with 1250 more leavers from the previous year.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY DISABILITY (HIGH NEEDS)

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve %	Leavers	Achieve %	Leavers	Achieve %
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.1%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.7%	6,781	81.6%	6,545	88.0%
Not High Needs	All Ages	13,572	82.5%	14,834	79.8%	15,544	82.4%
	16 - 18	7,286	79.0%	8,207	78.7%	9,199	78.7%
	19+	6,286	86.6%	6,627	81.3%	6,345	87.8%
Has High Needs	All Ages	351	84.3%	427	89.0%	542	87.3%
	16 - 18	245	80.4%	273	85.3%	342	83.9%
	19+	106	93.4%	154	95.5%	200	93.0%

Analysis

High Needs students achieved 87.3% (542 leavers), surpassing non-High Needs students (82.4%), with achievement for high needs students remaining consistently high reflecting the effectiveness of targeted support, structured transition planning, and inclusive curriculum delivery.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY ETHNICITY

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.1%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.7%	6,781	81.6%	6,545	88.0%
White	All Ages	11,634	82.1%	12,506	79.7%	13,199	82.0%
	16 - 18	6,544	79.1%	7,239	78.7%	8,047	78.5%
	19+	5,090	85.9%	5,267	81.0%	5,152	87.5%
Non-White	All Ages	1,940	85.5%	2,292	81.9%	2,377	84.6%
	16 - 18	807	79.1%	1,056	79.5%	1,269	80.5%
	19+	1,133	90.1%	1,236	84.0%	1,108	89.2%
Unknown	All Ages	349	84.0%	463	82.3%	510	87.5%
	16 - 18	180	78.3%	185	81.1%	225	83.1%
	19+	169	89.9%	278	83.1%	285	90.9%
White British	All Ages	9,946	80.6%	10,975	78.8%	11,685	81.7%
	16 - 18	6,082	78.9%	6,714	78.4%	7,475	78.5%
	19+	3,864	83.3%	4,261	79.5%	4,210	87.4%
Irish	All Ages	74	85.1%	56	76.8%	72	84.7%
	16 - 18	22	81.8%	23	78.3%	32	71.9%
	19+	52	86.5%	33	75.8%	40	95.0%
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	All Ages	38	73.7%	38	60.5%	62	58.1%
	16 - 18	28	75.0%	32	62.5%	45	48.9%
	19+	10	70.0%	6	50.0%	17	82.4%
Other White	All Ages	1,576	91.4%	1,437	86.7%	1,380	85.4%
	16 - 18	412	82.0%	470	83.8%	495	81.2%
	19+	1,164	94.8%	967	88.1%	885	87.8%
White/Black Caribbean	All Ages	96	85.4%	162	74.1%	177	75.7%
	16 - 18	45	84.4%	108	69.4%	130	73.8%
	19+	51	86.3%	54	83.3%	47	80.9%
White/Black African	All Ages	99	86.9%	134	76.1%	100	75.0%
	16 - 18	58	86.2%	94	71.3%	69	71.0%
	19+	41	87.8%	40	87.5%	31	83.9%
White/Asian	All Ages	186	87.1%	224	89.7%	193	83.9%
	16 - 18	82	79.3%	123	85.4%	119	82.4%
	19+	104	93.3%	101	95.0%	74	86.5%
Other Mixed	All Ages	280	78.9%	316	78.8%	383	82.8%
	16 - 18	166	71.7%	219	76.3%	275	78.5%
	19+	114	89.5%	97	84.5%	108	93.5%
Indian	All Ages	36	80.6%	97	74.2%	89	86.5%
	16 - 18	12	91.7%	48	89.6%	43	88.4%
	19+	24	75.0%	49	59.2%	46	84.8%
Pakistani	All Ages	13	76.9%	13	69.2%	18	88.9%
	16 - 18	3	100.0%	3	100.0%	7	85.7%
	19+	10	70.0%	10	60.0%	11	90.9%
Bangladeshi	All Ages	37	83.8%	60	86.7%	67	82.1%

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
	16 - 18	10	100.0%	29	89.7%	30	66.7%
	19+	27	77.8%	31	83.9%	37	94.6%
Chinese	All Ages	53	94.3%	77	88.3%	93	93.5%
	16 - 18	13	84.6%	15	73.3%	24	91.7%
	19+	40	97.5%	62	91.9%	69	94.2%
Other Asian	All Ages	252	83.3%	254	79.5%	303	85.5%
	16 - 18	87	72.4%	90	81.1%	127	82.7%
	19+	165	89.1%	164	78.7%	176	87.5%
African	All Ages	226	87.6%	275	80.0%	262	85.9%
	16 - 18	104	86.5%	133	80.5%	163	82.8%
	19+	122	88.5%	142	79.6%	99	90.9%
Caribbean	All Ages	21	71.4%	30	80.0%	60	75.0%
	16 - 18	3	0.0%	9	88.9%	34	76.5%
	19+	18	83.3%	21	76.2%	26	73.1%
Other Black	All Ages	90	82.2%	107	83.2%	120	79.2%
	16 - 18	52	75.0%	56	82.1%	71	76.1%
	19+	38	92.1%	51	84.3%	49	83.7%
Arab	All Ages	267	85.4%	239	85.8%	217	91.2%
	16 - 18	72	69.4%	64	82.8%	80	92.5%
	19+	195	91.3%	175	86.9%	137	90.5%
Other	All Ages	284	92.6%	304	87.2%	295	89.8%
	16 - 18	100	89.0%	65	86.2%	97	85.6%
	19+	184	94.6%	239	87.4%	198	91.9%
Not Provided	All Ages	349	84.0%	463	82.3%	510	87.5%
	16 - 18	180	78.3%	185	81.1%	225	83.1%
	19+	169	89.9%	278	83.1%	285	90.9%

Analysis

Achievement rates across ethnic groups align closely with the college average of 82.6%, reflecting an inclusive environment where ethnicity has minimal impact on outcomes. Non-White students (84.6%, 2,377 leavers) outperform White students (82.0%, 13,199 leavers), with groups like Chinese (93.5%), Arab (91.2%), and African (85.9%) exceeding the average, while White British (81.7%) fall slightly below due to confirmed retention issues and poor English and Maths (E&M) performance in lower-level courses. White/Black African (75.0%) and White/Black Caribbean (75.7%) students underperform due to pass rates, while Gypsy/Irish Traveller students (58.1%, 62 leavers) show a persistent gap due to retention and pass rates. Where groups lag behind their peers this variability is due to lower retention and pass rates and low cohort sizes produce larger variability in statistics.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY GENDER IDENTITY

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.2%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.9%	6,781	81.9%	6,545	88.3%
Not provided	All Ages	9,105	81.5%	5,306	77.1%	4,792	83.6%
	16 - 18	4,819	79.0%	2,759	82.6%	3,087	82.8%
	19+	4,286	84.2%	2,547	71.0%	1,705	85.1%
Female	All Ages	2,733	86.6%	4,866	83.6%	5,887	83.8%
	16 - 18	1,231	79.3%	2,346	76.8%	2,843	76.3%
	19+	1,502	92.7%	2,520	90.0%	3,044	90.9%
Male	All Ages	1,925	82.8%	4,531	79.8%	4,788	80.3%
	16 - 18	1,353	79.2%	3,033	76.5%	3,258	77.3%
	19+	572	91.4%	1,498	86.6%	1,530	86.7%
Non-Binary	All Ages	75	78.7%	123	83.7%	117	74.4%
	16 - 18	63	79.4%	99	81.8%	87	72.4%
	19+	12	75.0%	24	91.7%	30	80.0%
Other	All Ages	25	84.0%	48	87.5%	28	75.0%
	16 - 18	20	85.0%	41	87.8%	25	72.0%
	19+	5	80.0%	7	85.7%	3	100.0%
I would prefer not to say	All Ages	22	81.8%	319	85.0%	412	86.4%
	16 - 18	14	71.4%	155	83.9%	197	83.8%
	19+	8	100.0%	164	86.0%	215	88.8%
Trans Women	All Ages	9	100.0%	26	80.8%	18	61.1%
	16 - 18	5	100.0%	17	94.1%	16	56.3%
	19+	4	100.0%	9	55.6%	2	100.0%
Trans Male	All Ages	29	65.5%	42	78.6%	44	97.7%
	16 - 18	26	61.5%	30	90.0%	28	96.4%
	19+	3	100.0%	12	50.0%	16	100.0%

Analysis

Achievement rates across gender identity groups closely align with the college average of 82.6%, indicating an inclusive environment where gender identity has minimal impact on outcomes. Female students (83.8%, 5,887 leavers) slightly outperform the average, while male students (80.3%, 4,788 leavers) are just below, with adults (female: 90.9%; male: 86.7%) outperforming 16–18-year-olds (female: 76.3%; male: 77.3%) due to confirmed retention issues.

Non-binary (74.4%, 117 leavers) and other gender (75.0%, 28 leavers) groups fall below average, though small cohort sizes warrant caution.

Trans male students excel at 97.7% (44 leavers, up from 78.6% in 2023-24), while trans women students (61.1%, 18 leavers) show a decline from 80.8%, due to retention and poorer pass rates.

ACHIEVEMENT BY RELIGION (SECOND YEAR OF COLLECTION)

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.2%	16,086	82.7%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.9%	6,781	81.9%	6,545	88.3%
Agnostic	All Ages	255	87.1%	318	87.4%	287	88.5%
	16 - 18	82	85.4%	77	89.6%	71	81.7%
	19+	173	87.9%	241	86.7%	216	90.7%
Atheist	All Ages	91	95.6%	364	88.7%	390	84.1%
	16 - 18	4	100.0%	220	85.0%	278	80.6%
	19+	87	95.4%	144	94.4%	112	92.9%
Buddhist	All Ages	38	92.1%	85	83.5%	96	92.7%
	16 - 18	5	100.0%	24	87.5%	31	90.3%
	19+	33	90.9%	61	82.0%	65	93.8%
Christian	All Ages	1,593	88.6%	1,664	86.6%	2,040	86.7%
	16 - 18	478	81.8%	570	78.4%	682	77.6%
	19+	1,115	91.6%	1,094	90.9%	1,358	91.3%
Hindu	All Ages	17	94.1%	50	88.0%	70	85.7%
	16 - 18	9	100.0%	35	88.6%	45	80.0%
	19+	8	87.5%	15	86.7%	25	96.0%
Jewish	All Ages	7	100.0%	7	85.7%	17	100.0%
	16 - 18	2	100.0%	1	100.0%	4	100.0%
	19+	5	100.0%	6	83.3%	13	100.0%
Muslim	All Ages	593	89.4%	498	85.1%	439	86.8%
	16 - 18	173	79.2%	118	81.4%	155	81.9%
	19+	420	93.6%	380	86.3%	284	89.4%
Sikh	All Ages	0	n/a	7	71.4%	4	100.0%
	16 - 18	0	n/a	3	100.0%	0	n/a
	19+	0	n/a	4	50.0%	4	100.0%
No religion	All Ages	3,939	80.5%	3,933	79.0%	4,220	78.6%
	16 - 18	2,923	77.7%	2,732	75.8%	2,905	74.7%
	19+	1,016	88.3%	1,201	86.3%	1,315	87.3%
Other	All Ages	280	82.1%	253	78.9%	269	86.6%
	16 - 18	105	69.5%	74	67.6%	53	79.2%
	19+	175	89.7%	179	83.6%	216	88.4%
Prefer not to say	All Ages	1,101	82.7%	1,623	82.6%	1,583	85.8%
	16 - 18	513	76.4%	877	78.6%	667	79.9%
	19+	588	88.1%	746	87.4%	916	90.2%
Not recorded	All Ages	6,009	81.3%	6,459	77.5%	6,671	82.3%
	16 - 18	3,237	80.3%	3,749	80.7%	4,650	81.2%
	19+	2,772	82.6%	2,710	73.1%	2,021	85.0%

Analysis

Achievement rates across religious groups at the college average 82.7%, with most groups, including Christian (86.7%), Muslim (86.8%), Agnostic (88.5%), and Buddhist (92.7%), performing at

or above this benchmark, reflecting an inclusive environment where religion minimally impacts outcomes. Smaller cohorts like Jewish (100%) and Sikh (100%) excel, though low numbers (17 and 4 leavers) warrant caution. The "No religion" group (78.6%) falls slightly below average, driven by lower 16–18 achievement (74.7%) due to confirmed retention and pass rate issues, while adults (87.3%) perform strongly.

ACHIEVEMENT RATE BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION

		22-23		23-24		24-25	
		Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve	Leavers	Achieve
Headline	All Ages	13,923	82.6%	15,261	80.2%	16,086	82.6%
	16 - 18	7,531	79.0%	8,480	78.9%	9,541	78.9%
	19+	6,392	86.9%	6,781	81.9%	6,545	88.3%
Heterosexual	All Ages	4,678	83.4%	5,635	81.8%	6,969	82.3%
	16 - 18	2,653	77.9%	3,063	75.8%	3,681	75.7%
	19+	2,025	90.5%	2,572	88.9%	3,288	89.7%
Bisexual	All Ages	402	80.8%	452	81.6%	395	78.5%
	16 - 18	321	79.1%	326	82.5%	269	75.1%
	19+	81	87.7%	126	79.2%	126	85.7%
Homosexual	All Ages	244	86.5%	205	84.9%	252	82.1%
	16 - 18	155	83.2%	95	78.9%	146	78.8%
	19+	89	92.1%	110	90.0%	106	86.8%
Pan-Sexual	All Ages	112	76.8%	87	78.2%	104	78.8%
	16 - 18	85	71.8%	58	75.9%	76	76.3%
	19+	27	92.6%	29	82.8%	28	85.7%
Asexual	All Ages	196	83.7%	58	93.1%	44	86.4%
	16 - 18	110	78.2%	36	91.7%	30	83.3%
	19+	86	90.7%	22	95.5%	14	92.9%
Prefer not to say	All Ages	1,772	81.9%	2,295	83.0%	1,984	86.4%
	16 - 18	936	76.8%	1,198	80.9%	855	81.3%
	19+	836	87.7%	1,097	85.4%	1,129	90.2%
Not recorded	All Ages	6,519	82.3%	6,529	77.6%	6,338	82.3%
	16 - 18	3,271	80.6%	3,704	80.4%	4,484	81.3%
	19+	3,248	84.1%	2,825	74.0%	1,854	84.8%

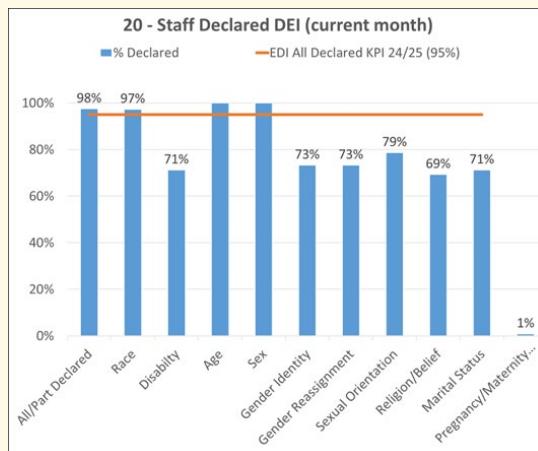
Analysis

Achievement rates across sexual orientation groups closely align with the college average of 82.6%, ranging from 78.5% (Bisexual) to 86.4% (Asexual, Prefer not to say), reflecting an inclusive environment where sexual orientation minimally impacts outcomes. Heterosexual (82.3%) and homosexual (82.1%) students match or approach the average, while bisexual (78.5%) and pansexual (78.8%) students are slightly below, driven by lower 16–18 achievement (75.1% and 76.3%) due to retention and pass rates, though adults (85.7% and 85.7%) perform strongly. Asexual students (86.4%) and those preferring not to disclose (86.4%) exceed the average. Unrecorded orientation (82.3%) aligns with the average.

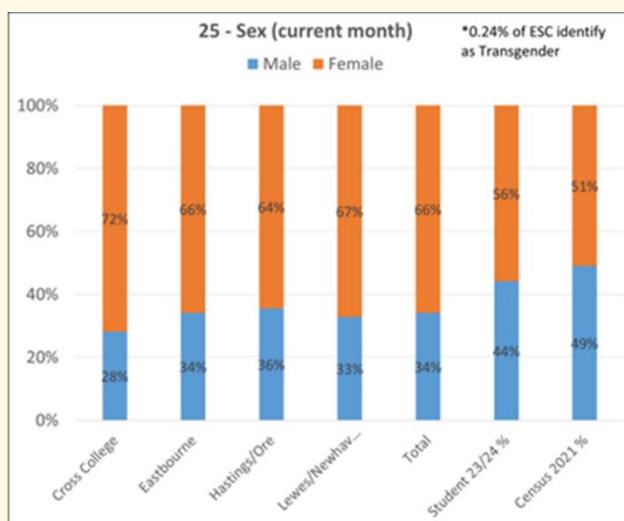
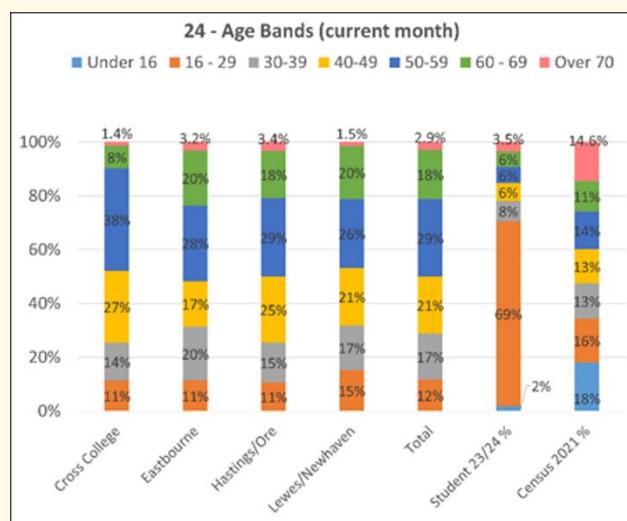
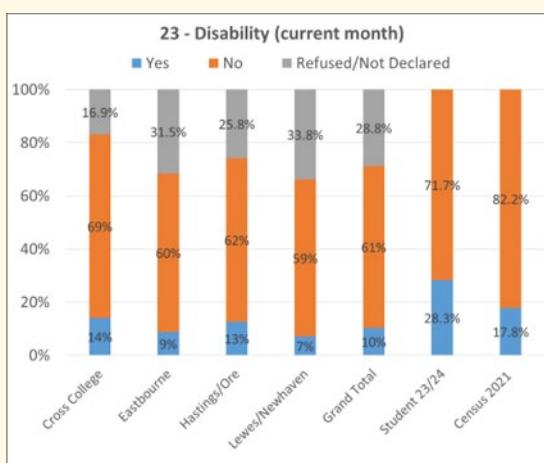
OUR PEOPLE

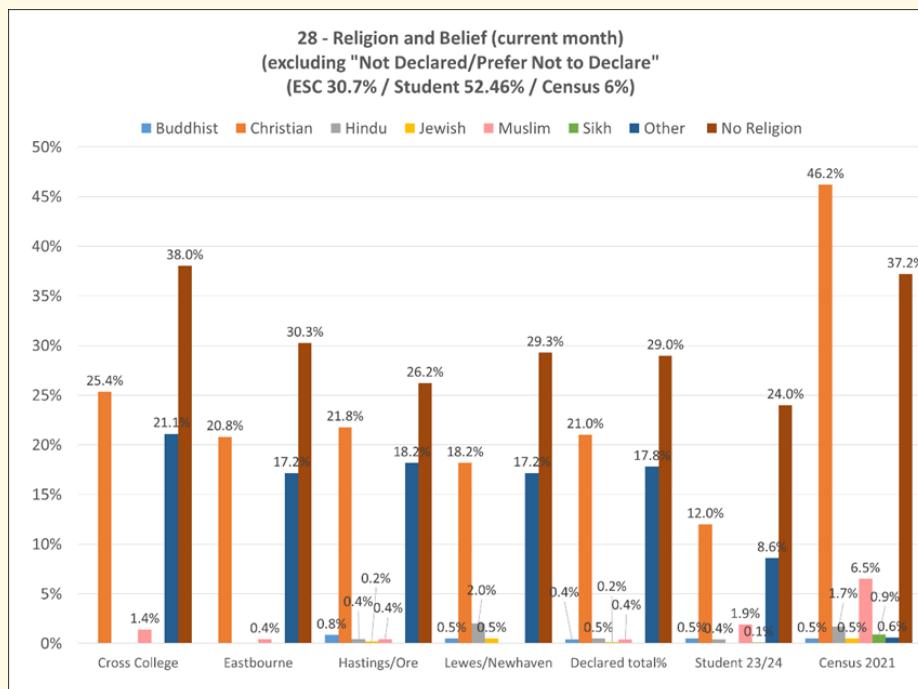
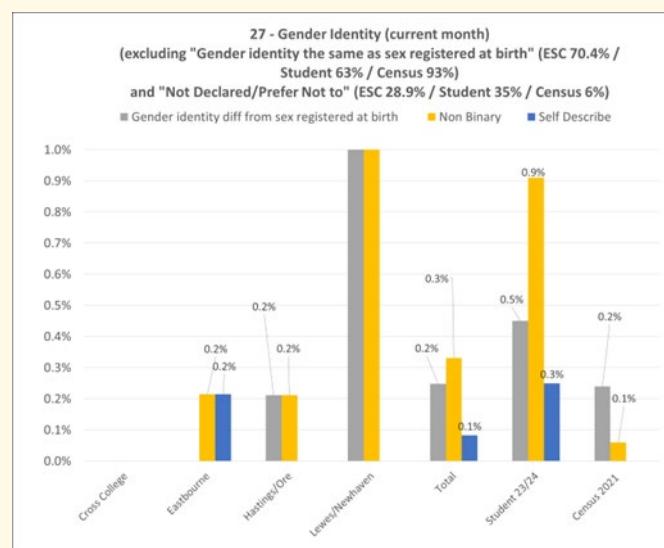
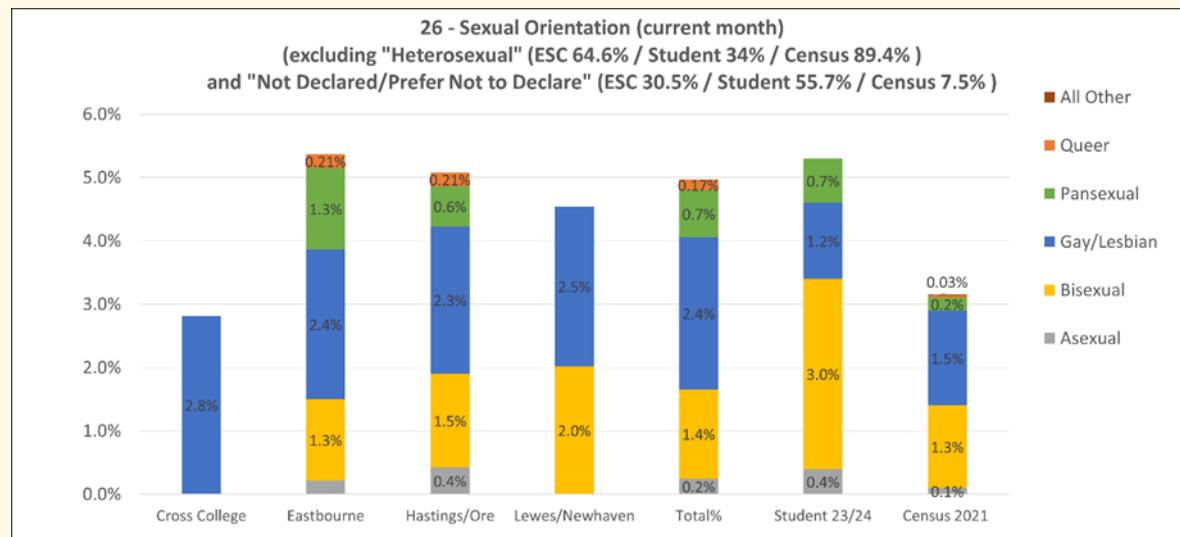
STAFF DATA COLLECTION

Full or partial employee DEI data disclosure has continued to increase from 84.5% in 2023, to 95% in 2024, to 97% in 2025. This is supported by the now embedded Applicant Tracking System, as well as the college's annual declaration programme.



DEI PROFILE OF OUR PEOPLE





DEI PROFILE COMPARISON – OUR PEOPLE, STUDENTS & LOCAL COMMUNITY

The college compares its employee DEI profile to those of the Local and Student populations, as well as previous years.

Staff profile changes during academic year 24-25:

- Gender profile remains consistent, with 66% female and 34% male.
- 0.24% of ESC staff identify as transgender.
- Race profile remains consistent, with 86% declaring as white. This compares with 89% of the student population, however the 8.6% of undeclared employees makes this an indirect comparison.
- A slight increase (from 9.7% to 10%) in employees disclosing a disability in line with the previous trend. This compares with 28.3% of students and 17.8% of the wider community.
- The employee population over 50 years of age has again increased, from 47% in 22-23, to 48% in 23-24 to 50% in 24-25.
- There were 7 employees on maternity leave in 24-25.
- A slight continuation of the increase in employees disclosing their sexuality as non-heterosexual, from 4.7% to 4.9%.
- A slight reduction in both employees declaring themselves Christian (21.6% to 21%) and in those declaring no religion (30.4% to 29%). Representation of those declaring their religion as Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim has increased, with those declaring their religion as Jewish remaining the same.

Whilst the college continues to monitor its employee profile alongside those of the student and wider populations, care should be taken when comparing what are essentially three different data sets – college employees containing only those of working age; the student cohort with a much higher proportion of those aged 16-29 and the wider census data, which includes both under-16s (18%) and those over 70 (14.6%). Annual comparison with college profile data is therefore also an important measure of progress.

The Talent Acquisition team continues to promote roles across a wide variety of media, including job boards focusing on a variety of racial backgrounds and LGBTQ+ candidates, in order to attract as diverse a pool of candidates as possible to our roles. The college also operates the Disability Confident scheme, ensuring that candidates who have declared a disability and who meet the essential role criteria are guaranteed an interview. This year, the college has also introduced unbiased shortlisting, whereby recruiting managers are not made aware of any candidate personal details, including name, to ensure that shortlisting decisions are free from unconscious bias and based purely on skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the role.

Gender pay gap data March 2025

The annual Gender Pay Gap Report is shared at the first Resources, Culture & Impact committee of the academic year.

Data for March 2025 shows that the mean gender pay gap (average of the hourly pay of each gender as a percentage of men's pay) has decreased by 0.3% since last year, however the median gender pay gap (middle hourly pay point) has increased by 3.1%.

The majority of the college's staff continues to be female (66%), which is in line with the FE sector. The college has seen an increase of 0.8% in the representation of women in the upper pay quartile this year, along with a smaller increase of 0.2% in the lower pay quartile.

The college has embedded a job evaluation scheme for non-teaching colleagues; this came into effect in January 2024 and ensures that these roles are paid according to evaluated criteria.

A new pay scheme for teaching staff has been consulted on and agreed and is due to come into effect in January 2026. This will have the effect of reducing the number of pay progression points and will introduce thresholds based on quality and qualification of teaching staff.

STAFF CPD

All staff continue to complete essential training modules online when they join the college, which includes DEI. Existing staff continue to receive face to face refresher sessions each September, including guidance around wellbeing, the enhanced Employee Assistance Programme (which now includes coaching for every employee and an enhanced financial advice provision), the staff Think Tanks and the newly enhanced Code of Conduct.

The college is now finalising plans for a new 2-3 year CPD programme, following consultation with both curriculum and non-curriculum colleagues. This will provide a more focused programme of CPD across the college, but will retain key messaging in support of the PROUD values throughout.

GOVERNOR DATA COLLECTION

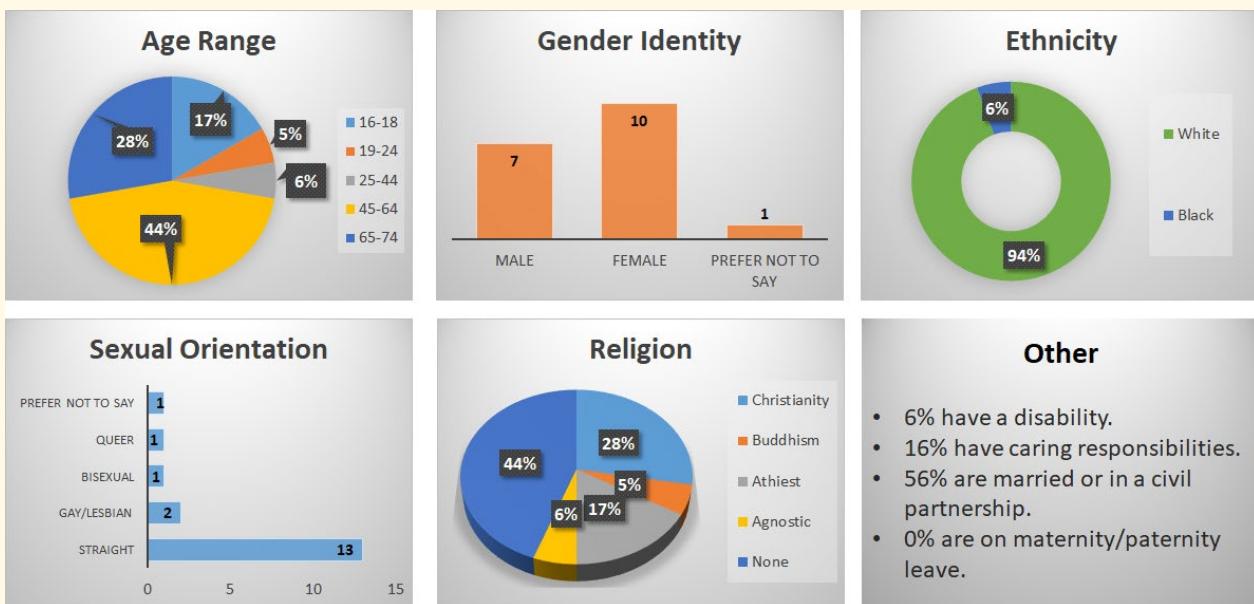
As part of the East Sussex College vision to be the learning provider of choice, the Governing Board is committed to reflecting the diversity of the people and communities that the college serves. This is to ensure that the Board has the breadth of insight and experience needed to govern a genuinely inclusive and prosperous organisation.

Diversity brings competing perspectives and is an important protection against 'group think' at Board level. In this regard, the diversity of Governors ensures that the overall quality of decision-making is enhanced. Diversity information is captured during the initial Independent Governor application process and subsequently on an annual basis, via a Skills Audit Survey. Student and Staff Governors are now asked to complete a diversity survey upon appointment to the Board. This data is used to support the Board in enhancing its diversification agenda.

As part of the Board's Governor Recruitment & Succession Planning Policy, Governors are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, with an appropriate balance of skills, gender, race and ethnicity, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation sought.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) data for Independent Governors was gathered as part of the 2025 Annual Skills Audit process, for which all Governors of all role types submitted a response.

The following summary DEIB information for 2024-25 was consolidated as output of this process:



COMPARISON TO 2023-24 YEAR DEI DATA

- 11 respondents were female, 7 were male and 1 respondent preferred not to say.
- 47% were aged 45-64, 26% aged 65-74, 11% aged 19-24, 11% aged 16-18 and 5% aged 25-44.
- 13 respondents identified as heterosexual/straight, 2 as gay/lesbian, 1 as bisexual, 1 as queer and 2 preferred not to say.
- 79% of respondents identified as white (Welsh, English, Scottish, Irish, British), 11% as mixed, 5% as white other, and 5% Asian.
- 5% of respondents advised that they had caring responsibilities.
- 5% of respondents declared that they had a disability.
- 53% of respondents advised that they were married or in a civil partnership.
- 42% of respondents indicated that they did not hold religious beliefs, 26% advised that they were atheist, 11% identified as Christian, 5% as Jewish and 16% advised that they preferred not to say.

THE BOARD'S KEY DEIB PRIORITIES

- Establish a Board membership that is representative of the communities that it serves, whilst continuing to prioritise diversity of thought.
- Ensure that promotional materials related to Governor recruitment processes are directly aligned to the Board's DEI strategy and agenda.
- Ensure that a broad range of recruitment channels are leveraged to maximise opportunities to engage with prospective candidates from diverse backgrounds.

FUTURE RECRUITMENT

The Board continues to ensure effective representation in its membership from a sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation perspective. However, further work is needed to ensure greater diversity from an ethnicity and age perspective.

Governor recruitment materials actively promote the Board's DEIB agenda, and a range of recruitment channels are routinely leveraged, including local volunteer action groups, the Black Leadership Group Job Board and various other forums.

ACTION PLAN UPDATE

DEI objectives 24-25

Objective	Outcome
Student experience	
Expand the use of inclusive and decolonised educational resources, using AI to support the creation of a fully decolonised and diverse set of resources and lesson planning tools.	The college has trained teaching staff in inclusive curriculum design and developed AI-enhanced, decolonised tutorial materials differentiated by level and provision type, ensuring diverse perspectives across Study Programmes, Adult provision, High Needs, and Apprenticeships.
Analyse student engagement data using DEI characteristics to ensure their access to student voice, enrichment and careers progression support	The college has embedded systematic analysis of student voice, enrichment, and careers participation data by protected characteristics within the Student Experience 3-Year Plan, enabling targeted interventions where vulnerable groups show lower engagement.
Use feedback from the student survey on Unity & Belonging, which identified appearance as a factor in bullying, to collaborate further with students via the Student Councils and develop awareness resources	Students decided that this issue should be represented through awareness days, which were held during the year, allowing for ongoing dialogue and education around inclusion, respect, and celebrating individuality.
Quality	
Strengthen TLA strategies to prioritise ESOL students and the wider community's achievement, progression, and integration, ensuring fair outcomes that reflect their distinct needs and the diverse student community	The college has prioritised ESOL student achievement through the deployment of Enhanced Quality Teaching Practitioners and Personal Development Wellbeing Tutors, resulting in achievement rates exceeding 90%. The ESOL department has been graded Exceptional, reflecting outstanding teaching, learning, and assessment practices that support progression and integration. This model demonstrates how targeted specialist support enables students with distinct needs to achieve outcomes that exceed college averages, while fostering successful integration into the broader student community and local area.
Create and implement tutorial resources that develop awareness among all students of local community needs and encourage a sense of belonging. These materials will ensure students engage positively with the broader community, enhancing inclusivity and social cohesion	The college has created comprehensive tutorial resources, differentiated by level and provision type, that develop student awareness of local community needs and encourage a sense of belonging. These materials developed using AI-enhanced inclusive curriculum design principles ensure students engage positively with the broader community across Lewes, Newhaven, Eastbourne, and Hastings, enhancing inclusivity and social cohesion. Resources incorporate decolonised perspectives and reflect the diverse backgrounds of students across all campuses, ensuring curriculum relevance to their identities and experiences.

Objective	Outcome
Strengthen ongoing CPD initiatives and develop focused resources to equip teachers better to support student development. This will enhance teachers' understanding of diverse student needs and help break down barriers to participation and achievement	The college has embedded a robust and inclusive CPD programme for all full-time teaching staff, equipping teachers to support diverse student needs and break down barriers to participation and achievement. Training covers inclusive curriculum design, decolonisation principles, supporting vulnerable student groups (including FSM, disadvantaged, LDD, and High Needs students), and recognising engagement barriers across protected characteristics. This systematic professional development approach ensures consistent quality across the college group, with staff confidence in delivering inclusive, responsive teaching that addresses the distinct needs identified in achievement gap analysis.
People Services	
Colleagues being able to be the best professional and authentic version of themselves at work without fear of judgement or discrimination - everybody is different and this is celebrated	The College's PROUD values are shared by students and staff alike and underpin our decision making and how we work. We continue to celebrate PROUD achievements throughout the year with staff nominations, at the end of the summer term via our Summer Scorchers, and at the end of the calendar year with our Christmas Crackers.
There is zero tolerance for any form of bullying or harassment, and our people feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour at all levels that is not in line with our PROUD Values	Our zero-tolerance approach is embedded in policy, and we actively encourage people to speak up and can demonstrate our commitment to investigate and take appropriate action for every single concern raised.
The college's workforce demographic continues to move closer to the local community and student profile	We have introduced new recruitment systems to counter any bias through the process and continue to make improvements. We also ensure that our roles are advertised prominently across a number of sites, dedicated to attracting applications from under-represented groups.

2025-26 OBJECTIVES

Student experience

- Implement targeted engagement tracking and intervention for vulnerable groups: Establish termly monitoring of student voice, enrichment, and careers participation rates disaggregated by FSM status, disadvantaged postcodes, Gypsy/Irish Traveller, and trans women identities, with proactive outreach where engagement gaps are identified to ensure equitable access to support systems.
- Develop specialist pastoral support pathways for Gypsy/Irish Traveller and trans women students: Design and deliver tailored retention and belonging interventions addressing the critical achievement gaps (58.1% and 61.1% respectively), including dedicated mentoring, family engagement strategies, and identity-affirming support structures.
- Strengthen careers guidance and employer engagement equity across all Priority First Students: Analyse and address with additional support participation gaps in careers guidance, work experience placements, and employer encounters for Priority First Students, implementing proactive outreach models that ensure all vulnerable groups access progression support rather than relying on self-advocacy.

Quality

- Transform E&M and Pathways provision quality to eliminate achievement gaps: Implement comprehensive teaching quality improvements in Functional Skills English & Maths and Pathways, particularly at Hastings campus, through enhanced pedagogy, attendance strategies, and curriculum restructuring to raise FSM achievement from 75.3% to match adjusted provision levels (83.3%).
- Embed enhanced 16-18 retention strategies across vulnerable populations: Deploy systematic early warning systems, first-term engagement interventions, and targeted pastoral support to address retention challenges affecting FSM (75.0%), disadvantaged postcode (76.2%), and specific ethnic and gender identity groups, with particular focus on Gypsy/Irish Traveller, and trans women.
- Scale ESOL exceptional practice model to other curriculum areas: Replicate the ESOL department's Enhanced Quality Teaching Practitioner and Personal Development Wellbeing Tutor approach across E&M, Pathways, and other provision where vulnerable groups are concentrated, establishing consistent specialist support that enables achievement parity.

People Services

In line with the college's diversity & inclusion ambitions in the People & Culture Master Plan, the 25-26 People Services objectives are:

- To open more routes of communication and action in support of enabling and celebrating authenticity at work.
- To further develop our PROUD values to specifically include leadership and management.
- To further develop our recruitment marketing strategy to encourage all under-represented groups to consider working at the college.

OUR STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS



Almayra & Iman Shah

Twin sisters Almayra and Iman Shah, Performing Arts alumni from East Sussex College, recently featured in Amazon Prime's 2024 Olympic campaign *The Best*, celebrating women in sport.

Directed by Michael Spiccia, the advert followed twin sisters whose competitive spirit is inspired by watching women's football on Prime Video—mirroring the Shahs' own passion for representation and empowerment in media.

Both credited their time at East Sussex College for building confidence, social skills, and a clear pathway into the creative industries. Their growing success, from starring in global campaigns to opening London Fashion Week, highlights the college's role in fostering talent, diversity, and opportunity for students pursuing careers in the performing arts.



Braydon Robus

Braydon Robus, a 17-year-old East Sussex College Hastings student, achieved double gold at the European Judo Union Get Together competition in Hungary, winning both the individual and team events.

Living with iris coloboma, autism, ADHD, and dyslexia, Braydon has shown exceptional resilience and focus, crediting judo with teaching him discipline and patience.

His success follows his earlier victory at the EJU Kata Championships in Latvia, where he and partner Isabelle Everest became double European champions - the only British kata duo ever to medal at the event.

Alongside his sporting achievements, Braydon recently completed his Level 2 Art & Design course and plans to progress to Level 3 Creative Practice, exemplifying East Sussex College's commitment to inclusivity, perseverance, and supporting students to excel across disciplines.



Ashlyn Weekes

Ashlyn Weekes, a Performing Arts alumna from East Sussex College, continues to shine on the international stage after joining the Asia Tour of Dear Evan Hansen as Ensemble and First Cover Alana.

Following her training at Urdang, Ashlyn made her professional debut in Starlight Express London, quickly establishing herself as a rising talent in musical theatre. Her achievements reflect the College's commitment to diversity and representation in the arts, providing students from all backgrounds with the confidence and skills to pursue successful careers in performance. Ashlyn's journey

from East Sussex College to a major international production demonstrates how inclusive education and opportunity can empower underrepresented voices to thrive on the global stage.



Indigo-Pacha Reynolds

Indigo-Pacha Reynolds, an Art & Design student at East Sussex College, won the Costume Design category in the 2025 Royal Ballet & Opera Design Challenge, a national competition that promotes access to creative careers.

Inspired by *The Winter's Tale*, Indigo impressed judges with her hand-stitched lace designs and thoughtful interpretation of historical fashion

through different moments in time. She credited her tutor, James, for guiding her creative process and helping refine her imaginative ideas into a cohesive final piece. Indigo's achievement highlights East Sussex College's commitment to nurturing diverse, creative talent and providing students with the skills, confidence, and opportunities to shine on national platforms in the arts and design industries.