Name of Provider: [South and City College Birmingham]
UKPRN: [10005967]

South and City College Birmingham

TEF Year Three provider submission

1.0 Provider Context

South and City College Birmingham is a large diverse, general further education college, which operates across much of Birmingham. The College dates back to1875 when it was formed as Handsworth Technical School and has undergone a number of name changes and developments since its original formation. In 1963 Hall Green Technical College was formed and then became independent as South Birmingham College in 1993 following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. In August 2012 the College changed its name to the present South & City College following the merger between South Birmingham College and City College Birmingham. In 2017 the College was approved to use the term 'University centre' by the Department for Education and now enrols approximately 850+ students on higher education programmes.

Following the Government's Area Review process in 2015, it was recommended that Bournville College merge with South and City College Birmingham. Bournville College experienced turbulent times in recent years due to pooor financial management and wider management issues which impacted on the quality of delivery and students' learning experience prior to 2016. The West Midlands region was in the first phase of the process and so during academic year 2016-17 South and City College Birmingham and Bournville College operated as federated colleges with a shared Principal and management team until merger was approved. Bournville College formally closed and became part of South and City College Birmingham in August 2017. South and City College Birmingham is now one of the largest general further education colleges in England, offering courses from entry-level qualifications to higher levels.

The College's mission is to provide outstanding education and training, which is primarily vocational, in response to the needs of learners and employers; it's vision is to continue to develop and be recognised as an outstanding educational and economic resource by learners, staff, employers and the wider community.

South and City College Birmingham qualified in 2017 for a TEF award following two successful QAA reviews. The QAA review in January 2015 identified good practice in the extensive support and opportunities for staff to develop as higher education practitioners, the effective support for students in the transition from lower levels to higher education, the clear focus on student employability and the established links with employers.

Bournville College, also qualified for a TEF award following two successful QAA reviews. The latest QAA review in February 2015, highlighted good practice in the timely and constructive assessment feedback to students.

In TEF year 2 both colleges applied for a TEF award as separate institutions. South and City College Birmingham (SCCB) was awarded a silver medal and Bournville College (BVC) was awarded a Provisional TEF award.

The statement of findings for South and City College Birmingham for TEF year 2 stated;

The Panel considered the College submission in relation to the TEF criteria and its judgment reflects in particular, additional evidence of:

- course design which provides high levels of stretch to enable most students to progress and develop transferable and professional skills, with curriculum design having input from employers and students
- teaching observations which are conducted by a dedicated observation team as well as support from teaching and learning coaches, supported by Accelerate, Aspire, and Innovation programmes, which contribute to a recently implemented institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching
- knowledge, skills and attributes acquired by students that are valued by employers and that enhance their professional lives, delivered through paid work experience live site visits, live projects, and the support offered to workplace mentors by academic staff
- a comprehensive estates strategy, which contributes to high quality physical and digital resources which are used by students to enhance learning, as evidenced by a dedicated higher education centre, and investments made in information technology and specialist resources for specific disciplines.

The panel's response also referred to the metrics in that they "indicate that students from all backgrounds achieve excellent outcomes in relation to employment or further study and highly skilled employment or further study, which are notably above benchmark for both majority and minority provision".

In applying for an award for TEF year 3, the TEF metrics from both South and City College Birmingham and Bournville College have been merged, and so the historical data from Bournville College has had significant impact on the combined metrics. Additional evidence in support of this submission will be referred to for both colleges separately due to the timing of the merger.

A consequence of the merged data is that the outstanding outcomes for employment and further study and high quality employment, have been negatively affected for TEF year 3. The metric for further study has fallen to 0.6% below benchmark with no flags from a metric that was 5.6% above benchmark and had positive flags for 3 years. The TEF year 2 metrics for highly skilled employment and further study has fallen from 19.1% above benchmark to 6.3% above benchmark and retains its positive flags overall, but they are lost across the year indicators except for a single positive flag in year 3.

Retention and continuation rates remain a concern for the College and the merged data shows that continuation is 6.7% below benchmark, this was an issue for both SCCB and BVC in previous years and a key focus of the annual provider action plan for Bournville College. During 2016-17 academic year there have been improvements to retention rates at both Colleges, however there has been a significant improvement of 11% at Bournville College, although this will not be evident in the metrics until TEF year 5.

SCCB has offered higher education courses for over 20 years and until 2012 they were all franchised from two local university partners. Following a successful bid for student numbers in 2012, the College developed directly funded provision and started to offer Pearson (Edexcel) programmes. BVC has also offered higher education programmes, however the higher education offer had declined for some years prior to federation. BVC's higher education provision was mainly franchised or validated provision with very small Pearson (Edxcel) awarded programmes. The College in 2017-18 now has five university partners awarding qualifications under franchise and validated agreements and continues to offer Pearson (Edexel) awards.

Higher education courses are now offered in a range of vocational subjects with 27 courses enrolling in 2017-18. The merger with BVC resulted in a small increase in complementary provision such as the addition of Sports Coaching to SCCB's Sports and Exercise Science. Courses now include Creative Industries provision such as Popular Music, Art, Media Games, Moving Image and Fashion; Business related subjects including Management, Marketing and Accounting; Health and Social Care, Early Years, Sports Science and Coaching, Construction and Engineering, Teacher Training, Specialist Hair and Media Make-up, Hospitality and Tourism. Most courses are classified as other undergraduate with the highest proportion being HND provision with some HNC, and foundation degrees. Three 'top-up' honours degrees are also offered in Popular Music, Early Childhood Studies and Business Management. The majority mode for the College is full time.

82% of our students are local students, non-local students normally study on franchise programmes for full time programmes or make good use of the excellent transport links from for example Northampton, Leicester, and Derby. Non-local part time students travel to College to study on specialist courses such as Building Services Engineering.

BVC is located in the west of Birmingham in what was traditionally white working class areas with high levels of employment in manufacturing. The campus is located on the former Rover plant at Longbridge, which is central to the supporting the key target wards of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme. BVC metrics data has impacted on ethnicity data of the College. BME students now account for 53% of our student body from 59% at SCCB. For our full time students, 61% are now from BME backgrounds against 70% for SCCB in TEF year 2. Asian students constituted the majority of full time students at SCCB in TEF year 2 at 42%, the merged data now shows that White students are the largest ethnic group for TEF year 3 at 39%. White students continue to be the majority for part time students and this remains due to the higher enrolments in construction based subjects where the percentage of higher skilled and qualified staff from BME backgrounds is low in the sector.

The College is committed to widening participation in education, 46% of full time higher education students are in categories 1 and 2 in terms of POLAR classification, this is an increase of 3% on TEF year 2. For SCCB in TEF year 2 there is was no difference between full time and part time students, however for TEF year 3 the percentage of part time students in these categories has fallen to 36%.

To support widening participation, SCCB also has lower entry criteria than most university providers with 91% of full time students and 100% of part time students in TEF year 2 classified as low or non-tariff for entry qualifications, of which 61% of full time students and 95% of part time students are non-tariff. The standard UCAS entry criteria for full time courses is 48 UCAS points. Higher education students can also study for Maths and English GCSEs whilst on programme. The impact of the metrics for Bournville College, coupled with the highly competitive environment in higher education is that non and low tariff entry students has risen to 77% of full time students and fallen to 83% of part time students. The offer of top-up degrees at SCCB, and teacher training programmes at BVC has meant that the 1% of high tariff students for SCCB in TEF year 2 becomes 10% in the merged data for TEF year 3.

2.0 Teaching Quality

Our students consistently report that they are satisfied with the teaching they receive and the delivery of their programme through mechanisms such as the NSS and the learner voice process (Boards of Studies). Boards of Studies are held at course level twice per year across all courses.

These meetings allow both staff and students to discuss the delivery of the course, and suggest improvements for students' learning experience. Boards of Studies discuss learning at module level, including the quality of teaching, understanding of assessment requirements and methods and enable students to be partners in their learning and contribute to the development of their learning experience.

Boards of Studies feedback supports the NSS for 2017, which clearly demonstrates that our students are satisfied with the teaching they receive. All satisfaction rates are significantly above the sector rates.

NSS question	Sector %	SCCB %	Diff %	BVC %	Diff %
1. Staff are good at explaining things.	89	93	+4	100	+11
2. Staff have made the subject interesting.	83	90	+7	90	+7
3. The course is intellectually stimulating.	85	96	+11	90	+5
4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.	82	93	+11	90	+8

There have been outstanding improvements at both Colleges in terms of student satisfaction with teaching. Comparing the three questions which related directly to the NSS in 2016 and 2017, student satisfaction at BVC has improved between 16% and 21% for teaching and a corresponding outstanding improvement in satisfaction of between 6% and 15% for SCCB has been achieved during 2016/17.

Bournville College Comparison of NSS scores 2016 and 2017

NSS question	2016 %	2017 %	Diff %
1. Staff are good at explaining things.	84	100	+16
2. Staff have made the subject interesting.	71	90	+19
3. The course is intellectually stimulating.	69	90	+21

South and City College Birmingham Comparison of NSS scores 2016 and 2017

NSS question	2016 %	2017 %	Diff %
1. Staff are good at explaining things.	87	93	+6
2. Staff have made the subject interesting.	80	90	+10
3. The course is intellectually stimulating.	81	96	+15

Students feel that teaching is outstanding at both colleges and the NSS results demonstrate that students are challenged by their course. Data at course level shows 100% of Business Management, Accounting, Marketing, Computing, Hospitality and Tourism students felt that staff were good at explaining things. 100% of Business Management, Accounting, Marketing, Computing, Health and Social Care students agreed that their course is intellectually stimulating and 100% of Advanced Practice Early Years, Business Accounting, Marketing, Computing agreed that their course challenged them.

The College offers a number of programmes at level 4, such as HNC Building Services Engineering, Construction, Civil Engineering, Automotive Diagnostics and Business. The majority of students on these programmes are employed in the industry and are supported in their studies by their employers. Boards of Studies feedback for programmes is excellent in terms teaching, however these programmes along with the honours degree top-up, and one year programmes are not eligible for the NSS and so students' opinions are not publically reported. Boards of Studies comments are very positive.

Our students' comments from Boards of Studies

The module is interesting, we have made very good progression in our knowledge and skills. Staff are always willing to offer extra support when lessons are finished. The module is challenging but we have made great improvement in our knowledge and academic skills. (Specialist Hair and Media Make-up)

I am enjoying the module and I'm happy with how it is going. We feel that we have progressed since Level 3 and the module is sufficiently challenging. We all understand what is required of us in our assessment (Building Services Engineering)

This module is very relevant to what is currently going on in the industry. All of us are able to have specialist input during the lessons as most of us are employed within the field. We are happy with this module and the teaching (Construction and Civil Engineering)

All students are enjoying the module and how it links to the other modules. The iPads are useful to have for practicing drawing techniques with Adobe Sketch. Staff are giving good demonstrations and explanations. All students are enjoying their lessons and have said that Lecturer X is great at delivering the module. All students are passionate about the assessment. (Fashion and Textiles)

Our students' comments are supported by comments made by External Examiners.

The use of technology alongside more traditional methods of teaching, learning and assessment models good practice and is a strength of the award. There was much evidence of good, innovative practice. (Diploma in Teaching)

The students with whom I met with are very happy with their experience on the course and spoke very highly of the support they have received. (Health &Social Care)

The Vocational experience/expertise of the delivery team added value and additional insight to the learning experience (Sport and Exercise Science)

The dissertation provides students with the opportunity to follow their personal interests and demonstrate their ability to integrate theory and practice. The quality of this work is impressive and students and staff are to be commended for this work. (Business and Management)

The obvious engagement of the staff, and their ongoing currency due to strong industry links and professional activities, is also a major strength. (Popular Music)

Visits to students in their settings by members of the programme team is an additional strength as it clearly demonstrates to students the importance of experiential learning, and encourages them to make links between academic learning and practice and to critically reflect on the impact of established practices on the lives of children and families (Advanced Practice in Early Years)

Part time students in specialist subjects such as building services and civil engineering also provide opportunities for student learning partnerships to be developed, for example students have provided demonstrated equipment from their workplace to support access to industry specific highly specialised equipment such as robotic total stations and GPS equipment, benefitting other part time students and full time students and enabling peer and flipped learning.

The College has a strategic objective of excellent teaching and learning. In order to achieve this objective, we have a comprehensive quality improvement processes in place, which includes

planning, monitoring and review processes alongside a developmental teaching observation scheme.

Teaching observations are carried out by trained observers who observe, feedback and recommend follow up developmental CPD. Observers are supported by Teaching Excellence Leaders (TELs) who are linked to, and work closely with each Faculty. TEL's focus is on improving teaching and learning and work alongside a quality link to address specific needs for teaching and learning relevant to each Faculty's subject specialisms. TELs use data from observations and quality improvement plans to develop bespoke CPD for academic staff. In addition to this personalised approach to development all staff can access a programme to develop teaching skills further including using the latest technology and for example embedding blended learning. In addition, this scheme enables the College to identify excellence in teaching and share good practice. The College introduced a digital teacher award during 2016-17 to recognise and reward excellence in use of technology in teaching.

All staff are required to have a teaching qualification within two years of appointment and the College delivers a level 5 diploma in teaching as free CPD to support this. The majority of staff teaching on higher education programmes already hold teaching qualifications at either PGCE or diploma level and a small number of staff are also fellows or senior fellows of the HEA. The College as part of the Teaching Excellence Framework intends to develop and support attainment of HEA fellowship status by higher education staff.

In aiming to appoint highly qualified,scholarly, interesting and stimulating teaching staff, our students are actively involved in recruitment. All applicants for teaching posts are required to carry out a teaching session to students as part of the interview process. Students are involved in the assessment of teaching ability with their views reported to the interview panel. Student feedback has significant weighting in appointment decisions. Newly appointed staff are observed three times during their probation period and must achieve a rating of good teaching prior to confirmation of appointment. New teaching staff receive on-going support during their probation period by a mentor and the Teaching Excellence Leaders.

Opportunities for staff development were identified as good practice in the latest QAA review. Opportunities continue to be in supporting staff to gain higher level subject qualifications such as degrees and masters degrees, alongside specialist industry updating. In addition to these development opportunities the college has dedicated staff development planned every six weeks on a whole College basis.

The College has clear assessment regulations and assessment framework in place. The framework includes timescales for feedback on assessments and anonymous marking of assessments where practicable, SCCB regulations and assessment framework have been introduced to BVC campus in 2016-17 and are embedding in 2017-18.

NSS question	Sector %	SCCB %	Diff %	BVC %	Diff %
7. My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.	81%	97%	+16	90%	+9
8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.	73%	83%	+10	90%	+10
9. Marking and assessment has been fair.	73%	87%	+14	90%	+17
10. Feedback on my work has been timely.	73%	85%	+12	68%	-5
11. I have received helpful comments on my work.	74%	93%	+19	90%	+16

SCCB consistently scores higher than the sector responses for assessment and feedback, with each question scoring between 10% and 19% above the sector responses. The most significant score is question 7, where our students agree that their course allows them to apply what they have learnt at 97% agreement and 16% above the sector rate. In addition, question 11 where our students agree that they have received helpful comments on their work, SCCB scores are 19% above the sector at 93%. BVC also scores higher than the sector average for the majority of the responses, the most significant score of 90% was for question 9, marking and assessment has been fair at 17% above the sector rate. Question 11 is also 16% above the sector rate. Our students also highlight a key challenge for the College at BVC in that students felt that they did not receive feedback timely. An action plan for BVC has been in place for 2016-17 and timely feedback is being monitored as a newly merged College for 2017-18 at BVC campus to improve student satisfaction in this area.

A number of programmes have adopted online marking and feedback, which is also supplemented by face to face and individualised feedback. Staff are encouraged to mark online and are supported through access to iPads for flexibility and remote access, this has also been introduced to Bournville College campus during 2017-18. Course teams aim to include a range of assessment methods, which allow development of skills as well as subject knowledge to equip students for employment and further study.

External Examiners also commented on the suitability and effectiveness of assessment instruments and practices.

The assessment briefs are reflective of the significant resources available at the centre and the experience within the sector of the staff involved. (Automotive Diagnostics)

A wide variety of types of evidence methods are used. (Public Services)

The use of technology alongside more traditional methods of teaching, learning and assessment models good practice and is a strength of the award. There was much evidence of good, innovative practice - some of the posters and blogs were excellent. The feedback is developmental and forward focused – consideration being given to employability, current and future professional development. (Diploma in Teaching)

There is an innovative assessment method… in which students adopt a professional role to participate in a multi-professional team review ….I consider this event will have given them a better insight of some of the issues and dilemmas professionals face when reviewing safeguarding cases involving young children and their families. (Early Years)

Some very good case studies used for assessments. Good assessment feedback, some exemplary. (Business Accounting/Marketing)

The briefs were carefully written and emphasised the contextual and intellectual engagement required for programmes at this level. The assignments were well structured…. giving a solid framework from which students could input their own creativity and development. The themes of the briefs were contemporary and all … supported by contextual information, which allowed..research before continuing with more personalised investigation and design development. (Fashion and Textiles)

The feedback provided to students, …. is excellent as it is very detailed and provides constructive feedback to support student's further development. The quality of feedback on modules, such as ….. is excellent and could be used as an example of good practice across all modules. (Business and Management)

3.0 Learning Environment

As a large College there is a comprehensive estates strategy, which takes account of the needs of higher education students. There is a dedicated University Centre at SCCB which houses a social and study space for our higher education students. The social and study space was refurbished and received further investment for 2017-18. This was replicated at BVC for 2016-17 and a further social and study space was developed at Bordesley Green campus and our Fusion centre where Sport Science, Construction and Fashion based courses are delivered due to the specialised facilities available. The College also introduced a specialist hair and media make-up foundation degree for September 2017 and invested £120,000 in developing a specialist studio with industry standard equipment.

The College measures its performance by comparison to the sector and generally a comparison against satisfaction with universities and colleges is more difficult when comparing learning resources. Both SCCB and BVC are below the sector rate for library services supporting learning well, however there is higher satisfaction above the sector rate for access to IT and course specific resources. Both Colleges perform favourably when comparing to further education colleges in the West Midlands region.

Since August 2017, developments include the merger of SCCB and BVC VLEs which has provided access to a significant amount of subject specific resources at course level and all are open access within the College. There has been further investment in online books, enabling 24-hour access to many key text. Following the merger,BVC students now benefit from access to online journals, and SCCB students now benefit from access to and support from, a dedicated higher education research and study support assistant. All university centres and study spaces have ‘drop in’ computer access to support learning outside of the classroom, and students can also access the comprehensive learning and library computer facilities at each campus.

NSS question	Sector %	SCCB %	Diff %	BVC %	Diff %
18. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well.	83%	83%	0	90%	+7
19. The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well.	86%	84%	-2	80%	-6
20. I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.	86%	91%	+5	95%	+9

Following the changes to the NSS most questions on resources cannot be directly compared to 2016. Learning resources questions have developed from asking satisfaction in terms of acceptable support to supporting learning well in 2017. Question 20, however is comparable with question 18 in the NSS for 2016. The results for 2017 demonstrate an outstanding improvement of 38% for BVC students accessing course specific resources rising from 57% pre-federation to 95% agreement in 2017 and 9% above the sector rate. SCCB student satisfaction also demonstrated excellent improvement with 91% of students satisfied with their access to course specific resources, a 16% improvement on the previous year’s NSS when it was at 75% and is now 5%

above the sector rate in 2017. We believe our students have access to high quality specialist resources as confirmed by the NSS.

External Examiners' support for a high quality environment.

The level and detail being set are appropriate and the working environment is reflective of the sector (an operational MOT testing centre within the college evidences this) The centre has significant resources for the provision, including operation detail to government standards. (Automotive Diagnostics)

Excellent workshop and support facilities were offered by staff and much praised by students. (Computing)

The resources and environment of the centre are impressive. The new facilities are first class and the building has a professional and creative atmosphere. The centre is very well equipped and provides a high level environment for practical, technical and creative skills. (Fashion and Textiles)

Access to gym and specialist sport and exercise equipment on the delivery site enriched and maximised learning opportunities. (Sport and Exercise Science)

Specialist resources for Music students are of high quality with access to studios, practice rooms and a 600-capacity live performance venue. Games and Media (Moving Image) students are provided with a high specification laptops and have access to the Microsoft lounge at the College where the latest specialist IT resources are provided. All courses have access to general IT teaching rooms with courses where appropriate timetabled into IT teaching rooms for the majority of their timetabled classes.

The College invests significant resources into information technology to support teaching and learning,the anywhere learning portal has been developed and extended to BVC campus to support students' learning. This portal allows students to access their College desktop from anywhere in the world with 24 hour and 365-day coverage, providing students comprehensive access. To encourage student engagement and retention there is an iPad mini scheme in place for full time first year students. Students who engage with their programme and submit assessments on time during their first semester receive an iPad mini, these can then be used to support learning and online research.

Learning for our students is enriched through exposure to industry practice and they benefit from the scholarly activity of staff and wider research. As previously discussed staff CPD is actively encouraged by the College and staff are supported in their own scholarly activity through support for higher qualifications and professional activities in industry such as in Music and Media disciplines.

College staff also benefit by being able to access research at our university partners, including attending research presentations and CPD activities. Courses in Business at BVC and Early Years and Health and Social Care at SCCB have professional development requirements and include work placements. Academic staff support professional practice and work place mentors in settings which also allows exposure to the sector. The Early Years and Health and Social Care teams have introduced a student / staff conference where students are exposed to current research in the sector and can share their own research and practice. In 2016-17 the conference included students presenting on Safeguarding in Early Years and benefited from research in conductive education and recently published research on PHSE. This has been developed further in to two conferences for 2017-18.

The College is linked with the AoC scholarship project and as such is exposed to Boyer's (1990) four scholarships framework, being a mainly vocational College the scholarship of application resonates more closely with the College and supports the College's focus on employability. A member of the Early Years team presented at the scholarship conference and developed a conference paper on "Farewell Mary Poppins! Forming deliberate, unique and Critical Professional Identities for the Early Years Sector."

Application in music based courses centres on industry practice and our students work in the College's live performance venue which has a capacity of 600. Students aspire to work on the College's Student Crew who gain paid work experience in venues across the city. Our students benefit by working with academic staff who are active within the music industry and are exposed to industry professionals and visiting speakers. Business programmes have an enduring relationship with the Prince's Trust, which supports the development of business planning, presentation and entrepreneurial skills. Construction courses benefit from live site visits and live project briefs such as HS2. Media film students work with live events and external clients such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Birmingham education Partnership, Newleaf Recovery project, World Skills and Unison. Moving Image students also benefit from working with professional broadcaster Joanne Malin and have access to organisations such as the BBC, including social media World News and visits to professional studios.

The success of our Construction, Civil Engineering and Building Services Engineering programmes have enabled through the excellent partnerships with our employers to develop higher apprenticeships in these subject areas for 2017-18, with an enrolment of approximately 25 students so far.

The focus on employability supports the College's mission to be an outstanding educational and economic resource by learners, staff, employers and the wider community. The College also focuses on widening participation to support the needs of our community. A significant proportion of students at 46% and 36% for full time and part time students respectively are classified as POLAR 1 and 2, 75% and 63% of full time and part time students respectively are classified in the national IMD categories 1 and 2 for the most deprived areas in the country. The majority of our full time students at 78% are low or non-tariff students, and part time is at 82%.

Our merged metrics demonstrate that continuation rates are the issue for the College and since merger of data and adjustments to data for year 3, we are now flagged and in the bottom 10% for continuation. Interventions for improvement undertaken as federated colleges will not be evident in data until TEF year 5. During 2016-17 the College introduced a number of measures to monitor and improve retention on programmes.

Following the Annual Assurance Review in 2016 BVC was required to provide an action plan for improvement. This resulted in many processes and procedures being introduced at BVC to improve students' learning experience and support the development of higher education at the federated college. Actions introduced included, regular monitoring at course level of students and their engagement in learning was introduced at BVC and made more rigorous at SCCB. Progress and module boards at the end of each semester identified students and risk and action plans put in place for intervention. Additional support workshops were introduced at subject level to encourage engagement. Changes made to management meetings to include a manager for the Student Engagement team to improve liaison. Improvements to advice and guidance as evidenced in the NSS were made. Enrolment processes were improved to identify students with support needs earlier in their studies and ensure support plans were in place as early as possible and applications for DSA were supported well. Rigorous annual monitoring has been introduced at BVC.

Internal data shows a significant improvement for BVC in terms of retention for 2016-17 academic year which demonstrates an impressive 11% improvement to 81% retention for full time students, still slightly below the continuation rate benchmark. Retention at SCCB has also improved during

2016-17 to 75%. Part time student retention remains higher at an overall rate of 86%, slightly lower than the previous year. This was due to one programme at BVC which had a retention rate of 75%, however, this course demonstrated a 10% improvement on the previous year. The main reason for low progression rates on to the second year of a programme is due to academic failure, and closer monitoring has been introduced across College in 2017-18, through school and team meetings and progress boards.

Students receive a personalised experience at the College, and we are continuously reviewing students' learning experience, focusing on improvements to retention. All students have a personal tutor who will support them both academically and with wider support needs. Personalised learning is achieved through rigorous curriculum development, for example, in Popular Music programmes students negotiate their studies and assessments within a framework which supports individual disciplines for vocalists, music production, composers and technologists. Module assessments on the majority of programmes are designed to support students to use live projects including their own work place and tailor their assessments towards an area of specialism or interest such as in dissertations, professional practice, and creative projects in Music, Film, Games and Fashion. For Early Years' students the College has introduced additional accreditation for students who do not have a license to practice.

In 2016 the College also introduced the ability to award exit qualifications at the end of the first year of study on Pearson (Edexcel) programmes. Sudents who, due to external pressures are unable to continue with their studies into a second year, are supported well by personal and subject tutors to complete their first year assessments and leave the College with a level 4 qualification. This supports our students well but can have a detrimental impact on retention, progression and continuation rates.

Student retention and achievement is formally recorded through Examination Boards and monitored through the reporting structure at the College, annual monitoring and annual assurance processes. Overall achievement rates for SCCB are 88% and 86% for BVC for 2016-17. Small numbers in provision can significantly affect the overall data. One programme at each College unusually experienced a fall in achievements in 2016 which negatively impacted the overall achievement rate and detracts from the seven programmes which had 100% achievement. Benefits of the merged College include the access to more resources and enables further sharing of good practice.

Our students report in Boards of Studies that they receive good support from staff in their studies and the NSS demonstrates our students can contact staff. They are very satisfied with the advice and guidance they have received. Improvements to staffing at BVC have been made during 2016-17 and continue to improve now that we are merged as BVC campus has access to a much wider level of resource since merger.

NSS question	Sector %	SCCB %	Diff %	BVC %	Diff %
12. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	86%	90%	+4	85%	-1
13. I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course.	79%	92%	+13	95%	+16
14. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course.	75%	90%	+15	90%	+15

It is clear that processes implemented at the College support the shared learning and staff/ student partnership. The NSS responses demonstrate student satisfaction in terms of community, working with fellow students, having their views valued and are very clear on how views have been acted

upon. The College has been exploring opportunities to engage with students and promote student feedback and discussion more, such as the introduction of Principal's Question Time at BVC campus. Online feedback such as Vocaleyes and Yammer have been trialled during 2016-17 but have not been popular with students. Currently the Boards of Studies, surveys and module feedback provide the most effective mechanism for feedback on students' learning experience at student and course level.

NSS question	Sector %	SCCB %	Diff %	BVC %	Diff %
21. I feel part of a community of staff and students.	70%	84%	+14	95%	+25
22. I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course.	84%	97%	+13	85%	+1
23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course.	84%	88%	+4	85%	+1
24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.	76%	90%	+14	90%	+14
25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on.	60%	81%	+21	90%	+30

4.0 Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

The focus of the curriculum at the College is primarily vocational and as such, the focus is on employability. The TEF metrics demonstrate that highly skilled employment or further study for full time students is 6.3% above the benchmark; in TEF year 2 this data was consistently above benchmark across the three years and across age group, disadvantage and gender and 19.1% above benchmark at SCCB. Following the new data for TEF year 3 and the merged data for SCCB and BVC the positive flags now indicate in year 3 only for other undergraduates, mature, BME and non-disabled students. There are no negative flags in the splits and students from all POLAR categories demonstrate above average highly skilled employment or further study.

We believe that the metrics still demonstrate high added value for students when taking in consideration that 77% of our full time students are classified as low or non-tariff qualifications on entry. The College aims to continue to develop top-up degrees to enable our students to progress at the College, alongside maintaining positive relationships with local universities to support progression of other undergraduate students into the final year of degree programmes.

Part time students metrics are also above the benchmark for highly skilled employment or study by 2.7%, and as for full time students the metrics have been adversely affected through the merger of SCCB and BVC data. During the year of operating as federated colleges SCCB processes for collection of DHLE data have been adopted by BVC and it is expected that this will improve the quality of data available for TEF year 5 in this metric.

The adverse impact of merged data continues with the employment or further study metric. The metric has fallen to just 0.6% below benchmark from an SCCB metric for full time students in TEF year 2 that was 5.6% above the benchmark, and included a positive indicator for first degree students. For part time students there is a negative flag for further study for first degree students. In interrogating the data there were 10 students in this cohort of students and 7 of our students continued into further study or employment. The low student numbers for this metric means that all

10 students would have needed to progress into employment or further study to meet the benchmark.

Standard occupational classification data is used in reviewing student destination data, it is worth noting that some of the subject areas offered at the College which have significant enrolments are not classified as highly skilled in this system, for example occupations in the Early Years, Creative, Automotive and Health Care sectors, and many have salary indicators for new entrants of below the median salary of £21,000.

LEO data shows that the College is flagged at 0.9% below benchmark for sustained further study or employment. The college would wish to improve this data and would like to investigate further the relationship between students who continue into further study at university partners from other undergraduate programmes and those that continue directly into employment.

In ensuring positive outcomes for our students the College has robust processes for assuring academic standards. Franchised programmes are monitored at the College and comply with university partners processes and for some partnerships processes are enhanced by additional internal college processes. For directly funded programmes such as those awarded by Pearson (Edexcel), the College has developed its own academic regulations. The College's Pearson (Edexcel) academic regulations ensure that students studying on a HNC or HND programme have a similar experience to students studying at a HEI and prepare students well for progression to final year entry of degree programmes. The regulations also ensure that there is no grade inflation for students studying on these programmes through a rigorous approach to awarding higher grades and qualifications. In implementing this approach to Pearson (Edexcel) programmes students are prepared well for progression, however this can have a negative impact on continuation rates as students must achieve a minimum amount of credits to progress into year 2 of their programme, a requirement only recently being introduced to Pearson programmes nationally and yet to be evident in TEF metrics.

The College monitors extenuating circumstances data to identify trends in circumstances affecting our students learning such as mental health, homelessness and bereavement. This has led to closer links with the student Engagement team in developing support strategies for students and plan resourcing and support and is having a positive impact on students' learning experience and achievement.

There are no NSS reportable metrics for part time programmes.The enrolment for part time learners is mainly on to one year equivalent programmes at level 4 and so do not qualify to complete the NSS. The college monitors retention and achievement of part time students using the same processes as for full time students. College data demonstrates that our students is on benchmark at 83% for retention. SSCB retention for year 1 students was 86% and BVC 76%. Part time student retention relates to the year prior to federation of the Colleges, and an additional contributory factor to the lower percentage at BVC was student data management alongside a financial difficulties and poor resourcing. Improvements to data management have been made during the federated year with BVC and all SCCB management information systems have now been adopted at BVC campus. It is worth noting here the high retention rates on programmes in Construction and Civil engineering that achieved 100% retention rates during 2016-17.

Part time student achievement is 94%, all programmes have achievement rates above 90% for 2016-17. Automotive Diagnostics, Early Years and Building Services Engineering all have achievement rates at 100%. Part time outcomes for students are positive across the combined college and across all splits by gender, ethnicity, age, POLAR and deprivation classifications..

A significant proportion of part time programmes are in Construction and Engineering subjects. The DLHE data for SCCB in 2017 had good response rates from Civil Engineering and Construction programmes, demonstrating that 73% of part time students are in employment and the remainder are working and studying or studying full time. 4% at the time were unemployed. The DLHE data

for 2016-7 gives a median salary of £24,000 and students are working mainly in the region but a number are working across other parts of the UK in line with sector norms.

DLHE data overall for 2016 provides that 82% of our students go on to work, study and work or study. The data reports that 6% of students declare as unemployed. Full time Construction, Business and Computing students are the most likely to continue in full time study on top-up degrees. Over 50% of Fashion, Early Years and Health and Social Care students will also continue to study full time. Early Years and Media course have the most students reported as working without further study. A high proportion of Early Years' graduates gain employment through the professional practice and work placements on their programmes. Media graduates are also more likely to be unemployed and this reflects the self-employment, project based and transient nature of the industry.

The focus on employability is ensured through rigorous course design and delivery and has been recognised by both QAA during review in 2015 and consistently by External Examiners. Our QAA Review team identified good practice in the areas of learning and teaching and enabling student development and achievement. "The College is committed to supporting its students in their progress into higher education and employment. It provides effective support for students in the transition from lower levels to higher education and has a clear focus on employability, supported by established links with employers. Staff teaching on higher education programmes are also given extensive support and opportunities to develop as practitioners". (QAA, 2015)

External Examiners' comments support good student outcomes and learning gain in terms of employability and skills, these include comments such as:

A strong industry focussed course with good practical application that is supported by a committed course team. The commitment of staff to learning and teaching is clear. (HNC Building Services Engineering)

This is a strong programme producing student work of a very high standard with a proactive attitude to moving the fashion programmes forward to new directions for the future. The team should be congratulated on the continued high standard of delivery and assessment and quality of the student work being achieved. (HND Fashion and Textiles).

The working environment is reflective of the sector. (Automotive Diagnostics)

The continuous documentation of professional practice and development in students' e-portfolios provides students with opportunities for critical reflection on practice and enhances their skills in using digital technology for use in their future professional lives. (Early Years)

Allows students to be independent in their learning and where applicable rely on the varied work situations and provide a reflective account of their own practise (Health and Social Care)

The development of employability skills is embedded in course design and delivery. There are strong industry links and opportunities for employability development. As previously discussed assessment is heavily focussed towards industry and live projects and this is supplemented in a variety of ways across programmes. Early Years and Health and Social Care programmes have professional practice modules and work placement requirement integral to the qualification. Fashion and Textile students have all during 2016-17 undertaken work placements in a fashion setting and participated in the clothes show live. Specialist Hair and Media make-up students and Moving Image students have opportunities for collaborative working with Music students on music video production and live events. Music students have the opportunity to be involved in Student Crew and undertake paid work experience at the College's live performance venue, a venue for

example for Birmingham's Supersonic Festival. Business, Games, Computing and Music students have undertaken work experience in Europe as part of an Erasmus plus partnership. Business students have elected to undertake a volunteering module as part of their programme and HE students participate in College wide fundraising activities.

Further initiatives are being implemented during 2017-18 for the merged College, including expanding the monitoring and review of students with poor engagement and surveying of students who leave their programme or are required to leave due to academic failure. Joint development across College of a new induction programme and pre-enrolment activities with the introduction of more taster days and developments through the ambassador scheme and activities of Aimhigher NCOP. There are no gaps in development across gender, disadvantage or ethnicity for students achievement in terms of employment or further study. There are no negative flags across splits for high quality employment or further study, however, there are some small differences in positive flags across the splits. To investigate further the College is enhancing the types of management information report available for higher education programmes to allow further interrogation of data and introduce or expand existing processes to support improvements for students.

5.0 Conclusion

The College is dedicated to supporting students to engage with higher education and achieve lasting, positive and transformational changes to their lives. The College achieves this well for all students, but particularly well for students who have low academic achievements, come from areas of high deprivation and low engagement in education. The College successfully supports a diverse range of students to achieve and the destination of leavers survey demonstrates how well the College achieves positive outcomes for students.

The merger of South and City College Birmignham with Bournville College has been successful. Immense improvements have been made to students' learning experience at Bournville College along with improved processes and resourcing to support both staff and students. Students at South and City College have also seen improvements over the last year as well as continuing to engage with high quality teaching and learning that is linked to employment.

These improvements are clearly demonstrated through our students' satisfaction and feedback which is evident in the NSS and through our External Examiners' comments. We feel that at our College we have Gold Medal support and satisfaction for our students and an outstanding employability focus and links. We understand that there are still improvements to be made to continuation rates. Considerable improvements have already been made at the same time as merging two Colleges and we remain focussed on our plans and processes to support improvement, although these will not be evident in the TEF metrics until year 5 at the earliest.

Widening participation remains central to the success of the College. The College's success is attributed to the ethos of the College and dedication of staff in supporting students alongside the hard work and dedication of our students.