

## **Our journey to the Gold LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Education Award, developed by Leeds Beckett University**

**Ben Webster, London Academy of Excellence**



### **Why did we work towards the LGBTQ+ award at Leeds Beckett University?**

We have had an enthusiastic and well-established student LGBTQ+ Network in our school for a number of years and we were looking for a framework by which both the school and the students could take LGBTQ+ inclusion to the next level. We were looking in particular for an effective self-evaluation and review process that could form an annual part of the school's self-improvement plans. We also wanted a way to formally acknowledge the achievements of the students and the staff in creating a strong, LGBTQ+ inclusive culture.

### **What challenges did we face and how did we overcome them?**

The evidence based self-reporting system is a rigorous process. I was personally completing the NPQH alongside this award and it is fair to say that they felt an equal rigour! However, this was welcomed and pushed us to really consider the input that LGBTQ+ education had within the strategic direction of the school and the school policies. The sections on governance, provided an important means by which stakeholders at every level were introduced and brought into the culture the school was trying to create,

### **What did we change or develop?**

One of the changes that had the most impact was having a link LGBTQ+ governor and including a thorough analysis of our inclusion programme within the termly governor reports. The second biggest change was providing the existing student network an approach to their work each school year that reflected on previous successes, identified areas of development and had clear impact measures that allowed them to see the changes they made. For example, this led to the network organising an off-timetable day for the whole school and arranging for a number of different visiting speakers, workshops and school trips on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

### **What impact did it have?**

The overall impact will be lasting as the systems and processes will allow for continuous year on year improvement on the culture of inclusion. Specifically, in this academic year, 86% of students said they agreed or strongly agreed that “there is a culture of LGBT+ equality within my interaction with other students”, which is the highest figure in the termly survey since we first asked the question in 2018.