



## Initial Review: report of the interim monitoring visit at Barnsley College, February 2015

### Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided before and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that Barnsley College is making acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the Initial Review in March 2013.

### Section 2: Background

2 QAA carried out an [Initial Review at Barnsley College \(the College\) in March 2013](#). At that time, Barnsley College published an action plan in response to the outcomes of the Review. The aim of interim monitoring is to provide information for the public on whether or not Barnsley College is making acceptable progress with implementing the action plan. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise Barnsley College of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next review.

3 The interim monitoring visit was carried out by Alan Weale, Review Manager, and Dr Carol Vielba, Reviewer, on 23 February 2015.

### Section 3: Changes since the Interim Review

4 The total number of students on the provision covered by the March 2013 Interim Review has increased from 60 to 145. The profile of this group of students has also changed: full-time numbers have nearly trebled, while part-time numbers have only increased by a third. The foundation degree in Engineering is in the process of closing; the final intake is due to complete in the current year.

5 At the time of the Initial Review negotiations were taking place to acquire University Campus Barnsley (UCB) from the University of Huddersfield. The transfer was completed in August 2013. The impact of this change has been significant. Whereas the provision covered by the Initial Review represented a small amount of higher education within a further education college, the same provision is now part of a higher education community of some 650 students with dedicated higher education infrastructure and located in a separate part of the College.

6 The action plan developed following the Initial Review is now part of a wider agenda related to the organisation, management, delivery, development and enhancement of higher education at the College. The new higher education structures, policies and processes are still being integrated.

### Section 4: Update on good practice

7 The Interim Review identified five features of good practice. These remain as positive features of the College. The first feature identified was institutional oversight of the provision through a composite report on external moderation and verification received centrally. This report has been expanded to cover all higher education provision and is now

presented to the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee (HETLQC). This is a new committee reporting to the Senior Management Team, chaired by the newly appointed Assistant Principal Higher Education, with responsibility for oversight of all higher education provision at the College. The second feature identified was the performance review system that was embedded throughout all levels of the College. The underlying approach to performance review at the College remains the same, but review of higher education performance has now been separated out. Reviews of planning and resources related to higher education take place biannually at departmental level and feed directly into the Senior Management Team. The third feature of good practice, the five-stage internal verification system, continues to be applied effectively to higher education provision accredited by Pearson.

8 The fourth feature of good practice, the identification and dissemination of good practice through the College's peer observation scheme, is being developed further. A new higher education focused system of peer review has been developed and is currently being implemented. The new scheme is aligned to appropriate professional standards. The outcomes of the scheme will be reviewed and reported to the Higher Education Forum, a new body that facilitates exchange of views among those teaching higher education programmes at the College. The fifth feature highlighted the comprehensive and widely available information that underpinned the management of quality and standards. This area has been developed through the work of a dedicated higher education management information systems administrator including new reports supporting higher education management processes and the production of key information sets.

## **Section 5: Update on recommendations**

9 The Interim Review made three recommendations, all of which related directly to students. The first recommendation was to strengthen the representation of higher education students on higher level committees of the College. At College level this has been addressed through the establishment of a place for a higher education student on the Board of Governors. Changes have also been made to student representation on committees related to higher education following the recent restructuring. Student panels have been established which operate without staff input, except for the attendance of the Student Support Officer who takes minutes. The terms of reference of the HETLQC provide for student representation: the committee currently has two student members. Students are represented on course committees and consideration is being given to finding a way to integrate student feedback into the work of the Higher Education Validation Panel which deals with programme approval and review. Students who met the monitoring review team indicated that student representation worked effectively and cited examples of issues raised by students to which the College had responded. Student representatives reported that not all representatives had received training, a matter which the College indicated it planned to address.

10 The second recommendation was to formalise the process for conducting end of year module evaluations. A standard module evaluation form is now in place. Feedback collected in this way feeds into annual monitoring and performance review; it is seen by course leaders and the Higher Education Enhancement Officer and discussed at course committees which include student representatives. Students who met the monitoring review team were familiar with the system.

11 The third recommendation was to integrate existing information for students into a single student charter that is reviewed annually. This has been acted upon. A separate version of the charter is produced for higher education students. The charter is displayed in poster form in all UCB classrooms and is available on the web. It is reviewed annually through the Students' Union and approved by HETLQC and the Board of Governors. Students who met the monitoring review team were familiar with the charter and considered it to be a helpful document.

## **Section 6: Update on affirmations**

12 The Initial Review contained no affirmations.

## **Section 7: Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

13 The College refers to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) in managing the quality and standards of its higher education provision. For example, work is currently being undertaken around the alignment of College practice to the Quality Code in relation to appeals and complaints. No comprehensive mapping of practice against the Quality Code has yet been undertaken. A continuing professional development course is being developed for staff teaching on higher education courses, particularly those new to such teaching.

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