

Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of St John's College Nottingham, June 2014

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that the St John's College Nottingham (the College) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring](#) visit in June 2013.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The College has 334 higher education students, which is eight fewer than at the annual monitoring visit in June 2013. The teaching staff in the academic year 2012-13 comprised nine full-time and six part-time staff. For 2013-14, there are eight full-time and eight part-time members of staff. Due to the Church of England's move to the validation of programmes under the 'Common Awards' curriculum involving a number of colleges, from September 2014 many new students will be on programmes validated by the University of Durham. Approximately one third of students will be on these University of Durham programmes with a decline in the number registered with the University of Chester. However, current students on a pathway leading to a programme not offered under the 'Common Awards' will be able to start the relevant University of Chester programme.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College has made acceptable progress on the recommendations in the 2012 REO report. The College has adopted a systematic and detailed approach to managing the changes, although implementation of its plans for the management structure and the linking of peer observation to staff appraisal have not yet been completed.

4 The College has made progress in implementing its new management and organisational structure. However, the planned reallocation of duties involving the Vice-Principal and the Director of Studies and Admissions has not been implemented fully. The College plans to finalise the changes during the academic year 2014-15.

5 The College has made progress with its peer review process and is now linking the outcomes to staff appraisal. Staff have worked in pairs and have undertaken reviews of each other with special reference to teaching practice. Next year, the theme for peer review will be based on preparation for teaching. The College plans to have all staff appraisals, linked to individuals' peer review results, completed by the end of this academic year.

6 The College's committees provide an effective oversight of the provision. It has revised the committee structure to provide appropriate consultative and decision-making capability. Students are represented on all committees except those that deal with personnel matters and individual student issues. Students reported that their voice is effective in improving their learning experience. The College's committees provide an effective oversight of the maintenance of academic standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities including the clear identification of priorities for future development.

7 The good practice in the June 2012 Review for Educational Oversight report of the additional support for students provided by proactive library staff and access to online resources continues to develop positively. Students praised the library staff for providing excellent support for their learning.

8 The College has made good progress on the other sections of its action plan. Staff provide feedback on students' work in a timely manner. Where exceptional circumstances have caused a delay in providing feedback, students were kept informed of the reason. All students have appropriate access to guidance and support. They each have a tutor providing academic and pastoral support. Formation groups, covering spiritual matters, contribute strongly to students' personal and professional development. Staff development is strategically planned with suitable training opportunities. The College ensures the information it produces is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Students receive comprehensive information at induction.

Section 4: Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

9 The College makes acceptable use of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and aligns its provision with the requirements of the Ministry Division of the Church of England. Since the last annual monitoring visit, the College has received approval for its new programmes validated by the University of Durham, using the 'Common Awards' curriculum framework. This framework incorporates the requirements of the Ministry Division which constitute an essential external benchmark for the College's programmes. The validation process included mapping the learning outcomes of the College's programmes against programme specifications approved by the University of Durham. The College has used the Quality Code to revise and develop its policies. For example, College policies on teaching and learning, equality and admissions have been modified since the last annual monitoring visit. Dissemination of the content of these revised policies to staff has involved informative discussions at a number of committees and also staff training sessions. The College recognises that it may not have developed policies to cover all aspects of the Quality Code. It has not mapped its policies against the Quality Code to ensure comprehensive use of all the guidance available. This is planned for the near future.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

10 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

11 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Peter Steer (Coordinator) and Mr Peter Hymans (Reviewer) on 26 June 2014.

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