Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Bournville College

December 2010

SR 016

Preface

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Purpose of IQER

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

The IQER process

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

Developmental engagement

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report:

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published. Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's

management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

Executive summary

The Summative review of Bournville College carried out in December 2010

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the structure and content of annual course reports and the higher education self-assessment, underpinned by a coherent management structure and quality assurance procedures, are thorough and central in evaluating and enhancing the provision
- the policies and incentives provided to staff encourage them to engage effectively in continuous professional development, scholarly activity and to pursue additional qualifications
- the termly programme area review meetings provide an effective and timely basis for the monitoring and control of the higher education provision
- the peer support system for students includes action learning sets and serves to enhance their learning experiences
- the investment in and updating of the virtual learning environment offers, for example, the opportunity for electronic module feedback and the submission of student work linked to anti-plagiarism software
- the attractive prospectus and well-presented printed information provided for the higher education provision informs students on their choice of programme.

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision:

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to:

- review its processes for ensuring its policies and procedures are aligned to the Academic Infrastructure, to make them more systematic and transparent
- embed further the teaching staff peer review observation scheme for the higher education provision to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for students
- encourage the representation of students on senior College-wide committees to ensure that higher education is given greater consideration
- review the website and course material to ensure that the relationship between the awarding bodies and the College is more clearly defined, that the website route to the higher education content is made transparent and that financial information on the programmes is more explicit.

A   Introduction and context

1   This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Bournville College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Coventry University and the University of Worcester. The review was carried out by Ms Elaine Crosthwaite, Mr Peter Hymans (reviewers) and Mr Robert Hodgkinson (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies; meetings with staff, students, and partner institutions; reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in section C of this report. The review was conducted by desk-based study. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*)*; subject and award benchmark statements*; *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ); and programme specifications.

3   In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree (FD) awards, section D of this report summarises details of the FD programmes delivered at the College.

4   Bournville College is a medium-sized general further education college situated in the south west of Birmingham and established in 1913. The College delivers courses at the Construction Centre at Longbridge, the Hollymoor Centre in Rubery and at its main campus in Northfield. Its immediate catchment area covers ten wards that account for about a quarter of Birmingham's population. All the local wards include areas with high levels of disadvantage and some are among the most deprived in the country. In 2009-10, the College's further and higher education provision numbered 7,073 students. For the academic year 2010-11, there are 134 part-time HEFCE-funded higher education students, being approximately 35 full-time equivalents. Seventeen staff teach the higher education provision, of whom four are full-time, nine part-time and four occupy fractional posts. The College's mission is to 'be the education and training provider of first choice'.

5   The College delivers its programmes within the Professional Programmes Department. It offers the following programmes (full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets):

Coventry University

- Diploma in Public Sector Leadership and the newly titled (2010) Graduate Certificate in Public Service Leadership (11.8)

University of Worcester

- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (18.75)
- Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) (3.8)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6   The College has formal partnership agreements with Coventry University and the University of Worcester. These outline the structure and scope of the collaboration between the partners and include programme specifications, the division of responsibilities, financial arrangements, quality assurance, marketing and the termination of the agreement. The awarding bodies are responsible for programme approval and alignment with the Academic Infrastructure, validation, acceptance of applications, ensuring common standards, moderation, final assessment and award, regular meetings to monitor quality and the process of annual evaluation and continual improvement of academic outcomes. The College is responsible for programme delivery, assessment and internal moderation, the quality of teaching and learning, application of the awarding bodies' standards, regular internal monitoring of quality and compliance with awarding body requirements for annual evaluation and review.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7   For the academic year 2009-10, the full-time Early Childhood programme was withdrawn by the University of Worcester due to insufficient student numbers and changes within the sector. Those who had enrolled on the course were transferred onto the current Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) programme. The HND in BioMedical Science (full-time) programme failed to recruit sufficient student numbers for a September 2009 start. In January 2010, the University withdrew the programme. The full-time Foundation Degree in Mental Health was to begin in January 2010, but due to slow recruitment the University withdrew the programme. The Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) was revalidated in 2010 for a period of three years and will be delivered on a part-time basis. Following the restructuring of the Diploma in Public Sector Leadership and its revalidation by Coventry University in 2010, the programme will be offered as the Graduate Certificate in Public Service Leadership starting in September 2010. The College expects to move to a new building in July 2011 that will replace the existing facility.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8   Students on the College's higher education programmes were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. This was submitted with the College's self-evaluation documentation. College staff explained the IQER process to the students and their role in the Summative review. The College prepared a written questionnaire that was based upon QAA's guidelines for the preparation of the student written submission and was completed by two-thirds of the students. The College provided an analysis of the results of the questionnaire in its self-evaluation submission. At the preparatory meeting, the coordinator met with students to seek their views on the provision. Their evidence was of value to the review.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

9 The College manages the standards of its higher education provision in compliance with awarding bodies' requirements. Responsibilities for the management and delivery of provision are specified in the College's partnership and course agreements with the awarding bodies. The latter detail arrangements for the quality management of each programme. The management and coordination of the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector is the responsibility of the awarding body's Partnership Advisory Group upon which the College is represented. Awarding body link tutors are appointed for the management and monitoring of the programmes. They coordinate their activities with the respective College course leader. A comparison of the respective responsibilities of the College and awarding bodies indicates that the strategic development of the University of Worcester's provision at the College is a joint responsibility. Whereas with Coventry University, the College has its own strategy for the provision. The awarding bodies each have responsibility for curriculum development and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The College is responsible for reviewing and responding to module evaluations and the production of annual monitoring reports.

10 The College manages the standards of its higher and further education provision through a number of committees and management structures. It has a comprehensive cross-College quality policy that gives clear guidance on the roles of the various boards and committees of the College. The overall responsibility for the management of the provision is vested in the Principal, supported by a senior management team that includes the Vice Principal assisted by the Curriculum Manager Higher Education who has cross-college responsibility for higher education. The latter reports to the Programme Area Head for Professional Programmes. Operational programme management issues are handled within the programme area through assistant curriculum managers. A Higher Education Programmes Committee steers the development of the provision. It meets four times each year to receive reports from each programme area, to share good practice and to ensure consistency in the quality of the provision. The minutes of meetings indicate that the roles and responsibilities identified are discharged effectively.

11 The outcomes of the Higher Education Programmes Committee are communicated to the Quality Improvement Board, which reports on quality issues throughout the College. The Board comprises senior members of staff within the College, including programme area heads and members of the Quality Audit Team, and is chaired by the Vice Principal. The Vice Principal reports on quality assurance, including the key activities of internal inspection; audit and internal verification; developmental observations and student satisfaction. The minutes of meetings confirm that higher education is considered at all levels of the organisation. A Quality Improvement Team of managers has responsibility for the improvement of quality across the curriculum. The Quality Audit Team of Programme Area Heads supports the Quality Improvement Team. It monitors programme performance and its outcomes are reported to the Assistant Quality Manager. It is also involved in managing the standards of the higher education provision. These structures ensure clear lines of communication between programmes and across the College. They underpin academic standards.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

12   All courses are aligned with the provisions of the Academic Infrastructure in terms of the academic standards embedded in the intended learning outcomes. The College has produced a guide to the management of quality and standards that contains a briefing for staff on all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. Reference to this is made in course team meetings. The programme specifications produced by the awarding bodies are written to align with the Academic Infrastructure. An outcome of the Developmental engagement action plan advises the College to review its policies and procedures to ensure their engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. In response to this, some policies have been amended and others specify that the awarding body's requirements take precedence. It is not clear how the College's policies and procedures are referenced to elements of the Academic Infrastructure or how the work has progressed. The College confirms that this is a continuing process. The team consider it desirable that the College's processes for ensuring its policies and procedures are aligned to the Academic Infrastructure are made more systematic and transparent.

13   The recent revalidation outcomes of the College's programmes by the University of Worcester confirm that there is engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and that academic standards are appropriate. The College has chosen to gain the external endorsement of its Foundation Degree Early Years (Sector Endorsed) programme by the Children's Workforce Development Council. In meeting their criteria, the endorsement confirms the programme's engagement with the *Code of practice,* the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and QAA's guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning*.*

14   The awarding bodies' assessment regulations are closely aligned with the Academic Infrastructure. The handbooks for these programmes contain module specifications that are comprehensive and informative. Intended learning outcomes are matched to subject benchmark statements. Overall, the College has engaged appropriately with the Academic Infrastructure in its management of academic standards.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of validating partners and awarding bodies?

15   The College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations through involvement with, for example, course annual monitoring, external examiners, course committee meetings, revalidation processes, and liaison with awarding body link tutors. Although there are some variations in the specific arrangements with each awarding body, the respective link tutor and the College course leader work together to ensure the maintenance of standards, the delivery of programmes in accordance with the regulatory framework and the programme requirements approved at validation.

16   The documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies indicate the respective responsibilities of the partners for annual programme monitoring, assessment, external examining and collating and responding to student feedback. The College monitoring and review process starts at module level and includes a statistical analysis and review of student feedback. Module reviews are aggregated into an annual course review that uses a standard proforma and incorporates link tutors' annual monitoring reports. The annual course review reports incorporate and evaluate course-related information, statistics, reports from module leaders, the results of student feedback and external examiners' comments. The Curriculum Manager Higher Education reviews the annual course reports and produces a higher education self-assessment report that identifies strengths and areas for development. These outcomes are reviewed in the Higher Education

Programmes Committee and at the Quality Improvement Board. The annual course reviews are integrated into programme area reports and moderated by the Quality Improvement Board. A College self-assessment report is produced for the attention of the Standards Committee of the Corporation. The structure and content of the annual course reports and the higher education self-assessment form the basis of a quality improvement plan that guides the following year's activity. Their content is carefully considered and is a central element in evaluating and enhancing the provision. Given the small size of the higher education provision and the integration of its systems and procedures with further education, they provide an effective basis for evaluating and monitoring outcomes and the quality of the provision. This represents good practice.

17   Assessment policies and procedures form part of the partnership agreements. First marking is undertaken within the College, and second marking or moderation is undertaken by or with the awarding body. External examiners are appointed by the respective awarding bodies to monitor and report on academic standards. The reports are received by the Vice Principal and forwarded to the Assistant Quality Manager who has responsibility for preparing and monitoring an action plan. This is disseminated to the Curriculum Manager Higher Education and the relevant course teams. External examiner reports, annual monitoring reports and resulting action plans are discussed at the Higher Education Programmes Committee. Procedures for the operation of examination boards are aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining* and conducted in accordance with University of Worcester's regulations. The College has cooperated with the awarding bodies in responding to the Developmental engagement action plan. External examiner reports now contain content that is more specific to the needs of the College.

18   Each term, the College engages in strategic partnership planning meetings with programme teams from the University of Worcester and partner colleges. The meetings include, for example, discussion of external examiners' reports and student feedback. They represent an important component in ensuring parity of standards between institutions. The annual monitoring reports for the Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) and the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector programmes demonstrate the close working relationships and effective communication between the awarding body and College tutors. A recent review of the programmes by the University of Worcester concludes that the partnership is operating in accordance with the terms of the partnership agreement. Reapproval of the agreement is subject to addressing an action plan developed by the College and the awarding body, on which satisfactory progress has been made. These partnership planning meetings and reviews help to ensure that the College is meeting its obligations.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards?

19   There are a wide variety of opportunities for staff development. Twice yearly, the College holds development days. Among the staff development sessions there are those of particular value to the higher education staff. These include sessions on combating plagiarism, academic referencing and the use of electronic whiteboards. The awarding bodies provide continuous professional development events. These include updates on their regulations, the development of assessment practice, internal verification procedures and sessions to promote further understanding of the Academic Infrastructure. Records show that staff engage fully with the awarding bodies' events.

20   The College's Higher Education Strategy includes a commitment to encourage the development of staff through a variety of means. This is reinforced in its Scholarly Activity

Policy and provides staff with an additional time allowance for each hour of their teaching. This acts as an incentive for staff to undertake professional development and scholarly activity. Higher education staff are encouraged to undertake additional teaching qualifications. Some staff have been awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching from the Staff and Educational Development Association. The College recognises the need for staff to maintain the currency of their subject expertise by encouraging study for higher degrees. Several higher education teachers have achieved or are in the process of achieving these qualifications. The Scholarly Activity Policy also contains the requirement for staff to record and reflect on their continuous professional development and other activities using personal learning space software. These structures, policies and incentives encourage staff to engage in continuous professional development and scholarly activity, and to pursue additional qualifications. They represent good practice and support the achievement of academic standards.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies.

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

How are responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

21   The arrangements described in paragraphs 11 to 13 provide an effective framework for the management and delegation of the College's responsibilities underpinning the quality of learning opportunities. Attendance at awarding body committee meetings and strategic partnership planning networks enriches the programmes. The relationship of the course leaders with link tutors supports the College staff in the implementation of awarding body policies and procedures governing the delivery of the provision. The course teams comply with the awarding bodies' regulations, policies and procedures, which are explained in the programme handbooks. They prescribe the range of learning opportunities necessary for the delivery of the courses, within which all tutors operate. The range of strategies that underpin the delivery of teaching and learning is clearly articulated.

22   Course teams meet regularly throughout the academic year using a standard agenda. The Curriculum Manager Higher Education chairs the Higher Education Programmes Committee which meets four times each year. This committee receives reports from each higher education programme and is also used to share good practice, all of which impact on the quality of learning. The respective programme area head notifies issues to the Quality Improvement Board for its attention. An electronic higher education forum is being developed as part of the virtual learning environment. This contains sections for the dissemination of good practice, guidance on course delivery and resources. As its use is evolving, the team is unable to make any judgement on its efficacy.

23   In addition to the role described in paragraph 11, the Quality Audit Team advises on the development of policy and procedures, many of which impact on the quality of student learning. Its role is to support the identification and development of quality learning opportunities in accordance with the College's quality policy statement.

24   There are termly reviews for each programme area attended by the Vice Principal, the Quality Manager and programme area heads. The meetings follow a standard agenda that includes consideration of student data, reviews of annual monitoring and action plans,

student feedback, external examiner and awarding body comments and complaints. The reviews provide a structured and timely opportunity for the oversight of the higher education programmes, ensuring firm management control of all the higher education programmes. They represent good practice.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies to ensure that students receive appropriate learning opportunities?

25   The processes and reporting arrangements described in paragraphs 15 to 18 provide an effective framework that ensures the management of the responsibilities underpinning the delivery of learning opportunities for students. The awarding bodies delegate a wide range of responsibilities for delivering learning and teaching to the College. The structures implemented by the College provide the basis by which it fulfils its obligations. These include the monitoring of student admissions; retention and completion; responsibility for developing staff to teach and assess learning, and the analysis and action planning of student feedback. In particular, the higher education self-assessment report (referred to in paragraph 16) includes a quality improvement plan that is monitored throughout the year. This document is then scrutinised by the Quality Improvement Board, which validates students' grades.

26   The awarding bodies provide the majority of the policies and procedures that govern the delivery of the higher education provision. The College has a number of well-articulated policies that are common to its higher and further education provision. These include policies on appeals, learner involvement, assessment and learning, and plagiarism. They provide a suitable basis that allows the College to fulfil its obligations to the awarding bodies.

27   The regular meetings of programme advisory groups consider trainee feedback and partnership evaluation, and contribute to the improvement of the quality of provision and to trainees' success. Ofsted refers to the high quality of the personal and professional support for trainees which ensures that individual needs are well met. Students are, in the main, satisfied with the learning opportunities provided by the teaching, the in-class support and tutorials, access to and suitability of learning resources, the clarity of assessment criteria and usefulness of feedback. The team concludes that the College has effective arrangements in place to ensure that students receive appropriate learning opportunities.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

28   The arrangements described in paragraphs 12 to 14 of this report apply to the College's management of the quality of learning opportunities. Staff are aware of the Academic Infrastructure through its consideration at revalidation and partnership events and at course team meetings, through attendance at the Higher Education Committee, and in responding to the College's Higher Education Strategy. Furthermore, the awarding bodies' documentation, continuous professional development opportunities, and the College's own staff development activities, ensure that the Academic Infrastructure, as it impacts on the quality of learning opportunities, is well understood.

How does the College assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

29   The College's Higher Education Strategy and Quality Policy statement indicates that it aims to provide a high standard of teaching and learning to all students through a process of continuous improvement focusing on the quality of their learning experience.

The College's comprehensive cross-College strategy aims to raise the standards of teaching and learning by promoting the effective use of resources, enhancing the professionalism of staff, and disseminating and embedding good practice. The continuous professional development records and student feedback confirm that the strategy informs and enhances teaching and learning practice. The College has gained external endorsement of its Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector from Standards Verification United Kingdom, which checks staff compliance with professional national standards. The Diploma in Public Sector Leadership programme has been developed by the awarding body and is accredited by the Chartered Management Institute. The policies, frameworks and feedback confirm that the arrangements serve to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The College must seek approval of the awarding bodies before making teaching appointments. Existing staff are approved on the validation of the award. This approved status allows staff access to awarding body resources and staff development opportunities.

30   The College operates a developmental class observation process whereby each member of the teaching staff is observed annually. The Professional Development Manager manages the process with trained observers drawn from the programmes. The graded observations use standard documentation and lead to the dissemination of good practice or the identification of additional support needs. Action plans are drawn up by the observer, monitored and instigated by the advanced practitioners. The programme area observers and the Professional Development Manager moderate this process. The records of observations are considered during annual performance reviews. The current Professional Programmes Report confirms that a significant number of class observations are rated highly. The report indicates that tutors have high expectations of students and employ challenging teaching strategies.

31   A recommendation is made in the University of Worcester's partnership review report that the College considers introducing a peer observation of teaching scheme, in addition to the scheme described in paragraph 30. The College already has a peer observation scheme that is operating for its further education provision, whereby teachers of equal standing observe and feedback to the observee on the effectiveness of their teaching. This scheme has not been fully adopted by staff teaching the higher education programmes. The team recommends the further embedding of the scheme to enhance the quality of teaching in higher education.

How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?

32   The College's induction checklist ensures that all students receive a relevant and thorough induction. Students also receive a comprehensive course handbook that details the level of support they can expect. The Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) students are supported by personal and module tutors. Email communication is encouraged and additional learning support is available for students with disabilities or learning difficulties. The Diploma in Public Leadership handbook outlines the requirement for students to undertake personal development planning and confirms their entitlement to three hours of personal tutor support for each year of the course. The handbook also informs students on the use of action learning sets as a means of peer support. In this process, groups of students are expected to meet regularly, to support one another in their learning, to resolve issues and reflect on actions to be taken. This peer support represents good practice and enhances the quality of students' learning.

33   Students' views are expressed in module feedback returns, surveys and student representation on course committees. All programmes have elected student representatives who are invited to attend course team meetings. As most students study part-time, they have limited opportunities to attend and so they are encouraged to submit issues for discussion to tutors. The College confirms that higher education student representation does not extend to

the senior College-wide committees. The team consider it desirable that the College introduces student representation on these committees to help ensure that the needs and concerns of higher education are given greater consideration across the College.

34   In addition to the services provided by the College, support for disability and hardship, and welfare and careers advice are available through the relevant awarding body. Students are satisfied with the support they receive within the College and have little need to access this support. The Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector students confirm that they view their teaching as excellent and professional, underpinned by helpful feedback from tutors. They are satisfied with the individual and peer support they receive within their groups.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

35   The arrangements for staff development described in paragraphs 19 to 20 of this report also apply to arrangements in support of the quality of learning opportunities. Analysis of staff curriculum vitae and the College's continuous professional development records confirm that staff have the requisite skills to deliver the higher education courses. In its Higher Education Strategy, the College is committed to the ongoing training and development of its staff, including teaching and support staff. It is also committed to providing a wide range of specific development courses and workshops in addition to access to any of the College's programmes. The College is committed to the principles of lifelong learning through continual professional development. It seeks to demonstrate this through the allocation of funds and time to staff.

How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programmes?

36   The College provides a range of facilities, but no dedicated space for higher education students. The agreements with awarding bodies provide students with access to their library and learning resources. Students are aware of and make use of the learning resources at the College and awarding bodies. Students are able to use the Society College of National University Libraries facility that provides access to other university libraries. The Diploma in Public Leadership students are also able to access resources through the Chartered Management Institute member database. Students consider the learning resources and their access sufficient and appropriate to meet their needs. They cite the wealth of online resources available.

37   The Developmental engagement action plan recommends that the College should make more effective use of its virtual learning environment to stimulate further interactive learning opportunities for students. The need to expand its existing range of books and journals and to continue to develop a greater range of online resources for students is recognised in its Higher Education Strategy. The College is investing significantly in the development and updating of the virtual learning environment for the storage and delivery of teaching and learning materials to provide an interactive facility for group discussions and to encourage other learning activities. The College has recently introduced an electronic module feedback form using the virtual learning environment. Its content is comprehensive and is expected to provide additional information on all aspects of module delivery. The proforma has been piloted by the Diploma in Public Sector Leadership students and will be introduced during the next academic year.

38   The College's strategic plan (2010-2013) for information and e-learning technology envisages significant expansion of the provision as part of its move to a new learning resource centre in 2011. The plan anticipates that all curriculum areas will use information and learning technology in curriculum delivery and will offer e-learning opportunities. The development of e-learning resources is expected to encompass delivery material, assignments, help files, examples of good practice, virtual libraries and techniques to support the student on and off campus to access information. As part of its quality improvement plan, the College expects to introduce a system for the electronic submission of student work linked to anti-plagiarism software. The comprehensive plans and newly introduced initiatives indentified in paragraph 37 and above lend confidence that there will be sufficient and accessible learning resources to meet existing and future needs. These represent good practice.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities, as required by the awarding bodies, to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Core theme 3: Public information

What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?

39   The College produces an attractive higher education prospectus and other printed material that contain clear and detailed information on its courses and services. In the rear sleeve of the prospectus there is provision for course leaflets to be inserted. These detail the course content, entry requirements and progression information. They inform students on their choice of programme, and their format and content represents good practice. However, the link with the awarding body is confined to the inclusion of a small awarding body logo and fails to make the relationship sufficiently distinct. Equally, the recently redesigned website is attractive and clear, but does not provide a direct link from the main toolbar to the higher education programmes. Although the website provides information on cross-College support services, there is a lack of information on higher education course fees. Details of these are also not included in the printed material. The information relating to student financial support only refers to non-higher education students. Consequently, the team recommends that it is desirable that these matters are addressed and reviewed.

40   Course teams are responsible for collating all information for the programme handbooks from material provided by the respective awarding bodies. This process is in the main effective. In its guide to the Management of Quality and Standards, the College has produced a document to support the dissemination of information relating to academic standards. This has been used in course team meetings, and relates the level of intended learning outcomes to the FHEQ and student performance. The team evaluated a sample of course documentation and web-based material. The information meets the requirements of the awarding bodies and the expectations of students. The awarding bodies play a key role in providing structures to control published information on the provision.

What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing? How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?

41   The College has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the accuracy and completeness of information that it publishes. Under the terms of the agreements with

awarding bodies, all courses are subject to the regulations and procedures of the awarding bodies, and publicity materials, including those which are web-based, are submitted to the relevant awarding body for approval prior to their publication. As indicated in paragraph 40, the majority of course information is provided by the awarding bodies. For University of Worcester's programmes, course teams produce supplementary guidance, for example, on assessment. Programme area teams submit updated changes to course information on a standard proforma that is checked by the awarding bodies. Approved changes are forwarded to the College's marketing team for inclusion in publicity material The Curriculum Manager Higher Education is responsible for monitoring paper-based and electronic information to ensure it is up to date and accurate.

42   During the course of revalidation of the programmes, assignments and other documentation is subject to reapproval. At the revalidation of the Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) public information on the partner websites and in student handbooks was found to be inconsistent. This resulted in an action plan to strengthen monitoring procedures and to confirm the accuracy and currency of published information.

43   Information received prior to students starting their courses is, in the main, accurate and reflects their on-course experience. However, more information could be provided on the level of study expected and students' time commitment. Prior to enrolment, students rely on their dialogue with College staff to supplement the limited website information. Most employers confirm that the information they receive about their employees' study commitments is accurate. Programme information on the virtual learning environment and awarding body websites is usually clear. Students are able to seek clarification on, for example, assignment briefs with their tutors. The team considers that, given the small size of the provision, the structures provided are appropriate.

The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

C   Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

44   The Developmental engagement in assessment for Bournville College was undertaken in October 2009. There were three lines of enquiry, as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: How effective are the College's assessment policies and procedures?

Line of enquiry 2: Is the feedback on assessment appropriate to student needs and sufficiently challenging and developmental? Are the systems and procedures for obtaining student feedback effective?

Line of enquiry 3: Can reliance be placed upon the accuracy, consistency and currency of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about its assessment practices and procedures?

The lines of enquiry covered the implementation of the awarding body regulations on assessment across the courses and the responsibilities of the College in these processes. The scope of the Developmental engagement in assessment covered all of the higher education courses offered by the College.

45   The Developmental engagement identified a number of areas of good practice. These included assessment opportunities that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the content of groups of modules. In addition, the team identified feedback practices that are enhanced by the outcomes of collaborative partner course team workshops.

46   The Developmental engagement team considered it as advisable that the College revised its policies and procedures to ensure their compatibility with its higher education courses, its awarding bodies' documentation and engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. The following advisable recommendations were highlighted as requiring action in conjunction with the respective awarding bodies. The format of the generic external examiner reports was identified as requiring outcomes that were more specific to the needs of the College. In addition, the formats and content of the assessment briefing documentation was identified as requiring attention to make them more uniform and clearer. The team considered it desirable that the College reviewed the communication of good practice within and across the provision, expanded the use of the virtual learning environment to stimulate interactive learning and highlighted the need to develop its role in gaining feedback from students.

D   Foundation Degrees

47   As of December 2010, there is one Foundation Degree, as follows, with the awarding body in brackets:

- Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) (University of Worcester).

For the academic year 2009-10, the full-time Early Childhood programme was withdrawn by the University of Worcester due to insufficient student numbers and changes within the sector. Those who had enrolled on the course were transferred onto the current Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) programme on a full-time basis. The full-time Foundation Degree in Mental Health was to begin in January 2010, but due to slow recruitment the University of Worcester withdrew the programme. The Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) was revalidated in 2010 for a period of three years and will be delivered on a part-time basis. The College expects to provide a new learning resource centre in July 2011 that will replace the existing facility and benefit its Foundation Degree students.

48   The annual monitoring reports for the Foundation Degree in Early Years (Sector Endorsed) programme, and the engagement in strategic partnership planning meetings with programme teams from the University of Worcester and partner colleges, demonstrate the close working relationships and effective communication between the awarding body and College tutors. The students also receive a comprehensive course handbook that details the level of support that they can expect. This includes support from personal module tutors and mentors. The outcome of the reviewer's evaluation confirms that appropriate and well-defined structures are in place to deliver academic standards that are appropriate to the provision of Foundation Degrees. These serve the needs of further and higher education without conflict.

49   In conclusion, the College discharges its responsibility and fulfils its obligations in line with the expectations of the awarding bodies. The College has made progress in meeting the recommendations contained in the Developmental engagement action plan. All of the good practices and recommendations listed below are relevant to the Foundation Degrees.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

50   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Bournville College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies: Coventry University and the University of Worcester.

51   In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice**:

- the structure and content of annual course reports and the higher education self-assessment, underpinned by a coherent management structure and quality assurance procedures, are thorough and central in evaluating and enhancing the provision (paragraph 16)
- the policies and incentives provided to staff encourage them to engage effectively in continuous professional development, scholarly activity and to pursue additional qualifications (paragraphs 19, 20)
- the termly programme area review meetings provide an effective and timely basis for the monitoring and control of the higher education provision (paragraph 24)
- the peer support system for students includes action learning sets and serves to enhance their learning experiences (paragraph 32)
- the investment in and updating of the virtual learning environment offers, for example, the opportunity for electronic module feedback and the submission of student work linked to anti-plagiarism software (paragraphs 37, 38)
- the attractive prospectus and well-presented printed information provided for the higher education provision informs students on their choice of programme (paragraph 39).

52   The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

53   The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

- review its processes for ensuring its policies and procedures are aligned to the Academic Infrastructure, to make them more systematic and transparent (paragraph 12)
- embed further the teaching staff peer review observation scheme for the higher education provision to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for students (paragraph 31)
- encourage the representation of students on senior College-wide committees to ensure that higher education is given greater consideration (paragraph 33)
- review the website and course material to ensure that the relationship between the awarding bodies and the College is more clearly defined, that the website route to the higher education content is made transparent and that financial information on the programmes is more explicit (paragraph 39).

54   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

55   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

56   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Bournville College action plan relating to the Summative review: December 2010						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the structure and content of annual course reports and the higher education self-assessment, underpinned by a coherent management structure and quality assurance procedures, are thorough and central in evaluating and enhancing the provision (paragraph 16)	Review the annual reporting mechanisms to ensure that they are maintained in line with the *Code of practice* and other higher education institution requirements	July 2011	Course leaders/assistant curriculum managers Curriculum Manager Higher Education Professional Development Manager	Minutes from programme area meetings highlighting the effective analysis and management of the programmes Annual course reviews and action plans completed in appropriate detail and underpinned by rigorous monitoring	Higher Education Programmes Committee Director of Business Development Programme Area Head	Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes Quality Improvement Board minutes College Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

• the policies and incentives provided to staff encourage them to engage effectively in continuous professional development, scholarly activity and to pursue additional qualifications (paragraphs 19, 20)	Scholarly activity to be monitored by the College's Secretariat Development of a central resource to share research undertaken by staff Examine the potential for publishing staff research	July 2011	Curriculum Manager Higher Education Professional Development Manager	Minutes from Higher Education Programmes Committee to be used to demonstrate successful policy compliance	Director of Business Development Programme Area Head	Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes Quality Improvement Board minutes Annual course reviews Higher Education Self Assessment Review
• the termly programme area review meetings provide an effective and timely basis for the monitoring and control of the higher education provision (paragraph 24)	By increasing curriculum representation, continue to enhance the quality of evidence presented at programme area termly reviews across all curriculum areas	July 2011	Programme Area Head Assistant Principal Quality	The monitoring and evaluation of evidence for higher education is demonstrated in termly review minutes	Assistant Principal Quality	Termly Review minutes Quality Improvement Board minutes

• the peer support system for students includes action learning sets and serves to enhance their learning experiences (paragraph 32)	Dissemination to other programme areas by the advanced practitioners and appropriate staff	July 2011	Curriculum Manager Higher Education Professional Development Manager Advanced practitioners	Feedback from programme area meetings demonstrate effective dissemination Advanced practitioner records to include the targeted activities Student feedback to be used to measure the impact of the initiatives Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes to be used to monitor and evaluate progress Annual course reviews Higher Education Self Assessment Review	Programme Area Head	Higher Education Programme Committee minutes Programme area annual course reviews Higher Education Self Assessment Review

• the investment in and updating of the virtual learning environment offers, for example, the opportunity for electronic module feedback and the submission of student work linked to anti-plagiarism software (paragraphs 37, 38)	Disseminate to other programme areas by staff engagement through continuous professional development activity Highlight good practice through staff newsletter Student feedback on the success of the process	July 2011	E-learning Technologist Professional Development Manager Curriculum Manager Higher Education Assistant Principal Marketing	Higher Education Programmes Committee to review and evaluate effectiveness Higher Education Self Assessment Review to review and evaluate effectiveness Programme area self assessment reviews to review and evaluate effectiveness Reports in staff newsletter Collect student feedback to measure its impact	Quality Improvement Board	Quality Improvement Board minutes Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes Student feedback evaluation

| | the attractive prospectus and well-presented printed information provided for the higher education provision informs students on their choice of programme (paragraph 39). | Consider the dissemination of this format to other programme areas through staff newsletter and Higher Education Programmes Committee

Review the use of the College website to ensure all information and presentation styles are standardised | July 2011 | Curriculum Manager Higher Education | Reports in the staff newsletter to highlight good practice

Higher Education Programmes Committee to disseminate good practice to other programme areas | Assistant Principal Marketing

Director of Business Development | Higher Education Self Assessment Review |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Desirable** | | **Action to be taken** | **Target date** | **Action by** | **Success indicators** | **Reported to** | **Evaluation** |
| The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desired** to take action: | | | | | | | |
| | review its processes for ensuring its policies and procedures are aligned to the Academic Infrastructure, to make them more systematic and transparent (paragraph 12) | Ensure the alignment of higher education with the college policy on authorising policies and procedures

Procedures to be reviewed by the Higher Education Programmes Committee (where applicable), to ensure effective mapping to the Academic Infrastructure | July 2011 | Assistant Principal Quality

Higher Education Programmes Committee

Higher education institutions | Updated procedures for writing, authorising and publishing quality procedures

Compliance with policies and procedures in mapping to the Academic Infrastructure | Director of Business Development

Programme Area Head

Higher education institutions | Annual evaluation of policies by Higher Education Programmes Committee |

• embed further the teaching staff peer review observation scheme for the higher education provision to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for students (paragraph 31)	Curriculum Manager Higher Education to prepare schedule for Higher Education staff to undertake peer observations each academic year	July 2011	Curriculum Manager Higher Education	Records of peer observations reviewed termly by Curriculum Manager Higher Education Points of good practice disseminated at Higher Education Programmes Committee and course team meetings	Director of Business Development Programme Area Head	Higher Education Self Assessment Review
• encourage the representation of students on senior College-wide committees to ensure that higher education is given greater consideration (paragraph 33)	Ensure that student representatives are appointed on each course Ensure student representatives are invited to attend each Higher Education Programmes Committee and given the opportunity to attend the College Student Council	April 2011	Course leaders/assistant curriculum managers Curriculum Manager Higher Education	Student feedback to be evaluated Course team minutes Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes Higher Education Self Assessment Review	Director of Business Development Programme Area Head	Higher Education Self Assessment Review External examiner reports Student Council minutes Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes
• review the website and course material to ensure that the relationship between the awarding bodies	Review website and higher education course material and clearly define linkages between College and awarding bodies	February 2011	Curriculum Manager Higher Education Course leaders/ assistant curriculum	College and awarding body linkages apparent on each course within the higher education section	Director of Business Development Programme Area Head	Higher Education Programmes Committee minutes Student feedback evaluation

and the College is more clearly defined, that the website route to the higher education content is made transparent and that financial information on the programmes is more explicit (paragraph 39).	Facilitate clear access to the higher education section on the College website through hyperlink on 'quick links' and the information banner on the homepage Include information on course fees and student financial support (where applicable) within each higher education course listed on website		managers Graphic Designer Assistant Marketing Manager	on College website Higher education quick link and banner inserted on College website homepage Course fees and student financial support information included (where applicable) on each higher education course	Assistant Principal Marketing	Higher Education Programme Committee minutes Higher Education Self Assessment Review