



Investors in Diversity
Final Assessment Report
For
Barnsley College



Date: Nov 2013

Assessor: Jo Barton

On behalf of the National Centre for Diversity

Assessment details

Organisation Name:	Barnsley College
Advisor	Jo Barton
Students interviewed	5
Employees interviewed	27
Governors interviewed	1
Number of Sites visited	1 site visited by the advisor
Total number of interviewees:	33
Site Visit Dates:	October 16 th 2013

The Assessment process

In writing this report, I have considered the feedback to the college in the gap analysis report of January 2013. I have also made comments and recommendations to support continuous improvement within Barnsley College. In the majority of this report I have focused on issues in relation to E&D for staff rather than the student population as I think this is where Barnsley College could benefit from further advice. I have communicated my thoughts to the college prior to and during the Final Review day and so this report will supplement those comments.

Summary

Solat Chaudhry was the first advisor who initially worked with Barnsley College to produce the gap analysis report and also to facilitate the Induction in February 2013.

I became the advisor in May 2013 and have since advised and supported the college and in particular I have worked alongside Angela Foulkes.

I visited the college in June to assess if we could move to final review and conducted the final assessment visit on October 16th. During interviews undertaken at both visits it became clear that leaders have played a pivotal role in advancing inclusivity within the college. There is clear evidence of the consolidating of practice on equality and diversity particularly since 2012 when the Single Equality Scheme was produced. The value of the equality and diversity remit held by Angela Foulkes in supporting staff and students at the college with E&D initiatives has been invaluable in terms of embedding E&D into the college. This was recognised in the gap analysis report. Now that Angela has left the college, this legacy needs to continue and I understand that another senior manager is to take on this remit.

Vision and Mission

The vision and mission statement and values of the Barnsley College as set out below incorporate the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and are key to the overall strategic planning process.

Vision

“To be a world class tertiary college”

Mission

“We will provide exceptional opportunities and inspirational learning experiences for young people, adults, businesses and the diverse communities we serve.”

Assessment Recommendation

As part of the assessment, one site was visited and a number of interviews were arranged with staff, students, the Chair of Governors and external stakeholders. Interviews were via face-to-face discussions, focus groups and telephone calls, which brought me into contact with a total of 33 interviewees.

I would like to thank Angela Foulkes for making the arrangements for the visit and also for her support and assistance during the time that I spent at Barnsley College. All of the people who gave up their time to be interviewed were also very helpful and their contribution is very much appreciated.

I have visited the college on three separate occasions as the liD Advisor and each time I have found the college environment to be very welcoming, friendly and accessible.

Recommendation

I would recommend that Barnsley College is awarded the Investors in Diversity Standard at Stage 2 and I am delighted that the college has evidenced some exemplary practice. The college is to be commended for the fast track through to achievement from the time of the Induction 8 months ago.

Congratulations to all those who played a part in this achievement!

The college will be accredited with liD for two years and will be due for re-assessment in October 2015.

This report will now provide feedback against the destinations of the Investors in Diversity Standard as set out below:

Strand 1 – Committing

In terms of communication about equality and diversity, information about progress is made available via the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. There are also various reports presented to the Governors to update on progress and events that are held within college, such as Black History Month.

There were examples of commitment to E&D provided in discussions and via reports to Governors. Leaders are actively involved in college life. Governors are expected to spend a day shadowing a student and are present at college E&D events.

There was a comment from one staff member about one Governor in particular taking an interest in their working environment, which is a positive. This Governor has now left the college and I suggest that this type of contact should be maintained.

Teams also discuss E&D and this is cascaded via managers.

There is a Single Equality Scheme Action Plan for Barnsley College which was drafted following consultation with stakeholders and which gives a strategic overview in relation to equality and diversity. This is due for revision in 2015.

In the introduction to the Single Equality Scheme, Colin Booth the Principal states:

“We believe that all those who form the community at Barnsley College (governors, staff, learners, visitors and contractors) have a right to be valued equally and to have equality of opportunity.

We will promote shared values that include equality and diversity, valuing and involving our staff, showing care and respect for others and demonstrating honesty and fairness in everything we do. The delivery and promotion of equal opportunities underpins the College’s Vision and Development Plan”.

There is regular communication to all staff and students via the intranet. There are updates about activities and initiatives in relation to equality and diversity provided within college communications.

Assessment on progress with E&D is part of the business planning and performance reviews for all 32 departments within college and all reviews are attended by SMT.

The Investors in Diversity Action Plan complements the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan. The liD Action Plan was drafted following the Induction day held on February 7th 2013 and has been updated on a regular basis. This plan is very comprehensive and provides detailed actions mapped against the liD Standard, many of which have already been achieved and evidenced.

Now that Stage 2 is formally awarded to the college, the full liD logo can be included in the college prospectus and on the website.

There are a variety of posters displaying information about equality and diversity and linked to this is Project Connect. There are posters for students in relation to apprenticeships where stereotyping is avoided. For instance, the information about electrical engineering features a young woman and describes how in a male dominated area she is treated no differently than the males on the course.

Job advertisements relate the college commitment to equality and diversity and the relevant part of the advertisements state that the college is *“committed to creating a dynamic and diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all candidates regardless of their gender, disability, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or faith.”*

The person specifications for jobs currently include reference to equal opportunities. Messages to external candidates about the behaviours that are part of the culture at Barnsley College should they become an employee can be conveyed within recruitment literature.

There is more work to be done around behaviours and HR is looking at this currently. In particular, they are also mapping the recruitment journey of candidates to find out at which stage within the recruitment process candidates are not being appointed to posts.

The recruitment information including the terms and conditions could now display the liD logo.

Having met with a variety of stakeholders, it was demonstrated that Barnsley College has made progress in terms of embedding equality and diversity and that the college is committed to continuous improvement in this area.

Extensive support is available for students who may require alternative provision because of an impairment or language requirement. A counselling and support service is available as well as health and wellbeing facilities.

Students were very positive about their experience of Barnsley College and this can be evidenced from the comments set out later in this report.

Equality and diversity is on the agenda at staff and student inductions and the e-learning package is utilised to deliver training. Face to face sessions are being considered as part of refresher activities and this is detailed in the liD Action Plan. This is an update on the training currently provided for staff and Governors. The college have also included an action to consider the use of the Learning Workbook provided by the National Centre for Diversity.

There have been focused training sessions provided for stakeholders including a session on the Equality Act for Governors. This received favourable feedback from the Chair of Governors.

There is a two-year review (2012-2014) of Equality Assessments currently being conducted for all HR policies and the college want to ensure that managers impact assess policies at the developmental stage.

Comments to support the commitment of Barnsley College by staff and students are highlighted below:

Quotes and Interview Feedback

Staff

“A nice place to work”

“Everybody wants to see people succeed”

“Learners are at the heart of everything we do”

“A good company to work for”

“We are listened to”

Employees who were not part of the teaching staff spoke about how they were included by the college and how they received information via the internet and could search for policies and procedures if these were required.

Without hesitation, the staff said that they would recommend the college as an employer.

Staff said that they received information via the newsletter (Buzz) and emails, as well as by regular meetings where managers would cascade information.

Students

“The college is like a family and you feel welcome”

“It is better than school and there are different people and cultures”

“I look forward to college”

In relation to tutors “They treat everybody with respect”

Students said that they would receive personal support with issues in relation to their life at home from the college. Also that there is time for them to carry

out other activities and that the college are accommodating in terms of their other interests.

They explained there was a code of conduct for students and that students know where to go for help if there is a problem.

The student feedback was extremely positive and complimentary about Barnsley College.

Strand 2 – Learning

Activities

Various initiatives are undertaken in relation to celebrating diversity. Of particular note is the E&D festival, which was held in April 2013. Departments were all involved in the day and there was a t-shirt competition based on E&D. Foundation Learning where the successful entrants were reported back to the Governors in the report they received at a subsequent meeting.

The liD action plan demonstrates that liD has provided a separate framework to enable staff to work together consistently to embed equality and diversity within college.

The gap analysis showed the business benefits of EDI were well known to staff.

Lesson planning includes a variety of topics around equality, diversity and inclusion and it is a requirement that this will be embedded in sessions with students. Monitoring is undertaken via lesson observation and there is support with this curriculum planning available to staff.

The gap analysis provided positive feedback on the sessions that were observed by the advisor. Tutors were able to give me clear and relevant information about how they had embedded equality and diversity within the curriculum and documented examples were provided for me on the assessment day.

It is suggested that as part of the support offered to staff case studies could be developed in the form of an advisory booklet for tutors in order to demonstrate and share how E&D has been successfully embedded in the curriculum.

Staff I interviewed gave clear and relevant examples of how they had supported students by making reasonable adjustments. Student Support cater for a range of alternative requirements such as ESOL and disability access as



well as making reasonable adjustments for students with a variety of impairments.

All staff and students I interviewed were able to explain where they could obtain information about equality and diversity.

Students feed into the consultation process and there is also a student union. There are surveys, which complement this process.

Interviewees indicated that senior and other management from Barnsley College were committed to equality and diversity issues. This is supported by the information in the liD surveys.

liD Survey

In relation to the question about the groups of people who take E&D seriously, in the way they behave and the things they say, staff responded as follows:

liD Staff Survey 2013	Yes	Think so	Don't think so	No	Don't know or N/A
Line Managers	71.2%	21.6%	5.3%	0.7%	1.8%
Senior Managers	61.6%	25.7%	5.3%	2.1%	5.3%

Governors regularly discuss equality and diversity issues and they are able to challenge. There is an E&D lead Governor to provide support. Governors have a detailed picture of progress. During the interview with me the Chair of Governors was able to articulate where there are gaps in provision and what the college saw as the challenges around E&D.

Despite the demographic of Barnsley, which has a low number of BAME groups compared to the national picture, there is a still varied range of nationalities within the community. I saw groups of students from different backgrounds chatting outside the entrance to the college for example.

The governing body are not as diverse as Barnsley College would prefer. However steps are being taken to address this.

The college communicates with different departments by updating on key issues in relation to equality and diversity via email and the website. They also provide and arrange for training around areas such as embedding equality and diversity into the curriculum and contribute to the various publications where equality and diversity features.

Students and staff cited adjustments that had been made for them by the college and were very complimentary about the support they had received.

The E&D Steering Group includes representatives from stakeholders at various levels within the college. There are regular meetings of the group and a wide range of roles are represented. The group has really made progress over the past few months via task and finish groups, which have been the catalyst for the work to be undertaken. Prior to this, progress in meeting the liD destinations had been slower than was originally anticipated.

A wide variety of topics are discussed in the task and finish groups and this feeds back to the main steering group. This includes updates on liD progress on the destinations, data capture, events and other initiatives that are taking place within the college.

In terms of flexible working, staff provided a variety of comments about their experience of this. Some people were positive whilst others were not as convinced that they would be supported by their line managers. The survey comments indicate that line managers appear to have the jurisdiction over flexible working and that there may not be consistency in practice across the college.

It is suggested that a message is communicated to all staff members to raise awareness of the flexible working procedures and to explain the process should a request be refused by a line manager.

It is also useful to explain that flexible working arrangements can be requested for a variety of personal situations. If a member of staff could provide feedback on a positive experience as part of this communication then I anticipate that the next survey results should show a more positive response overall.

The relevant information in terms of the respondents is set out below and there are a variety of comments detailed in the survey report.

liD Survey Data

	Yes	I think so	I don't think so	No	I don't know
Do you think your organisation would look positively at adopting flexible working arrangements if these were requested?	32.0%	36.3%	15.1%	7.6%	9.0%

The liD Action Plan and other documents highlight areas for improvement based on a variety of methodologies including self-assessment by the college.

The student experience is captured via surveys and learner reviews. The stakeholders interviewed were clear about the organisational benefits that embracing diversity brings to the college and were very positive about the approach of the college to inclusivity.

The liD surveys that have been undertaken complement other staff and student surveys that also provide feedback to inform the planning process.

Various reports are provided to senior managers in order to drill down on the gaps in student performance. Updates are reported back to the Governors meetings.

It was clear from the interviews with stakeholders that the college has made progress with equality and diversity by not only updating policies and procedures, but in terms of the welcoming environment at the campus and the impact of this on individuals. Staff and students said in the interviews that they felt valued at the college and they would recommend the college as either a place to study or to work.

E&D training is to be continued during 2013 for all staff and Governors. This covers key elements on the Equality Act 2010. The gap analysis recommended that training on the Equality Act was undertaken for staff as there were gaps in knowledge when these interviews were undertaken.

Staff and students have referred to awareness raising activities. There have also been initiatives around mental health and a variety of other events in relation to equality and diversity.

Strand -3 Developing

The data reporting that I was shown is very comprehensive and includes information about socio economic performance. The reports generated clearly highlight any inequalities that need to be addressed in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, ethnicity, gender and age ranges. It is planned that the data collected for the new term will cover all relevant protected characteristics in particular sexual orientation and religion and belief for students. The capture of data around sexual orientation continues to be a challenge for the College and during our discussions I have suggested this should be addressed.

Staff informed me that the appraisal process includes a question around equality and diversity. This is an action in the liD Action Plan and so I am pleased to see this has been adopted. I am not clear if this is a question which features in exit interviews and would suggest this is added if it is not currently included.

The gap analysis referred to the computer sign in facility on reception as being less accessible for some visitors. However, staff were only too happy to assist me when I attended at the college and so this should remedy any previous concerns.

There is also a prayer room facility for use by students and staff.

Information about bullying and harassment has been made available and both staff and students who were interviewed appeared confident about where they would go to make a complaint about this.

liD Survey

The diagnostic surveys report the following in relation to staff knowledge:

liD Staff Survey 2013	Yes	Think so	Don't think so	No	Don't know
I would know where to go for help if a victim of bullying or harassment	65.3%	23.5%	4.4%	5.6%	1.2%



I am not clear as to exactly what the current expectation is from the approved suppliers who are working with the college and also as to what level of evidence is required around E&D for each company. Perhaps more detailed questions when tendering and selecting suppliers would assist with the evaluation of external stakeholders.

One of the tender documents I was given referred to out of date legislation such as the Race Relations Acts and this will need to be updated in line with contemporary legislation. The tendering documentation is currently being reviewed and in discussions with relevant staff, we identified that these amendments and additions can be made as part of this review.

It is suggested that the web based training on E&D that the college have developed could be offered to external stakeholders who are successful in bidding for work with the college e.g. in construction. This would standardise the approach to equality and diversity via an existing training resource.

Also, the liD Stage 1 process or the verification process offered by the National Centre for Diversity will support SME's that may be completing tenders for the public sector and this is recommended to external stakeholders. This process would save the college from having to pursue this checking and would ensure that the practices of these stakeholders are aligned with the ethos of the college. This links to the public sector duty under the Equality Act where the college is expected to advance equality.

Strand 4 – Advancing

Monitoring takes place at various levels within the college. Data is provided for managers about the college and within the various faculty areas. As an example of this, information is available for recruitment and selection and in relation to the uptake of college courses.

This data can now be used in order for targets to be set around recruitment and I had a very useful discussion with HR representatives about this.

In terms of the college, the statistics mapped enable the college to drill down on the detail and so for example, the data capture indicates where there is underperformance from particular student groups.

Focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, surveys and the diagnostic process all provide vital data which influences future practice and informs the strategic planning at the college.

A new opportunity will be the £11 million construction of the engineering site for Barnsley College, which was being designed at the time of my visit. The



college is taking steps to fully engage with all stakeholders to ensure the building is fit for purpose and that the support to students and staff within the new facility takes into account the current student profile in terms of alternative requirements.

Barnsley College works in partnership with external organisations such as the voluntary sector, the public sector and businesses.

I am confident that the college is delivering on the targets within its liD Action Plan. Both internal and external stakeholders were able to give examples about the inclusivity of the college and how the college had exemplary practice in terms of the support for students and staff.

It was obvious from discussions that the Principal, senior managers and Governors took the lead on equality and diversity and all leaders could identify how they were intending to make progress with E&D initiatives over the next 12 months.

The marketing documentation such as the college prospectus and the website has been reviewed to ensure there are positive images that challenge stereotypes. The website is very accessible and is easy to navigate. The staff intranet has details of equality and diversity initiatives such as liD and policies and procedures which link to equality and diversity

Some staff interviewed were able to relate success stories about dealing with equality and diversity issues where they had seen successful results. The interviews conducted provide an indication that the majority of staff and students feel they are supported as individuals within the college.

There are plans to publish information about the college achieving the liD status as well as including the liD logo on the website.

Recommendations

There is some excellent practice in terms of the embedding of equality and diversity at the college and in order to assist with further improvements, some thoughts and suggestions have been included within the report. The following is a summary of the key areas that could be explored in order to build on current practice:

- To continue with the training support and resources around E&D and to introduce case studies that could be published for different areas of the curriculum. These could then be made available for tutors so that they are able to embed equality and diversity particularly for subject areas that can be more of a challenge.

- In line with the liD survey results, provide more training for staff on mental health within the workplace.
- Information about equality and diversity at induction via the web based package could be made available to staff who are employed by sub-contractors at the college.
- Whilst E&D information is already included in the visitor information, the reception area is an ideal venue for the ethos and mission to be displayed or perhaps an E&D Charter to showcase the commitment of the college. TV screens could also be utilised to show information about E&D initiatives.
- Training for staff could now be progressed to exploring cultural competencies and this would build on current training delivery.
- It is recommended that data gathered and held on Governors, staff and students includes information against the 9 Protected Characteristics. This will ensure that the college can produce detailed reports in relation to areas such as religion and sexual orientation This will provide data in order to support the positive action initiatives that the Barnsley College may wish to consider.
- The Governing Body is not as diverse as would be preferred. It is recommended that the current plans of the college to widely advertise positions on the Governing Body be taken at every opportunity, including at college open days and other events.
- A staff enrichment programme could be developed. The focus at the college is on students, which is to be expected. However in most cases, the staff remain at college longer than students and so long term investment is recommended. This suggestion was positively received when discussed in the staff focus groups.
- There could be pop ups on the computer screens to inform staff and students about E&D events such as festivals. I asked about Eid when I was at the college and hardly anyone I interviewed was aware about Eid even though it had just been celebrated.
- The various skills of staff could be audited. Other languages such as BSL could be noted and recorded on a central record for staff to access should they require someone with a particular language skill.

- Procurement requires further exploration in order for Barnsley College to advance equality as stipulated in the Equality Act 2010. This was also referred to in the gap analysis. The guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission on procurement has already been recommended with this in mind.
- A photographic competition open to all staff would challenge them to take a photo that shows what diversity means. This would engage staff in debates about the issue and would be open to all staff including tutors. There are many commendable initiatives aimed at students around the E&D agenda, which involve teaching staff, however, it is all staff that could also benefit from E&D interactions and who could be further engaged.
- Events within college could be utilised to promote the college as an employer. For example, the student open day that was held on the evening of my visit could be an opportunity for the college to advertise vacancies and careers as parents and relatives would be attending. It is an opportunity that would be cost effective and which may widen further the pool of candidates from different backgrounds applying to the college. Staff who speak various languages could also be on hand to speak with visitors.