

# Barnsley College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	130524
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	John Evans HMI
<b>Last day of inspection:</b>	5 November 2010
<b>Type of provider:</b>	General Further Education College
<b>Address:</b>	Barnsley College Church Street Barnsley South Yorkshire S70 2YW
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## Information about the provider

1. Barnsley College is a large tertiary college serving Barnsley and surrounding areas in South Yorkshire. The college is the main provider of post-16 education and the destination for 80% of school leavers in the town. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough has a population of 230,000 and is made up of both rural and urban industrial areas, including the main town of Barnsley, with a population just under 90,000, and other smaller towns and former mining villages.
2. Barnsley continues to experience serious economic challenges as a legacy of the demise of the mining industry. The index of multiple deprivation identifies it as one of the most deprived areas in England. Unemployment is several percentage points higher than the national average, household income is low, a high proportion of workers are in low-skilled employment, and the insolvency rate is high. The proportion of adults without any formal qualification is much higher than the national average. At 40%, the proportion of school leavers achieving five A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, in 2010 was significantly below the national average.
3. The college provides courses in all subject areas. In 2009/10 some 7,700 learners attended the college. Just under 60% were aged 16 to 18 and 60% were female. On learner-responsive programmes, 90% of students aged 16 to 18 and 20% of adult learners take full-time courses. Approximately 3% of learners have minority ethnic backgrounds compared to 2% of the local population.
4. The college estate spreads across six sites, including a working farm, with many of the buildings set within the town centre conservation area. New centres for sports, motor vehicle and construction have been opened in the last two years. A new main site is currently under construction with completion planned for September 2011.
5. The inspection took into account all of the provision offered by the college. Learner-responsive provision in health and social care and early years, engineering, sport and leisure, literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and employer-responsive provision in engineering, and business, was inspected in depth.
6. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - CSkills (construction).
7. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the college:
  - ALS (security training).

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10</b>
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to 16  Further education (16 to 18)  Foundation learning (included in above)  Entry to Employment	375 part-time learners  3,592 full-time learners 433 part-time learners  477 full-time learners 49 part-time learners  229 learners
<b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)	443 full-time learners 1,685 part-time learners
<b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships	989 learners 647 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	<b>1</b>
Quality of provision	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management	<b>1</b>
Safeguarding	<b>1</b>
Equality and diversity	<b>2</b>
<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Health and social care and early years	<b>1</b>
Engineering (learner-responsive provision)	<b>2</b>
Engineering (employer-responsive provision)	<b>2</b>
Sport and leisure	<b>1</b>
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	<b>1</b>
Business (employer-responsive provision)	<b>1</b>

## Overall effectiveness

8. Barnsley College has improved strongly since its last inspection and is now outstanding. The college is highly effective at raising learners' aspirations, supporting them to succeed and celebrating their achievement. Learners of all ages achieve exceptionally well at almost all levels. The college has a strong focus on further improving AS- and A-level achievement. Learners enjoy their time at the college, benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities and make excellent progress. Many learners progress through different levels of the course and make enormous advances during their time at the college. The college promotes the health and well-being of learners exceptionally well. Lessons are consistently good and often better. Work-based training and assessment are very good. The college provides a very broad and inclusive curriculum. It is especially responsive to users' needs and has developed

excellent partnership links which help to extend and enhance the provision. More full-time learners could benefit from work experience opportunities. Thorough advice and guidance ensure that learners are on the right course from the outset and outstanding support helps learners to overcome any barriers that might prevent them from succeeding. Targets set within personal learning plans are sometimes too broad to be useful.

9. The college is extremely well led and managed. It has been very successful in growing learner numbers. The college has high expectations of staff and learners. The approaches to planning, quality improvement and value for money are exceptionally good. Arrangements for safeguarding are thorough. The learners' voice is very strong. Learners had few suggestions as to how the college could improve further because they feel that the college has implemented almost all of their suggestions. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff throughout the college are extremely committed to ensuring the success of learners. The college provides an inspirational resource for the Barnsley community and a transformational one for many learners.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. In an area characterised by relatively low levels of attainment at the end of compulsory schooling, the college has become extremely effective at raising the aspirations of its learners, supporting them to succeed and celebrating their achievement. For many learners their experience at the college is transformational.
- Success rates are high and have continued to improve at a faster rate than they have nationally. Success rates are very high in work-based learning and are outstanding for students aged 14 to 16. The college is successfully narrowing the achievement gap between male and female learners. Attendance is good.
- Learners enjoy their lessons and going to college. Most learners make excellent progress during the period they spend at the college. For many the experience is life changing. Rates of progression from foundation courses, between levels of apprenticeship and into higher education are very high.
- Learners' development of personal, social and employability skills is excellent and they leave the college much better prepared for their future. Learners feel extremely safe at the college and are very appreciative of the exceptional efforts the college makes to promote their health and well-being. Learners make an outstanding contribution to the college and the communities it serves.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is planned well to meet the needs of different learners. In many lessons learners are actively involved in the evaluation of their own learning and progress. Teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning methods, although a few do not make best use of information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning.
- Initial assessment is very effective and identifies learning support needs before the start of a programme. Support is quickly in place. Teachers and assessors provide useful feedback on learners' work, although not all teachers correct

inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation. Assessment in the workplace is well planned, frequent and helps learners to make good progress.

- Arrangements to improve the quality of teaching and learning are thorough and wide ranging. Observations of teaching and learning are well planned and regular but observers' skills in evaluating learning and progress are not sufficiently developed; action that teachers might take to improve their lessons is not always clear in the written feedback.
- The college is highly responsive to meeting the needs of all of its users. Learners and employers have an excellent range of courses to choose from and the college is continually developing new provision. The education and training provided helps learners to learn skills and achieve qualifications that improve their lives. The wide range of enrichment activities adds great value to many learners' experience; however, more full-time students would like to have work experience opportunities.
- Partnership working is excellent. The college is a key player in developing strategies for the community. Links with schools give young people in Barnsley excellent choice in planning their future. Links with employers help them to become more competitive, enable them to secure their future workforce, and provide opportunities to local people.
- The support that the college provides for learners is outstanding. Information, advice and guidance are effective throughout learners' programmes. Additional learning support, assistive technology and adaptations help remove barriers to learning. Tutorial provision is very good. Tutorial learning mentors and progress coaches provide exceptional levels of support and help learners to make good progress, though this could improve with more effective target-setting within learners' electronic learning plans.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The Principal and governors have developed an ambitious vision for the college to raise aspirations and promote high standards for learners in Barnsley. Staff throughout the college are committed to ensuring the success of learners. The college's highly effective business planning and performance review process ensures that continuous improvement enables it to meet demanding targets.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. The college has an exceptionally strong culture of safety which ensures that learners feel safe and behave in a safety-conscious manner. Arrangements for safeguarding are clear and effective and all appropriate checks and effective monitoring take place. The college provides a safe and welcoming environment and promotes health and safety and safeguarding exceptionally well across its provision.
- The college promotes equality and diversity well and ensures that they have a high profile. A culture of mutual respect is evident and the college has taken effective action to reduce variations in the performance of different groups of learners. The promotion of equality and diversity in the classroom is good in some areas but the college is aware that this remains an area for further improvement.
- Quality improvement arrangements are outstanding. Self-assessment and action planning are rigorous. The college is extremely good at analysing its own

performance and deals with any identified weaknesses very successfully. It is very effective at gathering the views of learners and responds outstandingly well to their concerns in order to effect improvements.

### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to implement and monitor current strategies for improving success rates on AS courses and address the variability in value-added scores between different AS- and A-level subjects.
- Maintain the focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning so that learning activities and assessments enable all learners to achieve highly; secure greater reliability in the college's lesson grade-profile by developing observers' skills in evaluating how much learning takes place within lessons and how much progress learners make.
- Ensure, through closer monitoring and evaluation, that learners' electronic learning plans are completed fully to a consistently high standard, with specific, short-term targets that provide challenge and help learners to improve.
- Provide work experience opportunities for a wider range of full-time students by drawing on the good practice in some curriculum areas and overcoming traditional barriers in others.
- Strengthen the promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum by sharing good practices and building the confidence and ability of teachers to recognise the opportunities presented in their own subject area.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- knowing they have a voice and that the college acts on their suggestions
- feeling really safe and 'at home'
- the fact that staff and learners respect each other and their individual differences
- the consistently enjoyable lessons
- the wide variety of enrichment
- the extent staff go to in providing individual support and helping learners to resolve problems
- the range of wider support services, including the resources committed to promoting their health and well-being
- canteen food and the reasonable prices
- Moodle, now that it is being used more extensively by teachers
- the tailored additional learning support
- the recognition given to students through college awards
- the help for apprentices in securing jobs

- the good facilities and resources.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- the availability and cost of car parking
- the introduction of speed bumps adjacent to the college.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors****What employers like:**

- the responsiveness and flexibility of the college in meeting their training needs
- the high quality of the training and support the college provides for their learners
- the good communications
- the availability of college staff
- the practical experience of teachers and assessors, which means that they understand the needs of their businesses well
- the good use of labour market intelligence to develop the provision
- the opportunity the college gave them to contribute to the development of higher apprenticeships
- the help the college provides in helping them to recruit to hard-to-fill positions.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

- the consistency between college departments in how their employees' progress is reported
- the notification of assessor visits to learners in the workplace, in a few cases, so that supervisors can be more involved.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 1**

10. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. The college was judged to be satisfactory at its last inspection in 2007. Since then it has taken determined, effective, and sometimes imaginative action to bring about significant improvements in the quality of provision, and to enhance the learning experience for students. Some of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have now become strengths and others have improved significantly. Governors use their expertise very effectively to challenge managers and monitor performance. Leaders and managers set and achieve challenging targets. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. Robust quality systems are firmly established to enable further improvement. Outcomes for learners have improved significantly and are now outstanding.
11. When underperformance is identified, managers take quick and decisive action to secure improvements. Resources are allocated to bring about the greatest benefit for learners. The college pays very close attention to, and responds very quickly to, learners' views. This results in rapid and significant improvements for learners, which they value highly. The business planning and performance review process, which encompasses self-assessment and improvement planning, is a strong and innovative feature of the college. Within policies and boundaries set by the leadership team, managers have the autonomy to make decisions for their own areas. Managers and staff are then held accountable for delivery and for improving quality. The strong and relentless aspiration to be excellent is strongly evident throughout the college.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 1**

12. In an area characterised by school leavers' relatively low levels of attainment, the college has become remarkably effective at raising the aspirations of its learners, supporting them to succeed and celebrating their achievement. As a result learners achieve exceptionally well.
13. The standards reached by learners are good. Success rates are high and have continued to improve at a faster rate than they have nationally. For students aged 16 to 18 success rates are high on foundation and intermediate courses, and on advanced vocational programmes. On A-level courses success rates are around the high national average but they are below average on AS-level courses. For adult learners, success rates are high at all levels. Success rates for apprentices, advanced apprentices, and Train to Gain learners on work-based learning programmes have been improving strongly and college data for 2009/10 indicate they are now exceptionally high. Success rates for students aged 14 to 16 following college courses are also outstanding. Although success rates for male learners remain below those for female learners, the college's concerted efforts are succeeding in narrowing this achievement gap. Success rates for learners receiving additional learning support are high. Attendance is good and continuing to improve.

14. Learners make outstanding progress at the college and, for many, the period they spend at the college represents a life-transforming journey. Their behaviour is excellent on all college sites. A high proportion of those who embark on foundation courses go on to achieve at intermediate and advanced level. Progression rates between different levels of apprenticeship are also high. Over 90% of students aged 14 to 16 who completed college courses last summer have now enrolled at the college. Value-added data indicate that students on advanced-level vocational courses make very good progress and show an improving picture of the progress made by AS- and A-level students, although this varies widely between subjects. Standards of work are generally good and frequently better. At advanced level, almost half of vocational students and 80% of A-level students move on to higher education.
15. Learners enjoy college life, including their lessons. Learners' development of personal, social and employability skills is excellent and they leave the college much better prepared for their future, whether they are progressing to work, further or higher education or training. Success rates in key skills have been significantly higher than the national average. Opportunities for work experience or participating in vocational projects in the community are widely taken up. On completion of their apprenticeships, over 90% of work-based learners retain their jobs.
16. Learners feel extremely safe at the college. Their sense of security has been further enhanced this year by the introduction of an identity card system which has quickly become embedded in the culture of the college. Learners demonstrated exemplary health and safety practices during the inspection. They are highly appreciative of the exceptional efforts that the college makes to promote their health and well-being. The fully equipped health centre, provided in partnership with the National Health Service, is an outstanding resource and learners recognise and use the opportunities it presents them to make positive improvements to their own health and well-being. Learners make an outstanding contribution to the college and to the communities it serves. They contribute enthusiastically to the college's learner-voice processes and a high proportion of learners are involved in the wide range of voluntary, community and charitable activities.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 1**

17. Most lessons and training sessions take place in well-resourced environments. Learning is well managed and designed to be challenging and exciting. Teachers use a wide variety of methods to engage learners actively. Teaching is often inspirational and uses a range of carefully planned activities to meet individual learning needs. Learners make good progress and are fully involved in evaluating and reflecting on their own learning. Most teachers use questioning techniques well to check learning and extend students' knowledge. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan learning activities sufficiently to ensure stretch and challenge for all learners. Good ILT resources are widely available and used well; in a few areas teachers' lack of confidence and expertise in using ILT limits its effectiveness.

18. Teachers provide very good role models for learners. They have strong subject and vocational expertise and frequently enliven sessions by drawing on their own experiences. They link learning well to business and professional life. Teachers and support staff combine very effectively to provide well-judged support and challenge to learners with identified additional learning needs. Learners' rights and responsibilities are promoted well. However, in some lessons teachers miss good opportunities to challenge and extend learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
19. Initial assessment is thorough and used well in conjunction with learners' prior achievement and career aspirations to set challenging targets for most learners. Targets for a minority of learners are too broad and do not sufficiently identify the steps needed to make progress. Early and rapid identification of additional learning support needs enables timely and appropriate support to be developed. This information is shared well with teachers. Work-based learners have their work activities meticulously mapped against their specialist qualifications to support them to achieve.
20. Assessment is frequent and meets the needs of most learners. Work is marked promptly and returned quickly. Written and verbal feedback is detailed and constructive, although in a minority of areas the marking and correction of spelling and grammar receives insufficient attention. Assessment in the workplace for work-based learners is particularly effective and enables learners to make rapid progress towards their qualifications. Assessor visits to learners' workplaces are regular, training is well planned and learners receive excellent feedback. Arrangements for moderating assessments are thorough and effective.
21. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning are detailed and thorough. Well-planned staff development, the sharing of good practice and the use of peer observations are increasing the confidence of teachers in enabling active learning and providing high quality lessons. Support for teachers is good, for example, through coaching observations from advanced learning practitioners, when they have identified development needs. The college is already addressing the fact that some feedback to teachers is overly descriptive and fails to identify ways to improve the lesson. Internal lesson evaluations seek to provide positive encouragement to teachers and observers are not sufficiently experienced yet in judging how much learning is taking place, so that the system is not entirely reliable as a quality measure.
22. The college meets the needs and interests of its users outstandingly well. Learners have access to a very broad range of provision. Students in the sixth-form college can choose from a wide range of AS- and A-level subjects. A good number of students study AS- and A-level subjects alongside their Diploma. The college makes a highly effective contribution to reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training and unemployed adults through highly innovative and engaging programmes. Learners have good access to a very wide range of cross-college enrichment, with many of the

activities strongly promoting learners' health and well-being and broader awareness. The take-up of enrichment has improved significantly but varies across the college. Feedback from learners on the quality of enrichment is excellent. A range of team sports and fitness activities are taken up by a growing number of learners. A significant proportion of learners gain additional qualifications and a growing number have planned work experience; however, other students express their eagerness to have the opportunity to take part in work experience. Excellent Aimhigher projects have improved access to higher education.

23. Outstanding partnership working has significant benefits for learners. The college plays a pivotal role in all key strategic and operational groups in the area. The college plays a major part in delivering 14 to 19 education, leading on nine of the 11 Diploma lines in partnership with local schools. Students aged 14 to 16 take a wide range of vocational qualifications at the college. The college has developed excellent links with employers. The numbers of employer links, repeat business and income from employer-responsive provision have increased significantly. The college has achieved the Training Quality Standard for its work with employers. The college is highly responsive to employers' needs, often devising bespoke training for individual companies and increasingly delivering it in the workplace. External funding and industrial sponsorship have enabled the college to build an impressive new construction centre and install a high technology food manufacturing plant. A unique partnership with the Primary Care Trust has helped the college to establish an excellent health and well-being centre, providing a wide range of services to learners and staff. Good links with a number of universities have improved transition to higher education for students.
24. Information, advice and guidance are very good. The number of learners leaving early or transferring between courses is low and reducing. Highly effective links with schools and a wide range of events ensure that Year 11 students know what is available at college. Very good links with the schools' special educational needs coordinators and highly individualised transition arrangements for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensure their entry to college is smooth and effective. Learners receive good careers education through the tutorial system. Support for students preparing for university is very good.
25. The academic and pastoral support provided to students by their teachers, tutorial learning mentors and progress coaches is outstanding and a major factor in their success. The quality of individual and group tutorials has greatly improved. They are highly valued by students and well attended. The tutorial programme promotes learners' personal and social development exceptionally well. All learners have a very effective electronic learning plan and are able to monitor their own performance. The swift flow of information enables prompt action to resolve any issues. In a minority of plans sections are incomplete and targets are not specific or short term enough. Learners identified as 'at risk' receive very timely support to help them overcome personal and academic problems.

26. Additional learning support is highly individualised and well planned. An excellent range of strategies are used to deliver support, and learners value being able to negotiate what works best for them. Support is in place early in their programme and the take-up is high. Apprentices receive very good support in the workplace, as well as in college. Support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs are good; for example, a peripatetic Skills for Life tutor provides good support to Train to Gain learners. Learners have good access to counselling and specialist support agencies. Very good use of learner support funds helps those suffering extreme hardship to stay on course. Learners with small children are able to access good childcare support to enable them to participate.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 1**

27. Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal and governors provide strong and effective leadership, which places learners at the heart of the college's work, and have a relentless drive towards excellence. Staff across the college share this ambition and it has led to rapid and substantial improvements. This very positive culture is having a demonstrable impact on the aspirations of learners and transforming their lives. The college makes an excellent contribution to meeting local and national priorities, a clear understanding of which strongly informs planning.
28. A thorough, innovative and robust business planning and performance review process underpins the work of the college. This ensures that demanding targets are set and that staff are held accountable for meeting them. Senior managers monitor targets carefully and rigorously, and take decisive and effective action to tackle any areas for improvement. Curriculum management is consistently strong.
29. Governors make a valuable contribution to setting a clear strategic direction and ambitious targets for the college. They understand the college and its context extremely well and monitor both academic and financial performance rigorously. The full governing body considers curriculum and quality matters, which enables governors to have a clear strategic oversight of performance. New governors are recruited through a rigorous selection process to ensure an appropriate range of skills. The chair has recently instituted personal development interviews with governors in order to strengthen the board's performance further.
30. An exceptionally strong culture of safety is evident throughout the college. Health, safety and safeguarding have a very high priority and are promoted very effectively and widely. The college buildings provide a safe and secure learning environment and learners follow safe working practices in the college and in the workplace. Learners feel safe and have a highly developed awareness about how to stay safe, including good principles of e-safety. The college seeks and acts upon their views, and very quickly institutes changes which improve their safety and well-being.

31. Arrangements for safeguarding are excellent on both college and employers' premises, and monitored well by governors. Information sharing with relevant agencies is well established. The single central record shows that all appropriate checks have been carried out. Effective risk-assessments are in place for the most vulnerable learners. All staff have level 1 safeguarding training. Designated safeguarding staff have level 2 training.
32. The college is an inclusive community that welcomes all groups of learners. It provides good opportunities for those who might not otherwise be involved in education or training. Equality and diversity are actively promoted, especially through the tutorial and enrichment programmes. The college promotes learners' understanding well, through displays and events such as the recent equality and diversity celebration day and black history month. A culture of mutual respect is evident throughout the college. Learners feel fairly treated.
33. An equality and diversity strategy group, chaired by the principal, monitors the impact of the single equality scheme, now embedded in much of the college's work. Analysis of achievement by gender, ethnicity and disability, informs course review and action planning. A similar analysis is made of the staffing profile with positive attempts made to rectify imbalances. The college has successfully recruited students to courses against the normal patterns of gender stereotype. It has taken successful action to reduce differences in achievement between groups of learners.
34. The college is outstanding at gathering and responding effectively to learners' views. All learners, including those who are work-based, have many opportunities to give their views through learner forums, the diary room and 'Have your say' on the intranet. The college's speed of response is impressive and a host of improvements to provision have resulted from the learner voice. Sabbatical officers work with students to help collect their views and there are two student governors at a strategic level. Student representatives have received training to enable them to carry out their role effectively. The college engages very effectively with employers and is taking steps to improve its engagement with parents and other stakeholders.
35. Arrangements for quality improvement are excellent. Rigorous self-assessment, an integral part of the business planning and performance review process, has contributed to rapid and significant improvements. Weaknesses are identified well and tackled successfully with vigour and determination. For example, the principal took a clear strategic approach to improving AS- and A-level provision following a dip in performance. The sixth-form college was established, new managers appointed, facilities improved, tutorials revamped and extensive training carried out to tackle weaknesses in teaching and learning. The positive impact is clear. Self-assessment and action planning take place at course, departmental and whole-college level, with reports moderated to ensure rigour and accuracy. The current self-assessment report is largely accurate.
36. The college has excellent management practices to secure value for money. Over a three-year period the college has met and exceeded its recruitment targets. It has successfully managed substantial growth in learner numbers,

while simultaneously improving provision and securing efficiency savings. Positive financial performance has enabled the college to invest in facilities and equipment for learners. The new-build taking place reflects the college's commitment to sustainable development. Given the outstanding outcomes for learners and quality of provision, the college now provides outstanding value for money.

## Subject areas

### Health and social care and early years

### Grade 1

#### Context

37. The college offers full-time courses in health and social care and early years to nearly 600 students aged 16 to 18, spread evenly between health and social care and early years. An additional 80 students are studying GCE health and social care, mostly at AS level. Some 400 adults are studying on full- and part-time access to higher education courses in health. There are 17 students aged 14 to 16 studying on childcare courses at the college. The large majority of learners are female.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates at foundation and intermediate level in both health and social care and early years are very high and have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Success rates at advanced level have improved significantly over the last three years and were very high in 2009/10.
- Learners develop very good personal and social skills which enable them to demonstrate high standards of professional practice in both health and social care and early years. They gain the practical skills and theoretical knowledge needed for employment or further training. They also develop the confidence and self-belief in their ability to take up these opportunities in increasing numbers.
- Students feel very safe at the college, finding the environment to be friendly and secure. They are very well prepared to enable them to work safely in placements in diverse settings and communities.
- Large numbers of learners, both individually and in class groups, make a positive contribution to the college and their local communities. This is encouraged, recorded and celebrated by the college on learners' electronic learning plans as well as in displays in classrooms and corridors.
- Teaching and learning are good. Students benefit from consistently well-planned lessons. Teachers use a wide variety of methods to ensure that students are actively involved in lessons. Students benefit from the wide range of vocational experience teachers can draw on to relate theory to vocational practice.
- Assessment of learning is good. Teachers regularly check that students' understanding of a topic is secure. Assessment methods are varied and students benefit from constructive feedback. However, teachers too often overlook inaccuracies in students' written English.
- Resources to support and promote learning are outstanding. Students benefit from a wide range of high quality learning resources during their lessons, in the learning resource centre and through the intranet. Despite the imminent

demolition of the current teaching accommodation, prior to moving into a new building, classrooms are maintained to a very high standard.

- The needs and interests of users are met outstandingly well. The carefully designed range of subjects ensures that progression to further study and professional qualifications is possible. Teachers provide additional lessons and summer schools to help students to achieve and progress. Work experience is particularly well organised so that learners have a wide range of experience of appropriate settings.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. From their first contact with the college, students feel well guided and supported to succeed. Admission arrangements are thorough. Students find their electronic personal learning plans help to motivate them and to monitor their own progress. Tutorial support is extremely effective and enables most learners to complete their courses successfully.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers and teachers appreciate the clear responsibilities they are given. They feel very well supported by college management to achieve significant improvements. Morale is high and staff feel proud of the college. Professional development is comprehensive and meets teachers' needs to improve their work. Teachers share experiences and resources freely in the interests of improvement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Early years' learners have work placements in settings with more diverse communities, which allows them to experience diversity matters that they have covered in lessons and significantly widens their horizons. There are no significant achievement gaps because efforts to identify and remedy variations in achievement between different groups of learners have been very effective.
- Commitment to continuing the improvement that has taken place over the last few years is very strong. Self-assessment is rigorous and sharply focused on target-setting and improvement planning. The self-assessment report identifies accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the area but overstates the proportion of lessons that are outstanding rather than good.

### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that all teachers identify errors in students' written work to help them to improve the accuracy of their written English.
- Further improve teaching and learning, for example, through promoting better use of peer and self-assessment techniques, paired and group work, and more sophisticated questioning techniques. Strengthen lesson evaluations so that they more accurately identify the strengths and areas for improvement of the teaching, learning and assessment methods used.

## Engineering – learner-responsive provision

## Grade 2

### Context

38. The provision includes courses in motor vehicle, mechanical engineering, electrical installation, electronics and welding. The college offers full- and part-time courses from entry through to advanced level. Among more than 400 full-time learners, 90% are aged 16 to 18. Three per cent of students aged 16 to 18 and 17% of the 45 full-time adult learners are female. Just over 100 learners are taking part-time courses. A further 127 learners aged 14 to 16 are taking courses at the college, including 24 on the young apprenticeship programme.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates are high on most courses, and show an improving trend over the past three years. Success rates on the intermediate certificate in electro-technical and the short course certificate in arc welding are outstanding. Students from different groups achieve equally well. Students' attendance and punctuality are good.
- Students develop their vocational skills to a good industry standard, well supported by teachers who are ex-practitioners with recent industry knowledge. Students have a good understanding of health and safety, which is embedded in all engineering activities, from initial briefings to best practice procedures for different processes, tools and equipment. Students feel safe, and the college provides a secure and supportive environment.
- The quality of provision, including teaching and learning, is good. In theory lessons teachers use a range of techniques to engage and motivate students. Some teachers make good use of ILT, using interactive software supported by clear handouts. For example, in one lesson students were able to see a running engine graphically presented and the effects of increasing speed on engine components. However, teachers used ILT less effectively in several lessons.
- In practical sessions students experience a wide range of activities. In motor vehicle, learners develop their understanding by carrying out fault diagnosis on a range of simulators and then apply this to vehicles in the well-resourced workshop. In manufacturing, learners develop traditional engineering skills alongside advanced computer-aided prototyping and manufacture.
- Assessment and verification are accurate and fair. Work is clearly marked and returned promptly. Students feel that the comments written by teachers are helpful. However, in lessons teachers make insufficient use of directed questioning to check students' understanding reliably.
- Students work well together regardless of background or ethnicity. Teachers promote team working during lessons and equality and diversity feature prominently in the tutorial programme. Teachers challenge any anti-social behaviour immediately. Students show respect and support for each other inside and outside of their lessons.

- The range of provision is outstanding in terms of breadth, levels and multiple entry points. The department works closely with schools delivering the Diploma and young apprenticeship programmes. Entry-level provision has grown significantly and progression to higher education is good.
- Strong links with employers ensure that course content and skills meet local needs. Although work experience is not a component part of most full-time courses, local employers provide talks to classes, and learners make visits to employers' sites to help prepare them for employment.
- Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. Initial advice and guidance ensure new entrants start on the right course and determine appropriate levels of support. The revised tutorial programme includes a well-structured programme of health and well-being sessions and provides students with excellent support. Good use is made of attendance and punctuality data to monitor individual learners and improve retention rates.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Inspirational leadership has been instrumental in driving rapid improvement across the curriculum. Planning and progress reviews make routine use of data. Target-setting is robust and challenging. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the areas for improvement. Comprehensive staff development is matched well to curriculum and learners' needs. However, the sharing of good practice between teachers is insufficiently developed.
- There are good resources for developing engineering skills to industry standard. The motor vehicle and motor cycle sections are equipped with a vehicle testing suite, lifts, and a wide range of hand and diagnostic tools, located in a purpose-built centre. Engineering manufacturing is equipped with computerised manufacturing machines and a wide range of manual lathes and millers. Bays for electrical installation provide a realistic work setting.

### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Further increase success rates by closely monitoring the strategies recently introduced to ensure they are effective in helping more students to achieve their qualification.
- Improve the use of interactive teaching technology to secure stronger engagement of students in lessons by more sharing of good teaching and learning practices.
- Ensure teachers check students' learning more thoroughly by sharing good practices in the use of direct questioning and other feedback techniques.

## Engineering – employer-responsive provision

## Grade 2

### Context

39. The college offers apprenticeship programmes at foundation, advanced and higher levels, and a range of Train to Gain programmes. Currently, there are 68 apprentices, 59 advanced apprentices and 31 higher apprentices on work-based learning programmes. About 45% of learners are aged 19 or over. The Train to Gain programme has a further 59 learners, mainly in engineering, glass production and food manufacture. Learners are all in employment.

### Key findings:

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates for apprenticeship programmes are very high and show good improvement over the last three years. Success rates are also very high on Train to Gain programmes, although they have declined slightly. Success rates for advanced apprenticeships have improved but remain below the national average. Timely success rates for advanced apprenticeships have been low for the past three years but have now started to improve.
- Learners make good progress and their standard of work is exceptional on many programmes, often exceeding the levels expected. In the workplace, learners display high levels of understanding and excellent acquisition of skills. Employers confirmed that they perform beyond their expectations.
- Progression is good. The college is successful in securing apprenticeships for full-time learners and there is a good progression rate from apprenticeship to advanced apprenticeship. One apprentice, who started out at intermediate level and is now working towards a foundation degree, was recently nominated as the Master Cutler's apprentice of the year. Another learner, who has progressed from foundation level to a foundation degree, has been selected as college apprentice of the year.
- Learners feel safe and there is a strong culture of health and safety. During the inspection, learners demonstrated good compliance with health and safety procedures in both the college and their workplace.
- Learners receive most of their training and assessment in the workplace. Review and assessment in the workplace are good and external assessors highlight some exemplary practices. Assessors provide learners with clear and prompt feedback on assessments, both verbally and in writing. Although a tracking system is in place, it is sometimes difficult to establish how much progress learners have made towards their targets.
- The area offers an excellent range of provision. Apprenticeship opportunities are available at all levels and for all age groups. The college is extremely flexible and responsive to employers' needs. Assessment in electrical installation often takes place at the weekend. In food manufacturing, assessment takes place to accommodate all three shifts including late at night or early in the morning. Employers agree that programmes closely meet their needs.

- Learners receive excellent programme and pastoral support. Support, mentoring and risk registers help in identifying learners' needs, which are then met in a timely fashion. Extensive support given to one severely dyslexic apprentice enabled him to achieve his apprenticeship and progress onto an advanced apprenticeship. The college has created new staff roles to strengthen learner support further, including dedicated support roles for engineering learners.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The engineering department has an extremely productive working relationship with the employer-responsive unit. A comprehensive planning cycle ensures challenging targets are set and close monitoring of progress towards these targets. Self-assessment is thorough and largely accurate. Staff development strongly supports the targeted improvements.
- The department goes to considerable lengths to support equality and diversity. For example, the assessment team has worked with native language speakers to develop a phrase book to assist engineering learners working for one large employer with their English. Learners often take an ESOL qualification prior to commencing their work-based programme. Another group of work-based assessors has redesigned progress review sheets to include positive, curriculum-specific examples of diversity.
- Work-based learners have a strong voice in the college. They complete three surveys each year and the college is very responsive. For example, it extended canteen opening times to better suit the needs of day-release learners. Learner representatives attend frequent engineering forums. Following a request from motor vehicle learners, an extra ramp was promptly installed in the workshop.

#### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to implement, monitor and evaluate the college's improvement strategies for advanced apprenticeships so that success rates improve.
- Further develop tracking systems in order to monitor learners' progress against their targets more effectively.

## Sport and leisure

## Grade 1

### Context

40. The college offers a range of mainly full-time vocational and academic courses in sport, exercise and physical education. Almost 400 students, 95% of whom are aged 16 to 18, are currently on programme. Almost 80% of them are male. Some 15 students are at foundation level, 59 at intermediate level and 294 at advanced level. A further 20 learners are taking part-time courses.

### Key findings:

- Outcomes for students are outstanding. Success rates on vocational programmes at intermediate and advanced levels are consistently very high. Retention is particularly strong. Many students start college with low levels of prior attainment and go on to achieve high grades. Key skills success rates for vocational students are also very high. Success rates are continuing to improve.
- Students enjoy their courses and most achieve well. A very strong culture within the department inspires students and promotes ambition, respect and team working. Development of students' knowledge and skills is very good. They make very good use of ILT in carrying out independent research. Students in specific sports academies develop very good technical and tactical skills. All students develop good knowledge about fitness and how to exercise safely.
- The very good promotion of students' health, safety and well-being ensures that they feel very safe. Teachers set good examples. Students' awareness of what might constitute a risk to their own personal safety and the safety of others is keenly developed. They have a good understanding of how to use specialist equipment safely and how to minimise risk of injury. They complete risk assessments well. Many complete first-aid courses.
- Students make excellent progress. Clear progression pathways exist for entry level learners through to advanced level. Students, including those with low prior attainment, make considerable progress from their respective starting points. Value-added scores for advanced-level students are high. A very large proportion of students progress onto higher-level courses.
- Enrichment opportunities are excellent. Most students take part regularly in a very good range of competitive and non-competitive activities and many represent the college at sport. Good use is made of guest speakers and organised trips. Students take advantage of the very numerous opportunities available to gain additional qualifications that enhance their employability. They make an outstanding community contribution through community events, fund-raising, volunteering, hosting and coaching.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan lessons well, vary the learning activities to keep students engaged and enthused and strongly link theory and practical sessions. Learning objectives are clearly shared and reinforced. Information and learning technology is used imaginatively in the better lessons. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own learning. In

some lessons insufficient attention is paid to developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.

- Assessment practices are very good. Teachers use the outcomes of initial assessment well in the setting of individual learning goals. Assessment tasks are clearly planned and written. Feedback is prompt, constructive and developmental, leaving students very clear about what they have to do to improve and to achieve high grades.
- Support for students is excellent. Prospective and current students receive very good information, advice and guidance. Tutors tailor the well-structured but flexible tutorial support programme to the needs of students. It helps to increase their confidence and ambition. Progress towards personal and learning targets is routinely monitored during individual tutorials and good action plans are agreed.
- Facilities and resources are very good. Most classrooms and specialist practical areas are very well equipped. The high quality of resources has a real impact on the development of learners' skills, knowledge and abilities across a range of sports activities.
- Very good partnerships inform curriculum development and enhance learning. Good links with local sports clubs and schools, regional sports associations and national governing bodies have increased access to specialist facilities. Extensive networking with school sports coordinators and other agencies helps generate income and provides good training opportunities. Managers recognise the need for more links with local employers which could provide work experience and employment opportunities to students.
- Curriculum management is excellent. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined. Staff appraisal promotes continuous professional development and higher aspirations very effectively. Staff feel highly valued and there is a strong ethos of team working. Provision is very closely monitored and managers are highly effective in developing good action plans to address any areas of concern.
- Excellent use is made of data to inform planning, self-assessment and decision making, all of which are very inclusive of staff and take strong account of students' views. The curriculum self-assessment report is rich in judgements and accurately reflects the provision. Continuous improvement is supported by detailed and well-researched business development proposals. The rebranding of the department under the 'Sports Academy' banner has been particularly successful.

### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to embed the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills, with greater contextualisation of functional skills to engage students' interest.
- Increase the engagement of local employers to ensure that provision is tailored to local employers' needs.

## Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

## Grade 1

### Context

41. The essential skills department provides part-time courses in adult literacy, adult numeracy and ESOL, from pre-entry to foundation level. There are currently 299 adults and 27 learners aged 16 to 18 years on these programmes, 63% of whom are female. Most of the provision is based on the main college site.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners' achievement levels have improved substantially over the last three years and success rates are very high on all literacy and numeracy courses. The success rate for ESOL at level 1 remains below average. Attendance levels and the standard of learners' work in lessons are good.
- Learners make very good progress in developing their personal, social and employability skills. Their learning experience is transforming the lives of most learners for the better. Improved literacy and numeracy skills enable learners to complete vocational courses successfully, enter higher education and help their children with homework. Many have increased their self-esteem, developed stronger communication skills and gained new work-related skills, for example, by volunteering with charities. Learners on the ESOL course become much better placed to take part in life in this country.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Excellent lesson planning, contextualised teaching, and skilful classroom management makes learning a pleasurable and engaging experience for many learners. Teachers use a variety of strategies and activities that challenge learners and promote good learning. Good relationships with teachers and peers enable learners to share ideas freely.
- Learners take good responsibility for their learning and achieving their learning goals. In literacy and numeracy sessions teachers use learners' individual targets to plan lessons and encourage them to learn independently. Learners make good progress towards both their broader learning goals and their specific targets, including 'soft' targets such as arriving on time and organising a good file. In workshops they benefit from good one-to-one support and receive very constructive feedback on their progress from the teacher.
- Resources to support learning are good. Imaginative use of resources, for example, the tasting of jams from different countries while practising language for shopping, enhances learners' enjoyment of lessons. Teachers use ILT effectively for explanations, demonstrations, the sharing of learning objectives and quizzes. Some learners enthusiastically take up opportunities to use computers and interactive whiteboards.
- Provision is targeted successfully to meet the needs of specific groups of learners, including groups whose circumstances have made them hard to reach, and is highly responsive. For example, there is good take-up of literacy and numeracy courses by college staff, including cleaners and administrative staff, as well as shift workers from a local supermarket.

- Support for learners is good. Teachers work very hard to provide good pastoral support within lessons. Learners value the help they get, particularly in tutorials, which are used to review their individual progress and discuss any problems. Learners needing dyslexia support can access it readily.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Thorough performance reviews, a supportive appraisal process and target-setting for improvement support effective quality monitoring and have led to better teaching and learning and improved outcomes for learners. The culture of high aspirations has led to even greater staff commitment to their own personal development in pursuit of excellence. Self-assessment is accurate and highly inclusive.
- The excellent teamwork fostered by the curriculum manager and course leaders results in well-managed programmes. Teachers learn from each other, particularly through peer observations, and share good practices well. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic, hard working and well supported. They feel valued.
- The quality of accommodation is variable. Well-resourced teaching rooms, often with lively displays of learners' work, provide a pleasant learning environment. However, some numeracy and ESOL workshops take place in rooms that are too small and cramped with computers.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Topic selection and learning materials represent diversity very well. Teachers plan learning well to meet learners' individual needs. They arrange lively displays about other cultures and festivals. A culture of inclusivity and respect underpins the work of the department.
- Very productive engagement with users helps to secure improvements. Learners are very satisfied with their learning and the college; the department recorded the highest satisfaction rating in the most recent college survey. The department responds positively to learners' suggestions, for example, by increasing their access to computers and introducing ESOL learners to native speakers.
- Safeguarding is very good and learners feel very safe. They welcome the new initiative of wearing badges to ensure their security on college premises. Internal training has helped teachers to promote and discuss safeguarding issues in lessons. Induction ensures that learners' safety awareness is good and wall displays provide good reinforcement.

### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to implement current strategies to improve ESOL success rates at level 1.
- Provide more suitable workshop accommodation for numeracy and ESOL courses.

## Business – employer-responsive provision

## Grade 1

### Context

42. Work-based learning provision in business spans administration, management, team leading and accounting. At the time of inspection there were 116 apprentices, 47 advanced apprentices and 12 higher apprentices. Most of the 122 Train to Gain learners are following National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) business administration and management programmes. Half of the learners are aged 16 to 18. Most learners are female.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Overall success rates are very high for both apprenticeships and Train to Gain. Timely success rates on apprenticeship programmes have improved for three consecutive years and are high. In 2009/10, timely achievement declined on Train to Gain and levelled off for advanced apprentices. However, effective strategies are securing improvements. Currently 80% of apprentices have achieved their framework qualification in the expected time.
- Within a culture of raising aspirations staff have high expectations that learners will progress to further learning, including higher education. Progression rates are high. Learners produce work of a high standard.
- Learners say that they feel safe. Safeguarding has a very high profile in induction, in sessions and in the workplace. The college provides valuable support to employers when they have sensitive issues to deal with. Apprentices have the opportunity to attend additional workshops on safeguarding once they have achieved their technical certificate.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most teachers check learning effectively and ensure learners can make appropriate links to NVQ units and work placements. Apprentices value their off-the-job training, which helps them to improve their performance at work. In a few sessions there is insufficient planning to meet the needs of all learners and not enough checking of progress. Equality and diversity matters do not have a high profile in sessions.
- Assessment practices are excellent. Assessors' high level of professional experience enables them to provide assessment in a broad range of settings. Learners email work to assessors who provide prompt and constructive feedback, which learners value. Staff have started to make more use of the college's virtual learning environment for work-based learners. Portfolios, including e-portfolios, are high quality and well presented.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of users extremely well. Staff are highly responsive to learners' and employers' views and use these effectively to improve provision. They work closely with employers to develop and deliver more personalised training options, for example, to meet shift patterns. Employers clearly identify the business benefits they secure from the provision.
- Partnerships are outstanding. The college responds rapidly to requests for training and is the preferred provider for many large public-sector

organisations. Employers are actively involved in apprenticeship programmes and work with the college to promote work-based learning at taster sessions and during interviews. Employers are usually fully involved in the assessment and review process and help to provide good assessment opportunities.

- Guidance and support are excellent. Thorough initial assessment and job analysis ensures that learners embark on the most appropriate NVQ at the right level to meet their own and their employer's needs. The college and employers work well together to provide effective workplace support. This has enabled a learner with dyspraxia to pass the technical certificate successfully and now make good progress on the NVQ.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff focus strongly on learners' achievement and managers monitor and evaluate performance carefully. Good communications and highly effective team working are strong features of the department. Managers have autonomy to manage their department and use their budgets well to support staff and respond to learner feedback to improve provision. Course reviews are accurate and action plans lead to improvements.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners value the opportunities to broaden their horizons and experience other cultures. Recruitment of men has doubled in the last year. There is a strong culture of respect in the department. Staff are strongly committed to increasing access for all.

#### **What does Barnsley College need to do to improve further?**

- Continue current actions to improve timely achievement further on Train to Gain programmes.
- Further improve the extent to which learning sessions meet the needs of individual learners by making better use of their existing knowledge and increasing the frequency and types of checks on learning.

## Information about the inspection

43. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and eight additional inspectors, assisted by the college's deputy principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
44. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Barnsley College**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>					
Full-time learners	4,339	0	3,830	433	76
Part-time learners	3,400	346	433	1,685	936
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>1</b>				
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	1				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?	1				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?	1				
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1				
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	1				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1				

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