

# **RNIB College Loughborough**

## **Focused monitoring visit report**

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**Unique reference number:** 131990

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**Type of provider:** Independent Specialist College

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## **FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS**

### **Context and focus of visit**

RNIB College Loughborough is a medium-sized residential independent specialist college. The majority of learners have a visual impairment, although most learners have multiple difficulties and/or disabilities. An increasing proportion of learners enrolling to the college's day provision have complex communication needs. The college has six learners enrolled on its Residential Training for Disabled Adults (RTDA) provision funded through the Department for Work and Pensions. One learner is funded through Leicestershire Social Services. This provision was not included in the scope of this inspection.

At the time of the monitoring visit there were 57 learners, of whom 56 were funded by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). Of these, 30% were aged 16 to 18, 45% were residential, 61% were male and 11% were of minority ethnic heritage.

The college received its last focused monitoring visit in March 2010 and was found to have made significant progress in strengthening quality assurance, improving learners' short-term targets, improving the quality of teaching and learning and in widening user engagement. It was judged to have made reasonable progress in developing learners' economic well-being.

Since the last monitoring visit, the college has extended its vocational curriculum.

### **Themes**

#### **Self-assessment and improvement planning**

<b>What progress has been made in using self-assessment and quality assurance procedures to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including the use of specialist support in lessons?</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>
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The college has continued to refine its observation process and in February 2010 introduced a 'stretch and challenge' focus to increase active learning in lessons in order to better plan activities to meet individual learners' needs. College data show the proportion of good and better lessons increased from 63% in 2009/10 to 84% in 2010/11. Moderation procedures for the college's teaching and learning observation programme are well established and thorough. Observations for teachers within RNIB, learning assistants within RNIB, and for lessons taught at Loughborough College which RNIB learners attend, are all now separately scrutinised. As a result of this increased scrutiny, procedures across the provision have been amended to ensure greater levels of consistency and approach.

The college has revised its process for specifically observing the quality of support in lessons in order to improve further the effectiveness of learning support. The college

encourages learning support assistants to reflect on their effectiveness prior to observations and any areas of development or training need are recorded and followed up systematically at future observations. College data indicate a consistently high proportion of good or better support practice in lessons.

The college's updated self-assessment report for this aspect is detailed and in many cases uses trend data effectively to support its evaluations. The views of learners, parents and carers and employers are reflected particularly well. In a few cases however, the report is repetitive and not all areas for improvement are sufficiently precise.

## Outcomes for learners

<b>What progress has been made in ensuring all learners make at least their expected progress towards their long-term goal and final destination?</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>
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College data show of the 21 learners who left the college at the end of their programme in 2010/11, 19 achieved their planned destination. Over half progressed into further education, employment or some form of combined supported employment and voluntary work.

Learners' records sampled during the monitoring visit showed clear long-term planning of learner destinations through both overarching and smaller targets to support the development of their independence. Staff involve learners frequently in discussions about their targets and future aspirations. Individual learner targets sampled within individual learning plans during the monitoring visit were clear and appropriate. In the very small number of lessons sampled during the visit, however, not all individual targets were precise enough or sufficiently subject-focused to be easily measurable.

The college has revised its arrangements for monitoring learner progression after leaving RNIB to ensure learners are able to sustain their chosen destination. The college's transitions team now tracks learner destinations for their first year after leaving college to provide extended transitional support for both learners and parents and carers. The following 12 months are tracked through the college's marketing department and any information is passed back to the transitions team. The college has managed to make contact with around a third of leavers from its 2009/10 cohort and information suggests all these learners are still successfully following their chosen destination, including one learner pursuing a higher education programme.

The college has continued to expand the range of external work placements to support learners' placement and destination choices. Over the last three years the total number of external placements undertaken by learners has risen from 40 to 72 and the number of employers with whom the college offers work placements has risen from 29 to 41. In 2010/11 a total of 91 internal and external placements were undertaken by 52 learners.

## Leadership and management

**How much progress has been made since the last inspection in strengthening the quality of reporting to the governing body, in particular on monitoring the impact of key aspects of the college's work?** **Reasonable progress**

The governing body is highly committed to improving learners' experience of college life. Governors continue to bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their role and support senior managers effectively. Several aspects of governance have improved since the previous inspection. For example, training for the governing body is more systematic and the overwhelming majority of governors have received updated training in equalities and safeguarding.

Key areas of the college's work such as: progress against its key performance indicators; its self-assessment report; equality monitoring; and safeguarding matters, are reported frequently to the governing body and through its committees. In a number of cases however, a few updated reports and particularly annual performance reports received by the governing body, are not always in a format that is either easy to interpret, clearly summarises the salient messages, or that clearly indicates the impact of work undertaken. For example, incident reports are frequently collated and reported along with other related information but these are not pulled together or summarised sufficiently to enable patterns over time to be easily reviewed at a strategic level. In addition, the annual equalities report tends to focus on the vast array of actions undertaken to promote equality and does not report as comprehensively on the impact of actions or make sufficient reference to the impact from the single equality scheme. As a result, governors are not always best placed to be able to ask questions and provide more focussed challenge to managers.

The governing body has recognised this, in part, and has recently requested more summarised information be sent prior to committee meetings.

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