

# Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

## Independent specialist college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		14–16 May 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- Students make good progress and are prepared well for their next stage.
- Very good, substantial work placements prepare students well for employment.
- The use and promotion of British Sign Language (BSL) by students and staff are excellent.
- Therapeutic and communication support worker provision is excellent, resulting in significant improvements in students' confidence, social skills and academic progress.
- The involvement with partners and the local community is very effective.
- Senior leaders provide strong leadership and clear direction.
- The management of staff performance, and the good emphasis on developing the skills of all staff, are improving the quality of provision.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall, but it is not outstanding.
- The pass rates achieved by some students in functional skills reading and writing courses require further improvement.
- Not all students are aware of how they can contribute more to the decisions that college managers make
- The actions to improve the college provision recorded in the development plan, and their expected impact, are not always clearly linked to the needs of students.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons by continuing to implement the recent staff development and training activities, and by routinely sharing effective practice.
- Make sure more students pass their functional skills courses at levels 1 and 2 in reading and writing by exploring different opportunities for students to access levels 1 and 2 reading and writing programmes.
- Work with Local Authorities and other agencies to increase the proportion of students progressing to independent or supported living.
- Ensure all students understand how they can influence the curriculum and wider college activities, and are aware of the decisions made and actions taken by managers. Make a formal link between the student council and governing body.
- Increase the pace of progress in further improving the quality of provision, by establishing success measures for the priorities of the college aspects of the academy's development plan.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Students make significant progress over time in managing their own behaviour and developing good social and communication skills. The standard of most students' work in practical lessons and on work placements is usually good, and sometimes outstanding. Attendance is good.
- Achievements in functional skills are good overall. In English at entry level 3, and on the speaking and listening components of English at levels 1 and 2, pass rates are outstanding but require improvement on reading and writing modules.
- Outcomes on BSL courses are good or outstanding, but require improvement on deaf heritage and culture. Pass rates for mathematics qualifications are good, although some GCSE target grades were set too high. Pass rates on information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications are good at entry level, but require more improvement at levels 1 and 2.
- Progress against individual targets for students on foundation programmes is good. A new system adopted by the college sets carefully designed individual termly targets for students in English, mathematics, BSL and social and emotional development. All staff record and review students' progress against these targets, and managers take effective action when progress needs improvement. The college does not set information technology (IT) targets or record IT progress, but students develop good skills in using tablets as assistive technology.
- Students are prepared very well for life after college, developing the skills and confidence to live more independent lives on leaving college. However, the restricted availability of appropriate support and accommodation, in some parts of the country, results in too many students having to return home following their time at college.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and contribute very effectively to the high success rates and good development of the students' personal and vocational skills. Tutors are highly motivated, enthusiastic and expect students to work at the highest level possible. Students are encouraged to have high expectations, challenge themselves and develop strong independent living and learning skills.

- Excellent specialist therapeutic provision builds the appropriate level of support around each student, working across all areas of the college. This support can include input from specialist staff such as a clinical psychologist, occupational therapists, a physiotherapist, speech and language therapists, an educational audiologist, BSL tutors, counsellors, student mentors and a nurse. Students can receive other highly-specialised support through the extensive local and national links developed and maintained by the college team.
- Students value the excellent and highly-qualified communication support workers (CSW) who work with them on campus, and also accompany them at mainstream further education college sites and in work experience placements. CSWs provide highly-effective language support and help students to be more confident and manage their own learning and communication over time.
- Students have a high level of support from teaching assistants, care staff and through the tutorial system to enable them to engage actively in learning and follow their individual programmes successfully. Behaviour management is very good; all staff work together to provide a consistent, personalised and effective response to help students develop their own strategies to manage change, challenge and anxiety.
- Staff deliver a broad curriculum to meet the individual needs of all students, based on an effective and thorough initial assessment process before admission and on the six-week assessment at the start of their programme. Students have clear personal, language and vocational targets that are recorded on the new student tracking and recording system. These are shared by all staff to maximise opportunities for learning and are reviewed termly.
- Health and safety practices are very good in practical workshops, with reinforcement through displays, regular checking, and strong focus on the appropriate government legislation. Students demonstrate safe working and an understanding of the importance of being safe and keeping others safe in a range of working and domestic environments.
- Teaching and care staff are well qualified and very experienced. They use a wide range of teaching approaches to meet the individual needs of the students and ensure that they are well prepared for the requirements of accreditation boards and employers, and for independent living. Highly effective questioning techniques prompt learning, encourage reflection and check understanding. Practice in supporting and assessing each other enables students to take more control of their learning and to build personal and social interaction skills. Students receive detailed verbal and written feedback on their work, which is constructive and identifies areas and strategies for development.
- Students develop a good, practical understanding of equality and diversity during their time at college. A culture of tolerance and mutual respect is reinforced throughout the organisation. Staff have the confidence and experience to discuss sensitive topics relating to sexuality and diversity. Students will also challenge each other if they notice use of inappropriate language, comments or behaviour. Students are actively involved in promoting an understanding of deaf culture through involvement in events such as Unexpected Exeter. Good use is made of external experts and naturally-occurring events to broaden students' understanding of the wider aspects of equalities.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new senior leadership team, supported by the chief executive, provides strong leadership and a clear direction for the college. The well-managed restructuring reduced the tiers of management; middle managers now have greater responsibility and accountability, enabling them to respond more quickly to students' needs. The expectations that all relevant staff will achieve an advanced level of sign language emphasises the high standards set by managers and their aspiration for students to receive high-quality provision, regardless of their previous experience or potential barriers to their success.

- Governors are well briefed. They provide appropriate challenge to senior managers, and closely monitor progress on improvements, resulting from the last inspection. Senior managers and trustees of the charity which provides the academy are working effectively with a local social housing organisation to increase the availability of appropriate accommodation, after managers identified the restricted opportunities for students to progress into independent or supported living.
- The management of staff performance, and actions to develop the skills and talents of staff, are effective in raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The range of actions includes improving the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, the use of peers to identify good learning, the introduction of learning mentors and coaches and good, relevant staff training. The large majority of teaching and learning are good, although further work is required to continue the improvement of standards.
- Students are excellent ambassadors for the college and are effective advocates for other young deaf people at conferences, visits to the Houses of Parliament and other events. A group of students recently advised local police on how to work with deaf people. Students feel involved in some decision making, particularly in improving facilities of the college. They give their views regularly through surveys and informal meetings with the head of college and other managers, and are listened to. The chair of the student council plays an active part in the college safeguarding group. However, no student representation exists on the governing body. Although the college takes actions in response to the formal and informal meetings with students on improving the college experience, not all students are aware of the actions taken or decisions made.
- Self-assessment arrangements are strong and the report reflects the good progress made since the previous inspection. The development plan is comprehensive and ambitious and, in general, identifies the actions necessary for the academy to improve the students' experience further. However, the development plan covers both the school and post-16 college aspects of the academy's provision. It does not effectively specify the current position for the post-16 provision, or set clear success criteria for improvements. In some instances, the expected impact on students, resulting from actions, is not clear.
- Leaders and managers successfully provide a curriculum that is highly responsive to individual needs and makes excellent use of partnerships and available resources. Partnerships with two local further education (FE) colleges are particularly beneficial, as these have a high level of commitment to working with deaf students. Academy students benefit from good advice and guidance at the colleges, as well as flexible and challenging educational experiences. Students from the general further education courses also gain from working with deaf peers by having a greater understanding of deaf culture and, in several cases, starting to learn BSL.
- Links with employers are good. All new employers receive deaf awareness training and excellent support and advice from college staff. College staff use feedback from employers to adapt and improve the curriculum and are making good progress in establishing supported internships for students.
- Parents and carers value the college provision at the academy, with many seeing levels of independence and achievement they had not believed possible. Communication between the college and parents is frequent, regular and productive. College managers acknowledge that more parents would benefit from developing sign language skills to improve and increase the sustainability of students' achievements.
- The vast majority of students make at least good progress, regardless of their level of disability or other barriers to success, because of the personalised curriculum, good use of resources and strong collaborative approach from therapeutic, education and support staff. Managers effectively monitor and analyse the progress and achievement of all students.
- Safeguarding procedures meet legal requirements. All staff develop their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding through good, regular training and updating. Staff are becoming increasingly confident about knowing when to report safeguarding incidents formally and when to raise them as an area for concern. Students' understanding of their rights and

responsibilities relating to safeguarding is reinforced well. For example, following the introduction of a bullying policy, many students reported that they were experiencing bullying. Further investigation identified that the term bullying was not fully understood by all students, resulting in inappropriate reporting of bullying incidents. All staff receive e-safety training, including guidance on how to manage communication with students using social media.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent specialist college							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	59							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Jonathan Farnhill							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	March 2012							
<b>Website address</b>	www.exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	14	12	5	7	1	7	-	-
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>								
<b>Full-time</b>	-							
<b>Part-time</b>	-							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	-							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	-							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Exeter College</li> <li>■ Bicton College</li> <li>■ St Lyses Foundation</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education (the Academy) includes a school for pupils aged five to 16 and a college for students aged over 16. The Academy is based in Devon close to Exeter city centre. The vast majority of the students are profoundly deaf and use BSL as their first language; many students have additional barriers to learning. Students follow individual programmes at the academy site or at one of the partner colleges. The Academy offers day and residential placements. Students from many parts of England and Wales attend the college. This inspection looked at the college provision only, the school provision was inspected at the same time.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Nigel Evans HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Deputy Head of College, as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners, parents and partners; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions and assessments. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report above.



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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