

## Communication Specialist College Doncaster

**Independent specialist college**

<b>Inspection dates</b>		11-13 November 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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, particularly in developing their communication, personal and social skills. They make good gains in managing their behaviour, travelling independently and interacting more confidently with others
- most students progress successfully to their chosen destinations when they leave college. Many students progress into further education and a few progress into independent and supported living arrangements, as well as employment
- good teaching and learning motivates students to take part fully in well-planned activities, develop their practical skills and gain relevant qualifications. Students have good opportunities to practise their English, mathematics and communication skills in lessons
- specialist and personal support is very good and highly effective in helping students to make good progress. It enables many students to overcome the barriers which hinder their ability to learn and to integrate into the wider community
- management of the individual study programmes is good and meets students' needs very well. Leaders and managers have strong links with local, regional and national groups to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of current and future students
- performance management at all levels across the college is effective. Improvement plans identify specific actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and governors and senior managers monitor these closely.

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

- although teaching and learning is good overall, it is not outstanding and small pockets of less effective practice still exist
- individual students targets are not consistently used well to plan their learning in lessons
- students ongoing record of progress is not summarised to give a clear picture of their progress over time towards their long-term goals
- not all key reports submitted to the board are sufficiently clear to enable governors to challenge senior managers on aspects of quality and performance.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen the quality of planning for learning in lessons so that it takes into account students' targets and starting points. Provide training for observers to ensure that they evaluate the quality of the learning and clearly identify where less effective practice occurs.
- Enable more challenge from governors by presenting performance and quality reports with measurable objectives and targets. Strengthen the reporting of student achievement data by ensuring that full and partial achievements are separately recorded.
- Review and strengthen the procedures for collating students' progress against the range of short-term targets by developing a summary that reflects what the students can do and their next steps towards their long-term goals.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Students take part in study programmes, individualised to their needs and starting points, using on-site vocational and independence facilities and off-site work placements as well as community resources. Students have a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and approximately a third have a hearing impairment. Around a quarter of students have complex learning needs, over half are aged 16 to 18 years, while a similar proportion are on courses at entry level.
- Outcomes for learners are good. Thorough assessment of students' individual starting points enables the development of detailed individual learning plans with clear targets. Most students make good progress in gaining a wide range of qualifications in vocational or life skills subjects and English and mathematics. Approximately half have progressed to a grade higher in one or more qualifications.
- The standard of students' work is good, particularly in practical subjects such as joinery. Attendance and punctuality are good and students enjoy their programmes. The majority of students progress successfully to their chosen and projected destinations. A significant number of students progress onto further education; a few progress into independent and supported living arrangements, as well as employment.
- Students make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. They greatly increase their ability to make confident choices, to communicate very effectively and begin to manage their own anxieties and behaviour. Students are encouraged to develop their sign language skills to enable them to communicate and interact with their deaf peers.
- A significant number of students make good progress in developing their independent travel skills which enhances their future opportunities. They gain good independence skills in everyday tasks including using money, shopping, cooking and cleaning. Students use tablet computers very well to evaluate food prices across a range of shops to enable them to budget more effectively.
- Increasingly, students gain English and mathematics qualifications at an appropriate level. They have good opportunities to practise their English and mathematics skills in lessons and in tutor groups. In one tutor group, students developed their social, communication and mathematics skills very well through playing a card game, adding up individual scores and keeping a score board.
- Around a third of students take part in a meaningful work placement as part of their study programme and this increases their chances of employment. Learning support mentors are effective in enabling more students to take part successfully in work experience and to prepare them for transition to the next stages in their lives. Students not yet ready to access external

work placements extend their knowledge of work and the community through a range of relevant industrial visits.

- Managers monitor the achievements of all student groups very well and accurately identify that there are no significant differences in students' achievement or progress.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers and learning support mentors have high expectations of what students can achieve which motivates them to engage, develop good skills including English and mathematics skills and gain relevant qualifications. Teachers and learning support mentors develop positive relationships with students and a culture of mutual respect is evident in all lessons. Students are encouraged to take turns and to interact with staff and other students appropriately.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers and learning support mentors know and relate to their students very well. Good use is made of this information to implement successful opportunities for learning. The use of skilful questioning establishes if students are learning while checking their understanding and enabling them to think independently. This encourages students to contribute fully through verbal or signed responses. Where learning is less effective, there is a lack of active participation by students, or they complete the same learning activities despite their different levels of ability.
- Good use is made of a range of practical learning environments to develop students' vocational skills. In one lesson, students used the knowledge and skills gained in their work experience to complete their qualification assignments to a high standard. Students learn to attend on time, to use tools safely and to follow instructions. They develop good mathematics skills in woodwork, by measuring and cutting wood into lengths. In an enterprise lesson, students plan and shop for the sweets, fruit and vegetables which they sell in the college; this enables them to gain skills in the use of money.
- Teachers and learning support mentors provide good opportunities for students to practise their communication skills in lessons. They provide good support and most communicate successfully with deaf students through signing. However, in a small minority of instances, signing support is not sufficiently accurate or deployed well enough to engage all students in learning. All students have good opportunities to learn and develop their signing skills to enable them to communicate more effectively with their deaf peers.
- The effective use of information learning technologies (ILT) enhances learning. In a sports lesson, the use of tablet computers to film students playing cricket enabled them to review and improve their batting techniques. In other sessions, students use tablet computers to recognise coins and prepare for shopping.
- Initial assessment is good and identifies students' individual needs and targets well. Most individual learning targets are clear and appropriate. However, they are not used consistently to plan learning and therefore, lesson targets are not always relevant to the activity.
- Teachers monitor students' progress closely and record in detail achievement of their short-term targets. However, this information is not summarised to provide a clear picture of students' progress over time towards their long-term goals.
- Students receive good guidance and information. Good tutorials engage students in identifying their achievements and their next step in learning. Transition arrangements are highly effective in helping students to plan and achieve their goals after they leave college. Learning support mentors provide good opportunities to ensure that students develop their confidence and skills to be successful in their future lives.
- Multi-disciplinary specialist and personal support is very good and has a major impact on students' progress and their good outcomes. Students' behaviour improves and their anxieties diminish as a result of the successful implementation of behaviour plans, counselling and speech and language therapy. Comprehensive and sensitive support enables many students to

overcome the barriers which hinder their ability to learn and to integrate into the wider community.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Students learn to respect their peers and develop a strong awareness and acceptance of each other's differences. Deaf tutors and staff provide excellent role models for students. Good guidance ensures that students know their rights and entitlement which enables them to access community facilities, continuing education and employment. Staff respond well to individual student's dietary needs. In one instance, the provision of halal meat enabled a student to participate fully in group meals. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to learn about diverse cultures and lifestyles through topics such as Diwali and Martin Luther King Day.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Good**

- Governors, leaders and managers are clear about future needs and the continuing development of the provision in the context of new legislation and funding changes. They manage change and quality improvement well. Students have a broader range of complex needs than previously and subsequent changes to staffing, programmes and resources meet their needs very well.
- Leaders, managers and staff have high expectations for all students and promote a culture that successfully values students' achievements and progress. Staff are highly motivated and committed to the college's mission to empower and support individuals to be resilient, independent and skilled to enable them to achieve their future aspirations and goals.
- Leaders and managers respond well to the national priorities to change the way special education responds to individual needs and the increased focus on outcomes and destinations. The principal, governors and senior managers play a prominent part in local, regional and national forums to develop the college's structure and to better meet the needs of current and future students. Students benefit from this wide range of strong partnerships and links by increased opportunities to access learning, work experience, social, community activities, and additional specialist support. In a few instances, links enable good matching of students to work placements with the opportunity to develop good skills and progress into employment.
- Leaders and managers use performance management well to promote continuous improvement at all levels. Teaching staff share good practice with enthusiasm and respond well to required changes. Staff benefit from a good range of relevant well-managed training and development activities. The observation process for teaching and learning does not always evaluate the quality of students' learning sufficiently well. However, it is effective in identifying underperformance in teaching and learning and managers take specific actions to promote improvement, including supervision sessions.
- Governance arrangements are effective in supporting the college's strategic direction and in securing quality and improvement. Governors are actively involved in college life. Leaders recognize the need to strengthen the board of governors and planning for succession is underway although at the time of the inspection appointments were pending. Governors are well informed and know the provision well. However, not all key reports submitted to the board include sufficiently clear performance objectives and targets to enable governors to challenge the senior team. Data reports on students' achievement of qualifications require improvement to ensure that they present a clear and accurate picture of full and partial qualifications. Managers are aware of this and taking actions to improve clarity.
- The well-managed study programmes offer a good range of subjects and qualification levels to meet the individual needs of students very well. The transition planning strategy is highly effective in supporting students to achieve their long-term goals. The implementation of the English and mathematics strategy is good with a clear focus on providing opportunities to develop skills across the programmes. Resources and facilities for learning are good including increased mobile technologies which support good progress in students' communication skills.

- The self-assessment process is effective and the report accurately identifies many of the key areas for improvement identified during the inspection, including the need to formalise the moderation of the recording of achievement. Quality improvement planning identifies specific actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and governors and senior managers monitor these closely. Students have a strong influence on improvement through the student committee. The views of parents and other users inform developments in the college effectively.
- Leaders and managers create a safe environment for students who demonstrate through their behaviour mutual respect and support for diverse needs. Students and staff experience an inclusive and harmonious setting for learning in which most students make good progress from their starting point. The promotion of equality and diversity across the college is good including many examples of creative and imaginative promotion to students. Clear policies and good practice by staff protect learners from bullying and harassment.
- Safeguarding arrangements for students are good. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students. Leaders and managers give a high priority to the health, safety and well-being of students. Good external links with external agencies and local authorities enable managers to support vulnerable students. Risk assessments are thorough and managed well to reduce risks. Staff are good at listening to and acting upon students' concerns. They identify quickly any learners, or groups of learners who are at risk. Students feel very safe and know how to raise concerns. Support for these students is good. The amount and levels of training for staff are good. All staff participate in training and updates on safeguarding. Teachers and learning support mentors promote health and safety in classrooms and workshops effectively.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Communication Specialist College Doncaster

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Independent living and leisure skills	2

<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>	77								
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Alan Robinson								
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	November 2007								
<b>Website address</b>	www.deaf-trust.co.uk/college								
<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+	
	31	23	13	4	3	7	N/A	N/A	
<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+			
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A								
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A								
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A								
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A								
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A								
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Local Authorities								
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>								

## Contextual information

Communication Specialist College Doncaster, formerly known as Doncaster College for the Deaf, is a large independent specialist college located on the outskirts of Doncaster. It provides residential and day further education for students with complex learning and communication needs, including those with autistic spectrum conditions, as well as deaf and hearing impaired students. The college operates under the auspices of Doncaster Deaf Trust, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Doncaster School for the Deaf, which provides specialist education for pupils aged 5-19 years, occupies the same site. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) and local authorities currently fund 81 of the 101 students who attend the college. Social services and the Department for Work and Pensions fund the remaining 20 students; this provision is not in the scope of the inspection. Of the 81 EFA and local authority funded students, 71% are male and 9% are of minority ethnic heritage.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Margaret Hobson HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Assistant Principal 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, and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. 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 study programmes 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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