

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: New College Worcester
Date of visit: 5 February 2008

New College Worcester is a non-maintained, residential special school for young people aged 11 to 19. A sixth form facility caters for students aged 16-18. The college is now fully independent from the RNIB following the de-merger in July 2007. All students are blind or partially sighted. A minority of students have additional needs, including hearing impairment and Asperger's Syndrome. There are currently 45 students in the sixth form; nine of these are funded by the Local Skills Council (LSC).

Students study GCE A level subjects with the majority progressing to higher education. A small number study foundation courses. Some students enrol at the college from mainstream schools. They also develop independence skills including their mobility. Training in information communication technology (ICT), Braille and social and communication skills is provided as required. There is a programme of extra-curricular activities available for students both in the evenings and weekends.

Achievement and standards

Does the college now identify potential underperformance of particular groups?	Reasonable progress
--	---------------------

Good systems are now in place to identify students' potential underperformance. All students are subject to assessment in the autumn term to identify if they are not meeting their target grades. Actions are quickly taken to ensure, where this applies, that students are brought back on course to achieve their expected GCE A level and AS level results. All 3 LSC funded students who left in 2007 achieved GCE A levels and secured university places. The college is developing a range of methods to evaluate how well all students progress.

Quality of provision

Are learning targets now shared regularly, reviewed and progress recorded across all areas of provision?	Significant progress
--	----------------------

Students are fully involved in setting learning targets at their annual reviews. These are regularly reviewed regularly and progress recorded each academic term by form tutors. The progressive programme of independent living skills is not yet fully embedded within the residential setting. However, residential staff provide supporting evidence of progress and are helping to develop specific practical independence skills in response to the students' individual wishes and ambitions. Communication between the residential and education parts of the college has improved significantly with regular contact and joint work. This has improved the setting of individual learning targets in relation to students' personal development, independence, study skills and the recording of progress.

How effective are transition arrangements for students?	Significant progress
---	----------------------

There is very effective support provided to individuals to ensure transition from mainstream provision into the college is as smooth as possible. Long term goals are established during the students' initial assessment and transition planning is included effectively within annual reviews. More focus is given to possible further education or work placements for appropriate students. The college and Connexions service provide good support and guidance. Links with other further education providers have been strengthened to provide alternative progression routes for those students not moving on to higher education.

Leadership and management

Are quality assurance processes now firmly established?	Reasonable progress
---	---------------------

Quality assurance processes have improved and good progress has been made in the development of the college's lesson observation process. Lesson observations contain useful evaluations and areas for improvement focused clearly on learner progress. The college has developed a quality 'cycle of

improvement' which identifies clearly quality assurance activities to gather data and evidence to inform self evaluation. The college is planning to audit the quality of provision against standards which are being developed in full consultation with curriculum leaders and teaching staff.

What progress has been made in relation to the promotion of equality and diversity?	Reasonable progress
---	---------------------

The college has recently revised their equality and diversity policies and procedures after their de-merger from the RNIB in July 2007. An action plan has been devised to ensure they are implemented effectively. However, the time scales stated within the plan for actions to be reviewed and evaluated, are not specific enough to monitor progress effectively. Governors have been fully involved in the development of the policies and procedures and are aware of their statutory obligations. An equality and diversity committee has been established and staff have had appropriate training. The gender equalities policy is in the process of development.