



Royal West of England College for the Deaf

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Better  
education  
and care

# Re-inspection report

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## Introduction

The Royal College for the Deaf was inspected in March 2005. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in Leadership and Management which was found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory Leadership and Management was re-inspected on 8 and 9 March 2007. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

## Leadership and Management

Leadership and Management are satisfactory. A new chief executive for the Royal School and College for the Deaf took up his post in September 2006. He has effectively gained the support and respect of college staff, governors and senior staff of the college. Staff appreciate the open and supportive management style of the senior leadership team. Morale in the college is good. Outcomes of the regular staff meetings are now formally recorded. However, responsibilities for the completion of actions and dates by which actions should be completed are not always identified.

The performance review system has been improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. The chief executive has recently introduced a new performance review system for senior staff. The targets set as a result of these reviews are clearly linked to operational and strategic objectives. All staff are now fully involved in the well-established appraisal system. Staff training has been extended since the last inspection to include multiple and complex needs and equal opportunities. The college acknowledges that training relating to mental health and behaviour management requires further development. Training in these areas is planned for next term.

Strategic and business planning is satisfactory. The overall strategic plan for the organisation now includes a discrete section related to the college. Whilst the college operational plan 2006/2007 is linked to areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report, it is not yet linked to the objectives in the strategic plan. At the previous inspection the mission statement was

under review. Staff appreciate their involvement in the review and subsequent development of the new mission and vision statements. All new policies and procedures clearly reflect a distinct college identity.

The college has developed and put in place an appropriate literacy and numeracy strategy. However it is too early to judge the impact of the strategy on meeting students' varied needs. The focus on British Sign Language (BSL) has been improved. All staff working directly with learners now follow appropriate BSL training. The number of staff with hearing impairments has increased providing positive role models for learners. Deployment of staff is appropriate to meet the needs of learners. Staff are positive about the resources available to support their work.

The college is compliant with current legislative requirements for the Special Educational Needs Disability Discrimination Act (SENDA) and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. An accessibility plan for 2007-09 is in place with clearly identified actions, responsibilities and dates for completion.

Quality assurance arrangements have been significantly improved and are now satisfactory. The appointment of a head of educational development has supported these improvements. Staff are appropriately involved in the development of the self-assessment report. The report is over descriptive in parts. The college is aware of the need to make more explicit the areas for improvement, although managers are clear about these areas. Staff have a good understanding of the progress being made by students but systems to record this do not produce clear, summative reports. The college is in the process of developing a management information system. The system is anticipated to be fully operational by the summer 2007. Appropriate systems are in place to monitor the quality of provision at local general further education colleges.

The governance of the college is satisfactory. Governors now give priority to the development of the college as a key department within the overall organisation. The head of college gives regular reports to the governing body. Governors have been allocated specific responsibilities in relation to the college provision, SENDA, equal opportunities and child protection. Governors with these specific responsibilities have attended appropriate training. Governors approve the self-assessment report but have not as yet taken formal steps to evaluate their own performance.

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Royal West of England School for the Deaf  
Date of visit: 8 to 9 March 2007

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

### Achievement and standards

How well did students achieve in 2005/06?

- Students continued to achieve well in 2005/06. Of the 21 students completing full-time vocational courses at levels 1 to 3, the majority achieved a full qualification and all achieved partial accreditation. Of those who gained a full qualification, 10% achieved distinctions and 19% achieved merits. This was across a range of qualifications, including national diplomas, NVQs and OCR business qualifications. Students on courses leading to Open College accreditation achieved well and a high percentage of students taking British Sign Language (BSL) at levels 1 and 2 passed the examination. A significant number of students gained additional awards, for example in health and safety.

Is the college effectively measuring the 'value added' to learners' previous achievements before they joined the college?

- The college has improved its systems to record learners' starting points, which helps them to measure more accurately the value added to their previous achievements. Students progress well through the levels of qualifications available to them.

The college self-assessment report (SAR) identifies key skills achievement as an issue; what progress has there been to improve this?

- Last year students made limited progress in achieving key skills qualifications, especially at level 1. The college has restructured the way this is being delivered and students are making better progress this year. Students are now more highly motivated to achieve, recognising the relevance of these programmes to their career aspirations.

## Quality of education and training

What curriculum developments are taking place in 14 to 19 provision?

- The college has successfully broadened its curriculum to meet the needs of learners at entry level. It has also developed a coherent strategy to teach students literacy, numeracy and communications. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy but the provision is better linked to students' main programmes, it focuses on progression routes and skills maintenance. Programmes are negotiated with learners to ensure that they are on suitable courses. The college has developed its own specialised resources for literacy.
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision has been introduced to recognise that English is a foreign language for users of BSL as well as for learners from other linguistic cultures.
- Senior staff are well involved in local consortia with other colleges and schools to discuss the implications of proposed national changes to the 14 to 19 curriculum.

Have assessment and planning to match individual needs improved since the last inspection?

- Assessment and planning to match individual needs has improved and is now satisfactory. Arrangements for initial assessment are more comprehensive and now include literacy and numeracy assessment. The outcome of assessment is generally used well to plan individual programmes for learners. Learners' progress is monitored and recorded at regular, frequent intervals by each member of staff involved with the learner. Many reports are generated, but there is currently no system to give a succinct overview of learners' progress for monitoring purposes.

Does personal and specialist support continue to be good?

Do staff have sufficient expertise to meet the current range of learner needs?

- Personal and specialist support remains a strength of the organisation. This expertise is well used during initial assessment as well as offering support during the student's programme. Students have access to a range of specialisms, including counselling, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy.
- The college has sufficient staff expertise to meet the range of learners' needs. Staff have undertaken training in autism and all members of staff have undertaken BSL training. The college has identified appropriate

priorities to further develop staff skills; there are plans for more staff training in signing, communication methods, mental health awareness and behaviour management.

## Leadership and management

More detailed examination of this aspect can be found in the re-inspection of leadership and management report.

Are safeguarding arrangements up to date with legal requirements?

- There are appropriate arrangements in place for the safeguarding of students. All staff and volunteers undertake CRB checks and the college is compliant with government recommendations in this aspect. The college risk assessment system covers all aspects of a student's programme, including work placement and courses taken at other colleges. There has been recent updating for support staff to reinforce their responsibilities with regard to health and safety.