



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

## Henshaws College

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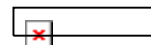
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## Basic information about the college

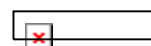


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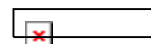
|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of college:             | Henshaws College  |
| Type of college:             | Independent, residential, specialist                          |
| Director:                    | Dianne Asher  |
| Principal:                   | Jane Cole   |
| Address of college:          | Bogs Lane<br>Starbeck<br>Harrogate<br>North Yorkshire HG1 4ED |
| Telephone number:            | 01423 886451  |
| Fax number:                  | 01423 885095  |
| Chair of governors:          | Tim Fawcett   |
| Reference number*:           | 221888  |
| Name of reporting inspector: | Joyce Deere ALI   |
| Date of inspection:          | 9-12 December 2002  |

\* *charity or registered business number of the company running the college*

## Part A: Summary



## Information about the college

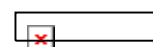


Henshaws College is located on a 12-acre rural site on the outskirts of Harrogate, North Yorkshire. It is a national specialist, residential further education college for students who are blind or partially sighted. The college forms part of Henshaws Society for Blind People, a registered charity, which is based in Manchester. The society provides a range of services to blind and partially-sighted people in the north of England and north Wales. All students have disabilities in addition to their visual impairment. These include autistic spectrum disorder, epilepsy, cerebral palsy and hearing impairment. The students are recruited nationally, the large majority from the north of the United Kingdom. Students are aged between 16 to 25, the majority are over 19 years on entry, 57% are male. The college does not accept students with profound disabilities, nor those wanting to enter higher education. The college has 64 residential students, including four essential wheelchair users. There are currently no day students.

All students have an individual timetable based on the college curriculum. The curriculum includes independent living skills, mobility, personal and social education (PSE), pre-vocational and vocational education, guidance, community access, sport, fitness and leisure, and practical skills in,

for example, craft and horticulture. Students may attend local further education colleges where appropriate. At the time of inspection, 15 students were attending for one or more lessons a week on a part-time basis. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed, and all areas have been divided into 10 Henshaw achievement levels (HALs), which range from pre-entry to level 1 in the national qualifications framework. External qualifications are offered at pre-entry, entry level and level 1 in subjects associated with independent living skills, literacy and numeracy, and recreation and leisure. Facilities at the college include a well-equipped health and fitness centre and hydrotherapy pool. The college provides physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and hydrotherapy. All students have a low vision assessment and medical screening by specialist ophthalmologists. The college employs an extensive range of staff including teachers, support workers, residential care staff and therapists.

### **How effective is the college?**



The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

#### ***Key strengths***

- very good development of students' mobility and independent living skills
- very effective work-experience programme
- very good therapeutic support for students
- good links between the residences and the independent living skills programme
- high standard of teaching and residential accommodation
- good oversight of the college by the trustees.

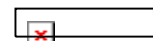
#### ***What should be improved***

- the unsatisfactory standard of teaching in pre-vocational and vocational programmes
- the overall coherence of the curriculum

- the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning across the college
- the promotion of equal opportunities
- the appropriateness of the curriculum for all students
- the rigour of the implementation of the quality assurance arrangements
- the rigour of initial assessment and monitoring progress.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

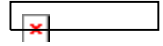


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4) and Very Poor (5).*

| Area                                   | Overall judgements about provision, and comment   |
|--|---|
| Mobility and independent living skills | <b>Good.</b> Much teaching was good or better. Standards achieved in mobility skills and independent living skills are very good. Good systems are in place to record and monitor progress. However, some support staff were poorly managed and some physical aspects of the external campus need improvement.                                  |
| Literacy, numeracy and communications  | <b>Satisfactory.</b> Much teaching is good or better. Standards achieved in communications programmes are good. However, the cross-college arrangements for initial assessment, and tracking and monitoring of students' progress are not satisfactory. There is insufficient weekly time allowance for literacy and numeracy tuition.          |
| Vocational and pre-vocational courses  | <b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Apart from a few very good lessons, many lessons were poorly planned, with tasks that did not meet the needs of all learners. Standards achieved were not always satisfactory, nor were monitoring and assessment of progress in lessons. The work-experience programme is very effective. The monitoring of the quality |

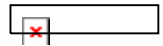
|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | of courses in local colleges is unsatisfactory. |
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### How well is the college led and managed?



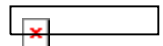
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategic and operational planning is linked to the self-assessment process, which is well managed. The college curriculum has been revised, but lacks coherence, and recent changes have yet to be fully implemented by all staff. Quality assurance mechanisms are evolving, but are not yet sufficiently rigorous. The appraisal and staff development opportunities are good, but there is little sharing of good practice across the college. The oversight of the educational provision by the trustees is good, as is financial management. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

### To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



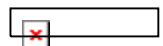
The college's response to social inclusion is satisfactory. In the past four years, the number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from one to seven. A new fully adapted residential block was completed in January 2000, in response to the increasingly complex needs of the students. The college promotes aspects of disability, but other issues are not sufficiently promoted in the curriculum. The trustees have not yet developed an action plan to respond to their responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, or to the anticipatory duties in relation to the Special Educational Needs Disability Discrimination Act (SENDA). A few students are on programmes that are not building sufficiently on their previous attainment.

### How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are very good. Students are well cared for, and benefit from the wide range of specialist provision and facilities. Therapeutic interventions are very effective and well integrated into students' programmes. Students are provided with good guidance about their courses. Appropriate attention is paid to the provision of information in a range of formats. The transition arrangements are very effective. The most recent inspection by the National Care Standards Commission found the college to be satisfactory. Some parents attend training provided by the college so that students can continue with some aspects of their programmes during the vacations. The tutorial programme requires further development.

### Students' views of the college



Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

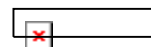
***What students like about the college***

- being able to move to more independent accommodation
- the staff
- work experience
- many evening activities
- learning new skills, such as Braille
- the freedom allowed by the college
- preparing for life outside.

***What they feel could be improved***

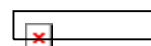
- noise levels in residential houses
- some lessons too easy/boring
- teachers' punctuality in lessons
- the housework and laundry
- not being able to go out when they want to.

## Other information

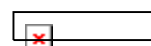


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) receives the college's post-inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

## Part B: The college as a whole



### Achievement and standards

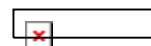


1. The college has a clear focus on developing students' skills of independence so that they can play a more meaningful part in their local community when they leave. The destinations of students who have left over the past three years show that more students are progressing into part-time time further education and voluntary work, with fewer students attending day centres. In 2000, 66% of leavers progressed into day centres. By 2002, only 33% had taken this route. The rest were either attending local further education colleges or some kind of voluntary work. This development has been achieved during a period where the needs of individual students have become more complex.

2. The college encourages students to achieve at all levels, and all students are entered for internally or externally accredited courses or units, as well as being set more individual targets that might be related to any aspect of residential life. Care is taken to make sure the units are achievable. The standards of achievement in these units and targets by students over the past three years have been good. These successes are celebrated in awards ceremonies. Retention rates, at 95%, are at the level expected in residential colleges.

3. Work seen in lessons is of very high quality in mobility, independent living skills and literacy, numeracy and communications. In the best lessons, students develop understanding as well as skills and have the confidence to successfully transfer this learning into other contexts, such as shopping. Work-experience placements are carefully chosen and students gain in confidence as a result of the systematically planned tasks. This good practice is less in evidence in some teaching in the pre-vocational area, where tasks and activities are not always appropriate for all students. In all areas of the curriculum, there are lessons where a few of the more able students are insufficiently challenged and the needs of a few students with more complex needs are not fully met.

### Quality of teaching, training and learning



4. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better in mobility and independent living skills, and in literacy, numeracy and communications. However, it is not satisfactory in vocational and pre-vocational programmes. Teaching is most effective where there is a strong focus on practical activities and links are made between new skills and those learnt previously and support staff effectively used. In the less satisfactory lessons, there was poor planning, and tasks and activities are not appropriate for all students. Students are bored or not fully engaged for long periods of time. Support staff are not well managed and do not encourage students to develop skills for themselves. Behaviour management is generally good. Recently introduced changes, such as the linking of the literacy and numeracy curriculum to the HALs and the recording of progress in 'soft skills', are not fully integrated.

5. Staff are well qualified. All teachers have teaching qualifications, and most either have, or are working towards, specialist qualifications relating to visual impairment. Many support workers are also working towards specialist qualifications relating to visual impairment or teaching qualifications. Therapy staff and care staff are appropriately qualified. Many staff have learnt Makaton. However, there are very few staff with specialist qualifications in working with students with learning difficulties.

6. Teaching and learning facilities are satisfactory, with a wide range of specialist augmentative aids and equipment. There has been substantial recent investment in information and communications technology (ICT) facilities, and the college now has the range and amount of equipment appropriate for a specialist college. Teaching resources are good, particularly in literacy, numeracy and communications, where teachers produce their own materials. However, the external campus needs improvement for the teaching of mobility skills. External lighting levels in some parts of the campus are too low, and there is insufficient graded and differentiated paving for the training of mobility and orientation skills.

7. Residential and teaching accommodation is of a high standard. The college's provision was found to be satisfactory by inspectors from the National Care Standards Commission. The college recently built a new accommodation block that has improved access for wheelchair users, more en-suite facilities and fully adapted kitchen facilities. It has plans to upgrade all the residential accommodation to a similar standard with a five-year programme of new build on the campus. A living skills kitchen has recently been fully adapted for students with a wide range of disabilities. The environment is welcoming and the college has excellent displays of the students' work in the practical workshops. There is a good range of sports and leisure facilities, including a swimming pool and a hydrotherapy pool. A well-equipped sensory room has been a recent development. The college has a technology centre, which enables students to try out new equipment and adaptations. Risk assessments are satisfactory, being carried out for all activities as well as for individual students.

8. There are some weaknesses in the initial assessment. Although the 24-hour initial assessment is thorough, it does not always take sufficient account of students' previous achievements. The baseline assessment takes place during the first few weeks of the course, but links are not always made between the findings in the baseline assessment and a student's programme. The initial assessment for literacy and numeracy is not adequate as the basis for planning a student's programme, and the literacy and numeracy staff use their own assessments for their individual discrete lessons. Reference is not always made in the documentation to the fact that a student's first or home language may not be English.

9. There is some very good practice in providing timely feedback to students on their progress in lessons, and in the best practice, the students are developing skills of analysis that enable them to reflect on their own progress. However, there are examples of less satisfactory practice in some pre-vocational lessons. The formal recording of students' progress is not satisfactory in literacy and numeracy across the college or in some of the pre-vocational and vocational provision.

10. The college meets the annual review requirements of the LSC. The reviews include progress made in all subjects studied and there are helpful reports of therapeutic interventions. The college is beginning to develop systems that show students' progress over longer spans of time. In the most recent reviews, greater reference has been made to the overall progress made by students since

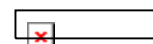


they started at the college. External and internal moderation reports for accredited courses are satisfactory.

11. The college provides an extensive range of courses. Good use is made of the residences and the community for students to develop and practise their skills. The work-experience programme is very effective. Students are able to access short vocational and leisure courses in local colleges to encourage their involvement in the local community. However, the programmes currently do not always meet the needs of the students at the extremes of the ability range, and recent changes have yet to be fully integrated into all aspects of the curriculum. The college offers a comprehensive programme of activities in the evenings and at weekends, and students are encouraged to become 'Millennium Volunteers' and to get involved in volunteer work. Transition arrangements are well managed and there are good links with the local Connexions service. Effective use is made of a personal adviser who is available for half a day a week and works closely with the students and staff.

12. Therapeutic interventions are very effective and well integrated into the students' programmes. Students are able to access counselling and psychological services where required. Links between the residential staff and the teaching staff have been strengthened by the recent appointment of a 'link tutor' who is attached to each house. Students are well supported, having both a key worker and a personal tutor. The formal tutorial programme is in the early stages of development. There is a timetabled programme for group tutorials which is held both in the college and the residences. Staff and students think that attendance is optional, and the programme is not always appropriate for some students with more complex needs. Students are not timetabled for a personal tutorial, and have to request one where required. They are not always fully involved in the decision-making about changes to their programmes. However, they are effectively involved in the students' council and in weekly leisure meetings in the houses.

## Leadership and management



13. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Henshaws Society for Blind People and Henshaws College have a philosophy and ethos which focus on developing students' abilities. This shared sense of mission and purpose permeates the whole college. Students feel valued and benefit from the friendly and supportive environment. The principal and senior management team give clear direction that places students' needs at the centre of their planning. Day-to-day operational management is effective, helped by daily handover meetings between the residences and the teaching staff. Strategic and operational plans are informed by action plans produced from the self-assessment process, which is well managed and well documented.

14. The college has undergone considerable change since the last inspection, and the curriculum and staffing levels have all been revised. More recently, the college has begun to incorporate the adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum into its revised model and introduced greater emphasis on students' progress in 'soft skills'. As yet, these newer curriculum models are not always coherent, or consistently understood and implemented by staff. Although there is some very good teaching by individual members of staff, the leadership and management of the curriculum as a whole are underdeveloped. In the process of tracking individual students, inspectors reviewed the college's response to the LSC's student schedule and purchase orders. Although students were receiving the provision as agreed, the initial assessment had failed to respond appropriately to the previous strengths and achievements of a few students, and opportunities to develop their potential further were not included on the schedule and purchase orders. Not all staff were effective in working with students with more complex learning difficulties and the more able students were not always sufficiently challenged.

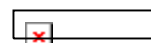
15. The arrangements to monitor, review and evaluate the quality of provision have improved since the last inspection. For example, there are now formal mechanisms to obtain feedback from parents, students and stakeholders. Formal recording and monitoring procedures to evaluate the provision

and lead to continuous improvement are now in place. The performance indicators for course reviews are not yet fully developed. They lack rigour and are not applied consistently. The college has failed to monitor the impact of its quality assurance arrangements with local colleges. Not all staff in the further education colleges who teach students from Henshaws College have had appropriate training and guidance. All staff have had police checks and the college has started the process of checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. Arrangements for the appraisal of staff are good and a comprehensive staff development programme that includes a financial reward system for completing awards such as National Vocational Qualifications and teaching qualifications. Induction of new staff is extensive and supporting documentation is good. Trained observers carry out observations. Two staff who were under-performing were given training to improve their performance. However, the scheme did not identify some of the weaknesses found by inspectors. Evaluation of the scheme is underdeveloped, and there is insufficient sharing of good practice amongst teaching staff.

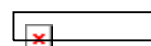
16. Whilst the college's response to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory overall, the promotion of equality of opportunity is not satisfactory. Formal policies and procedures relating to the monitoring of gender and minority ethnic students are good. However, discussion of gender issues, sexual orientation, citizenship and cultural diversity is underdeveloped in the curriculum. The equal opportunities policy is closely monitored and regularly reviewed by the board of trustees. There are policies in place relating to both the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the SENDA, but the college has not responded to the anticipatory duty for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to its responsibility to develop an action plan to promote issues relating to racial equality. There has been no recent staff training on the implications of the legislation.

17. The overview of education provision by Henshaws Society's board of trustees is very good. Council members promote the values and mission of the college, and are very well informed about all aspects of the college's work. The committee structure makes effective use of board members' expertise and oversees the strategic direction of education and the quality of provision. Comprehensive policies and procedures relating to all aspects of the college's work are developed centrally and monitored by the board. Financial management is good, and resources for education are effectively deployed. Recording of devolved budgets against income and expenditure to account for public funding is rigorous. Financial procedures are very effective and ensure clear accountability of resources intended for the education and training of the students. The college gives satisfactory value for money.

## Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



### Mobility and independent living skills



Overall provision in this area is **good (Grade 2)**

#### **Strengths**

- very good development of students' mobility and independent living skills
- effective planning of students' programmes

- good teaching
- effective monitoring of students' progress.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor management of learning support staff in a third of lessons
- insufficient external lighting and differentiated paving.

### ***Scope of provision***

18. Mobility and independent living skills form part of all students' programmes. Independent living skills is divided into four main areas: food studies; household and laundry skills; consumer studies; and shopping skills. Staff work across daytime and residential provision.

### ***Achievement and standards***

19. The development of mobility skills is very good. Students with little or no sight show confidence in travelling around the campus and in visiting the local shops. Students develop good knowledge of the subject and can transfer their acquired skills to a variety of settings.

20. Students have a clear understanding of the progression routes for both independent living skills and mobility. For example, they understand the criteria for independent living and many progress from living in single study bedrooms to residing in the independent housing on the campus.

### ***Quality of education and training***

21. Most of the teaching is good or better. The best lessons are well planned, with appropriate learning goals and challenging attainment targets. Teachers have good knowledge of individual students' learning needs and prior attainment, and this is used to provide appropriate support and guidance. One student was observed in a number of different lessons, and all staff encouraged the student to meet an individual communication goal, which was to look at the person speaking. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage learning, and create an appropriate environment for learning. A particular feature of the teaching is the emphasis on the students' understanding, not simply the achievement of an isolated skill. Teachers use effective questioning and evaluation methods to increase students' understanding of the concepts. For example, in two mobility sessions observed, students spent the initial part of the session working through a quiz to evaluate their learning to date. They were closely questioned by the teacher to check learning, before embarking on the practical aspect of the session, which was related to, and built on, their former learning. A thorough debriefing about their performance completed the lesson. Teachers have clear expectations of appropriate behaviour and use effective strategies to avert potentially disruptive behaviour.

22. While the level of support in teaching situations is appropriate for the students, in one third of the

lessons observed, support staff were not always effective in their support of students. Teachers were not always aware of this. For example, on two separate occasions, support staff were observed directing students to sign their progress reports by holding their hand and pen and writing for them. These particular students had learnt to write their initials and could therefore have undertaken this activity independently. Support workers undertake a variety of tasks with students.

23. The resources for students within both the college and the residential housing are good. Both the training kitchens and residential kitchens have a good range of resources for students to practise their skills. All staff have training in basic mobility and independent living skills. This knowledge enables staff to reinforce these skills in other settings. One member of staff in a residential house frequently reminded a student to adopt either 'trailing' or 'body protection' techniques around the kitchen and dining room area.

24. Some aspects of the campus could be improved. The external lighting is poor and, in some areas of the campus, there are too few lamps. Also very little use is made of differentiated paving to indicate landmarks and junctions to assist students undergoing mobility and orientation training.

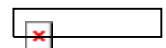
25. Initial assessment of this area of work is thorough and provides a good basis for lesson planning. A variety of formal mobility assessment procedures and forms has been developed to assist in evaluating and recording students' achievements. These show that students make very good progress. Staff collaboration has resulted in the recent development of an assessment procedure for recording progress in independent living skills. This process is still in the early stages of development. Students receive continual feedback on their progress during teaching sessions.

26. The curriculum is very effective for students, helping them to prepare for their future placements, by developing their skills of independence and mobility. However, although students are able to make choices from a range of modular projects, choices are not always in line with their interests, and students are not always fully informed of the reasons for the choices.

### ***Leadership and management***

27. Staff were actively involved in the development of self-assessment. The newly implemented curriculum provides a framework for staff to work across the residential and daytime curriculum, and this provides a good communication forum. Daily handover meetings in residential houses also enable staff to share information. There is little promotion of issues related to equal opportunities, other than aspects of disability. A specific mobility awareness course has been offered to involve parents in assisting with reinforcing students' skills during holiday and home periods. Three training events for parents have taken place and more are planned.

### **Literacy, numeracy and communications**



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (Grade 3)**

#### ***Strengths***

- very good teaching
  
- well-planned activities to practise literacy, numeracy and communications skills

- good use of therapeutic interventions and alternative communication.

### ***Weaknesses***

- inadequate initial assessment
- underdeveloped college-wide strategy and structure
- inconsistent tracking and recording of students' progress
- insufficient time allowance for literacy and numeracy tuition.

### ***Scope of provision***

28. Literacy and numeracy at pre-entry and entry level are offered to all students, with a maximum entitlement of one hour per week. Students are taught in small discrete sessions with an average group size of 3.5. The college provides an integrated communication scheme (ICS) focusing on speech and language therapy, as well as Braille or Moon facilities. Basic skills and communication are promoted through the PSE programme and through 'mealskills', 'ICS' and 'PISCES' programmes that emphasise the practical application of communication, literacy and numeracy skills.

### ***Achievement and standards***

29. The standard of students' work is good in relation to the targets set by the teaching staff, and the majority of students apply themselves well in class. Pass rates on externally accredited courses are good. Students have been entered successfully for accreditation at level 1 and below. However, failure to complete the necessary documentation for a numeracy certificate resulted in some students not receiving credit for the programme followed.

30. Student attainment in discrete literacy and numeracy classes is satisfactory when measured against the targets set in lessons. However, the college lacks a cohesive and consistent process for determining appropriate achievement goals, and some of the more able students do not have targets that take sufficient account of their prior achievements and performance. Systems for measuring progress in terms of prior achievement are underdeveloped.

### ***Quality of education and training***

31. The vast majority of teaching is good or better. The planning of the best lessons takes into account the range of abilities of the students in the group. Teachers set targets with their students and continually reinforce and check learning. In one lesson, the students were developing telephone skills. They were required to check each other's learning and to record against a checklist whether other students had completed the task successfully. This ensured that all the students were fully engaged throughout the activity. Group work and individual work are integrated into the lessons and

support staff are well briefed on the objectives and targets for individual students. In an ICT session, the students were required to e-mail the teacher with the answers to a quiz. The students had to interrogate the Internet to find the answers to the questions and also had to complete the task within a set time. All were able to complete the task successfully. There are well-planned activities to practice literacy, numeracy and communications skills across the curriculum, particularly within the residential setting. In the best practice, the teacher provides the house staff and other teachers with information about the achievements of the students in order that skills can be practised and transferred to different situations. This is particularly effective in the 'meal-skills' and 'PISCES' programmes, which specifically concentrate on the transfer of skills into real situations. In the less successful lessons, a common weakness is the failure to challenge the most able students or those with more complex difficulties.

32. The learning environment is pleasant, well laid out and appropriately decorated with substantial sensory visual reinforcement of the skills acquired. Clear and appropriate learning materials, often produced in-house to a high standard, are used consistently across the provision. Information and learning technology resources are good, although their use needs further development. The literacy and numeracy team is small, and there is currently insufficient weekly allocation of time to meet the individual literacy and numeracy needs of some students, in particular those who are most able.

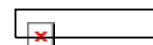
33. The literacy and numeracy team have produced their own initial assessment which forms the basis of the discrete literacy and numeracy lessons. However, there is inconsistency across the college as to which initial assessment is used, and staff are unclear about the use of initial assessment in the planning of their teaching. The college initial assessment does not accommodate the abilities of the more able students. Although the individual lessons are well taught, there is no formal process for tracking and recording students' progress across the college. This weakness was identified by the college in the self-assessment report, and there are plans to address it. The assessment and monitoring of progress in the communications lessons are good.

34. Students have good relationships with their teachers and benefit from the small group size and supportive environment. They have good access to a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Individual and personal support for students is extensive and well used. The support provided in the development of communications skills by the speech and language therapist, and through the use of alternative communication systems such as Braille and Moon, is very good.

### ***Leadership and management***

35. Leadership and management of literacy, numeracy and communications across the college are unsatisfactory. The college has been slow to respond to national initiatives. There is no coherent college policy, and recent college-wide curriculum developments have not yet satisfactorily addressed the issues relating to literacy and numeracy. Equal opportunities issues are addressed in one part of the PSE programme, but, apart from aspects of disability, are otherwise not actively promoted. The newly formed literacy and numeracy team is small. There are not sufficient resources to implement the new curriculum across the college.

### **Vocational and pre-vocational courses**



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (Grade 4)**

### ***Strengths***

- very effective work-experience programme.

### ***Weaknesses***

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
  
- insufficient monitoring of external college links
  
- deficiencies in the assessment processes.

### ***Scope of provision***

36. Where appropriate, all students have aspects of the vocational and pre-vocational curriculum on their timetable. Options include pre-entry and entry level provision in ICT, practical skills workshops and horticulture. Students are able to attend local further education colleges. At the time of inspection, 15 students were attending a local college for one or more lessons a week, mainly on recreational courses. None was attending on a full-time basis. The college provision also includes work-experience and guidance.

### ***Achievement and standards***

37. Standards achieved as part of the college work-experience programme are very good. Work experience activity is planned so that students can complete tasks and demonstrate skills appropriate for their level of ability.

38. All students are entered for external or internal awards or qualifications where it is likely that they will achieve the award. Often this results in students being entered for single modules or units of qualifications, and the success rate is high. This approach helps to build students' confidence.

39. Students' work is not always satisfactory. Too often, students are not provided with tasks that are appropriate and of interest to them.

### ***Quality of education and training***

40. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Some 40% of lessons observed were less than satisfactory. Many lessons do not have detailed specific aims or objectives either for the lesson or for individual students, and not all have lesson plans. Schemes of work are sometimes sketchy lists. Where there are individual objectives for students, these are not linked to the initial assessment. In many lessons, one or more students are not able to build on prior experiences because the activities planned are too difficult. In one lesson, a student did not understand the task of writing messages on to a Christmas card. In another lesson, while the teacher focused on one student, others were left for long periods of time with nothing productive to do. Opportunities for students to be involved in lessons are missed, where the teachers lead the lessons for too long. In some lessons, student behaviour is poorly managed and support staff are not used effectively in supporting individual students. A few lessons are good. In these lessons, there are clear personal goals understood by students. Students are actively engaged in learning and make good progress. The activities planned take account of the diversity of student ability in the group. Often, the teachers build on skills learnt in previous lessons.

41. The formal monitoring of the courses attended by students in other local colleges is unsatisfactory. Although there has been a staff development programme, the college does not

ensure that all teachers who work with the students know how to adapt lessons for the specific needs of individual students. For example, in one lesson, handouts were not modified and there was little consideration of the needs of the partially-sighted students when delivering a presentation to the whole class. Although there is a system for receiving termly reports on students' progress, the weekly feedback to Henshaws College from the support worker who attends the class is informal.

42. The college has adequate learning and specialist resources to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers and support staff are suitably qualified. The numbers of support staff assisting students to access the curriculum are adequate, although they are not always well managed and given sufficient guidance.

43. There are deficiencies in the assessment processes. The initial assessment is not always used effectively to plan students' programmes. There is little effective assessment of students' progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. During the least effective lessons, little comment is made on students' progress during the lesson, and any recording of progress consists of a list of activities, rather than an assessment of what the students achieve. In the best lessons, feedback during lessons is regular and constructive, and teachers keep detailed records of students' progress.

44. The college has a very good work-experience programme, which is offered to students both on and off site. They are interviewed for a position, and, if accepted, they are supported initially by a support worker. All external work placements are monitored both by the college and the placement provider. Work experience on site offers less able students the opportunities to experience work tasks and to develop work-related skills. Students' work experience may include working in the college kitchen, the dining room or practising office skills or Braille for an external placement. The Connexions service has an effective working relationship with the work-experience co-ordinator, this arrangement benefits all students, enabling the college to have a wider network of placements within the community. Students are encouraged to think about the next step after leaving the course, or after work experience has finished. Appropriate progression routes and procedures are in place to support the transition of students on leaving the college. This process is encouraged through the tutorial system. However, the tutorial programme needs further development in order to meet the needs of the students with more complex needs.

### ***Leadership and management***

45. Regular team meetings are held for all members of staff, and they were involved in the self-assessment of their respective area. Since the recent college restructuring, the staff teach a wider range of students and find communication more difficult. Recent changes and additions to the curriculum, have led to some confusion. A comprehensive staff handbook for the pre-vocational aspects of the programmes in this area has recently been produced. However, it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness. There is little promotion of equal opportunities issues other than aspects of disability.