



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Royal West of England Residential School for the Deaf

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' view of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

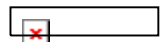
[Scope of Provision](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of teaching, training and learning](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

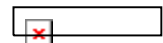
Basic information about the college



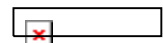
Name of college:	Royal West of England Residential School for the Deaf
Type of college:	Independent Residential Specialist College
Director:	
Principal:	Mr John F Shaw
Address of college:	50 Topsham Road Exeter Devon EX2 4NF
Telephone number:	01392 272 692
Fax number:	01392 431 146
Chair of governors:	Mr Richard Speight
Reference number*:	1090056
Name of reporting inspector:	Kathleen Smith HMI
Dates of inspection:	28 February- 4 March 2005

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

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

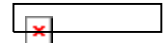


The West of England College for the Deaf (WECD) enrolls students nationally and is located within walking distance of Exeter town centre. It is a department of the Royal West of England School for the Deaf which was established in 1826 and is a registered charity. Post-16 provision now known as the West of England College for the Deaf was established in 1980 and has 38 students currently, of whom 10 are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Eight students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, three of whom are funded by the LSC. Of the total number of students, 32 are residential and six are day students. Nine of the LSC-funded students are residential, and live in accommodation on site; one LSC-funded student attends during the day. All LSC-funded students are aged 19 years and over. The other students are funded by their local authorities as a continuation of their schooling and are 16 to 19 year-olds.

The college's mission is 'to create the opportunity for hearing impaired students to achieve their personal, educational and vocational goals, maximising their potential through flexible learning platforms'. All students learn through total communication, which includes British Sign Language speech, lip speaking and reading and facial expression. Some students have difficulty in reading and with written English. Most LSC-funded students have complex needs, which include learning difficulties, emotional vulnerability, and lack of confidence or additional disabilities. Of the LSC-funded students, eight undertake vocational or academic courses at local general further education (GFE) colleges with support from the college. The remaining two students also access foundation programmes at the GFE college, as part of their Skills for Working Life course based at WECD.

Skills for Working Life students work towards entry-level qualifications which include independent living skills, literacy, numeracy and communications. The college has teaching rooms, a catering kitchen, common rooms, practical and vocational work areas, and offices. It also has a domestic kitchen and a living area for students to practise independent living skills in a realistic context. Residential accommodation is on site and all students have single bedrooms. There are also two flats on site, which enable some students to experience more independent living arrangements. All students have access to kitchen facilities to prepare their own food and refreshments.

How effective is the college?



Provision is satisfactory overall. Students access a wide range of programmes and work placements, with good communication support. They are successful in gaining vocational and academic qualifications, and progress to appropriate destinations which include employment and supported living arrangements. There is inadequate planning for individual needs with few appropriate learning targets shared across students' programmes, especially for students with complex needs. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

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

Key strengths

- good achievements in nationally recognised qualifications

- success in achieving destination goals

- varied range of GFE college programme options

- good personal and specialist support.

What should be improved

- assessment and planning to match individual students' needs

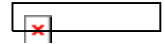
- the monitoring and measurement of student progress

- the focus on post-16 provision

- rigour of quality assurance processes
- the implementation of the requirements of Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

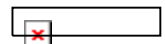
Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

How well is the college led and managed?



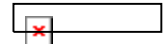
Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Managers are supportive of staff. Communications, although informal, are responsive to the expressed needs of staff and of partner colleges. Arrangements to manage the performance of staff are unsatisfactory. Staff training is satisfactory overall, but insufficient training is provided on multiple and complex needs and on equal opportunities. Strategic and business planning is weak as this does not have a post-16 focus. Day-to-day operational management of the college is good. External liaison is used effectively to provide curriculum choice and appropriate destinations for students. Curriculum planning and review, and the strategy for literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are also unsatisfactory, as are arrangements for quality assurance. Self-assessment and development planning are inadequate and do not effectively promote continuous improvement. Governors have not given sufficient attention to post-16 provision. Financial management is satisfactory and resources are deployed efficiently to achieve satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



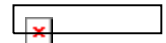
The college's response to social inclusion is satisfactory. Students are enrolled from various backgrounds, ethnic groups and nationalities and their cultural and religious needs are met. Students have good opportunities to study and socialise with hearing and deaf peers in a mainstream setting. Appropriate use is made of the community for leisure and for everyday activities such as shopping. Students progress well to jobs or to independent or semi-independent living. Promotion of equal opportunities through the curriculum is also satisfactory and provides useful strategies for deaf students for coping in a hearing world. Educational inclusion is not satisfactory. The college has not responded adequately to SENDA in anticipating and meeting the needs of students with complex or multiple needs. It also does not meet legislative requirements under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and monitoring of equal opportunities is inadequate. Programmes and support are not sufficiently planned and monitored to ensure that students' needs are met during lessons. Provision is satisfactory for key skills but unsatisfactory for literacy and numeracy. Speech and language therapy and British Sign Language are satisfactory and help students to communicate with both deaf and hearing communities.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are good. A range of therapies promote improved communication, independence, and support learning effectively. Students have good access to the college counsellor and additional support from other internal and external educational and health care professionals. Students' induction into the college is effective. Good communication with parents and carers is maintained throughout the student's programme. The Connexions advisor works effectively with staff and students to support students' transition from college into future placements. The flexible tutorial system is responsive to students' needs. Most communication support workers and learning support assistants are effective in supporting students in their learning programmes. Some communication support workers do not have the appropriate level of skills to communicate sufficiently well with students. Personal support is good. Staff know the students well and students are confident in asking them for advice and support.

Students' view 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

- opportunities to gain qualifications in chosen field

- GFE college lessons

- working towards their chosen career.

What they feel could be improved

- quality of communication support by some communication support workers

- the attitude of some staff towards students

- the quality of the food

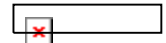
- evening activities

- complaints not followed through

- the extent to which British Sign Language is used by staff

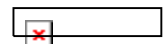
- deaf awareness of staff.

Other information

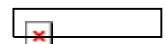


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring 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 should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole



Scope of Provision

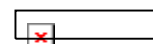


1. All ten LSC funded students have different types of hearing impairments and additional learning disabilities or difficulties. Three of the students have complex needs. All ten students undertake courses at local GFE colleges with support from the college. Currently four students are working towards vocational qualifications at Level 2 in Food Preparation and Cooking. Two students are following Level 2 and Level 3 courses in Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) Performing Arts. One student is currently taking General Certificates in Secondary Education

following a Level 1 course in the Foundation Diploma in Hospitality, Travel and Tourism. The remaining two students follow the skills for working life programme which includes part-time study integrating within foundation programmes at the local GFE college. Students access work experience either as part of their vocational college course at the GFE college or through arrangements made by WECD as part of their Skills for Working Life programme.

2. All students undertake literacy, numeracy and information technology (IT) as part of their courses. Provision for key skills is provided by GFE colleges as part of students' courses. Students have the opportunity to attend British Sign Language classes at the WECD and take a qualification at an appropriate level. They also participate in the 'Life after FE College' programme which takes place at the college for one week, twice a year. All residential students follow the college-based Independent Living Skills programme, which includes personal and social skill development within the residences, and through use of community facilities.

Achievement and standards



3. Students achieve well on GFE college programmes. They are successful in gaining vocational and academic qualifications at appropriate levels of attainment. In the previous academic year (2003/04), four of the eight students funded by the LSC for 2003/04 gained a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 1 in Food Preparation and Cooking. One student gained GNVQ Foundation in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and one student obtained a BTEC First Diploma in Caring. Students progress onto higher level courses as appropriate. For example, two of those students achieving Level 1 qualifications in Food Preparation at the end of the last academic year are now following Level 2 courses.

4. Retention rates are high, and in line with similar independent specialist colleges. Students are successful in achieving the goals of the courses they undertake. Four student leavers in 2003/04 achieved open employment and one entered voluntary work. Three students left to live in either independent or supported living arrangements. Data is kept for three years after a student leaves and demonstrates that students are successful in achieving and maintaining their destination goals. Over a three year period from 2001- 2004, 28% of student leavers continued in full-time study, and 41% achieved open employment.

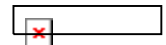
5. Personal and social development is of a satisfactory standard. The development of independence skills is insufficiently planned or recorded to identify whether adequate progress is being made. However, students were observed mixing and relating appropriately with other hearing impaired students within the college and with those attending the GFE college. Students gain in confidence, learn to travel independently, to handle their own finances and to use local community facilities and amenities effectively. Attendance and punctuality during inspection were good. There are procedures in place to monitor attendance, and students attending GFE colleges or work experience are expected to arrive on time. Residential staff promote students' independence and adult status by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own punctuality and attendance.

6. Communication skills are satisfactorily developed throughout curriculum activities. Students undertaking courses at the GFE college develop literacy, numeracy and key skills as part of their courses. As a result students produce work of a satisfactory standard

appropriate to the vocational courses they follow. Students following the Skills for Working Life programme develop literacy and numeracy skills whilst completing course units towards an entry level qualification. Tutors for this programme are responsible for individualising learning targets to enable GFE teachers to plan lessons. In many lessons across courses attended by students, individual learning targets are insufficiently identified within lesson plans. Achievements relating to literacy and numeracy are therefore inadequately recorded or recognised.

7. Progress is not consistently tracked and recorded across all curriculum areas to monitor students are achieving at an appropriate pace. Monitoring to ensure students are achieving is largely dependent upon information shared between staff members and staff teams through informal communication and discussion. There are no formal methods of ensuring that learning targets are used consistently enough across all curriculum activities both at the college and on courses at the GFE college in order to identify progress.

Quality of teaching, training and learning



8. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, a variety of activities provide good opportunities for students to participate. In these lessons, communication support workers were generally effective in signing all the necessary information, including informal conversations, in the appropriate register. New concepts and terms were carefully explained. In catering lessons, students worked effectively as a team and could demonstrate their understanding by relating the order in which the required steps should be done to ensure the task was completed successfully. Tutorials held at the college provide useful reinforcement and support for work recently completed at the GFE college. However, there was insufficient attention given to preparing students for their next lesson, which may entail, for example, the use of terminology unknown to the student.

9. In less effective lessons, students were disadvantaged by the lack of planned strategies to include them into the main activity. In a drama session, for example, deaf students who were using British Sign Language to communicate were taking part in an activity which required them to close their eyes, listen to the music and follow the verbal instructions from the tutor to move in various ways. Insufficient adaptations are made to teaching materials to enable students to complete tasks. Written instructions contained words too difficult for some students to understand and no illustrations were provided to assist in the task. Lesson targets were rarely shared with students, or reviewed or evaluated at the end of sessions.

10. Staff have sufficient qualifications and expertise in promoting and developing communication skills of deaf students and those with hearing impairments. The majority of teaching staff have British Sign Language and teaching qualifications. Communication support workers have, or are working towards, British Sign Language qualifications, although some do not have adequate signing skills to support students with high levels of signing ability. Staff do not have sufficient expertise or training to meet the needs of students with additional or complex needs. Residential staff have appropriate care qualifications but do not have the skills to set targets for independence skills development or to evaluate progress.

11. Accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching accommodation within the college site provides realistic learning environments for students to practise independent living skills and to develop interests and pursuits for their future, such as gardening and cooking. Students are provided with communal spaces for social interaction and there is a well resourced tutorial room. Residential accommodation is satisfactory and provides single bedrooms and two on-site flats for students to experience a more independent type of living arrangement. Students have access to IT equipment with an updated computer suite accessible at all times. Use of IT, observed within lessons at the GFE college during the inspection, was insufficient. Resources, information and materials are insufficiently adapted to meet the range of students' disabilities. For example, the student handbook does not take into account the needs of students with low levels of literacy skills.

12. Assessment processes are unsatisfactory. Appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of examining bodies. Pre-entry assessments provide some detailed information in relation to the students' hearing impairment including use of hearing aids and communication methods used by the student's and their anticipated support needs. Additional disabilities are identified but do not provide enough detail about the students' needs to devise an appropriate individual learning plan. Baseline assessments summarise the students' prior qualifications but do not give sufficient information about the students' personal and social skills as a basis to plan learning targets. Individual learning plans are ineffective in monitoring progress and do not prioritise learning targets for students to achieve. Some of the learning targets for individual students to achieve within the individual learning plan programme lack focus and are couched in vague terms such as 'to take responsibility for independence skills'.

13. The assessment of individual skills is completed by residential staff to establish the students' level of independence skills. Individual targets are identified based on the student's needs and capabilities and are contained within care plans. However, the quality of target setting is variable. Individual targets are often written as descriptions of the student's behaviour rather than specifying the desired outcome. Where desired outcomes are written for the students to achieve they denote a level of uncertainty as to whether the student is capable of achieving the targets set. For example, 'hopefully she will keep her room tidy', and 'hopefully as she matures she will be able to complete this task'. There is insufficient evaluation or analysis of whether the student has achieved these targets and many are described to be 'ongoing'. Tracking of students' progress is unsatisfactory and over-complicated by the different documents used by care staff.

14. Annual reviews are satisfactory, summarising students' achievements and revising or amending targets for students to achieve. Given the absence of a coherent process to track students' progress, it is difficult to establish if these targets are appropriate or build on skills already learned. Risk assessments are detailed, and action is taken to manage and minimise risks. However, risk assessments for work experience are standardised rather than specific to the individual student and placement. For example, one student's known allergies to certain animals were not recorded on the risk assessment completed for a work experience placement in a pet shop.

15. Programmes and courses are generally good in meeting the needs of students. Most of the taught curriculum takes place in the local GFE college. Students can take taster courses before deciding on their programmes, and can choose from the wide range of programmes provided. The college supports students on programmes from pre-entry level through to

Level 3. Students work towards relevant vocational programmes at an appropriate level, and work towards GCSEs where this is appropriate. They can take British Sign Language qualifications and develop their communication skills through speech and language therapy. Literacy and numeracy provision adequately supports students in the achievement of qualifications. However, not enough attention is paid to the particular literacy and numeracy needs of students, and students make insufficient progress in these areas. The literacy provision for students with complex needs is not always suitable

16. Students' overall programmes are poorly planned and coordinated, and too few links are made between different aspects of the students' programmes. Not enough joint discussion and planning takes place between the college and GFE colleges to ensure that students' generic targets are built into the process of planning lessons and schemes of work. Learning plans are not sufficiently individualised to be clear about how and when targets will be achieved so that progress cannot be suitably monitored and evaluated. Programmes for mobility training are well structured and comprehensive and learning is reinforced at appropriate opportunities. However, the individual learning plan programme is not adequately structured and planned to ensure maximum steady improvements within planned timescales.

17. Formal transition planning is not in place but annual reviews are used to identify appropriate actions to take to ensure students achieve appropriate destination goals. Work experience is used effectively to help students learn about a range of workplaces in the vocational areas that interest them. The enrichment programme is satisfactory with a broad range of activities provided over the year, but there is not enough choice during the week to meet students' interests.

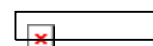
18. Support for students is good. A good range of therapies promote improved communication, independence and supports learning. Most students receive speech therapy to improve their communication skills. Speech strategies have helped one deaf student to perform in a drama production. The audiologist supports students and staff to use and maintain hearing aids. A college counsellor can respond rapidly to requests for personal support and counselling. Students can gain support through an educational psychologist, physiotherapist, a specialist psychiatric service and mobility training.

19. Pre-entry arrangements and induction are effective in enabling students to settle quickly into the college. The students' handbook is insufficiently detailed and does not, for example, describe the complaints procedure. Towards the end of their programmes good support through close liaison with the local Connexions advisor helps students move to an appropriate future placement.

20. The college provides adequate levels of communication support workers and learning support assistants to support students in their learning programmes. Communication support workers provide overall a good range of signing support in lessons including British Sign Language, Sign Supported English and cueing. They provide frequent and useful follow-up tutorials to discuss and support students with the study skills they require to undertake their programmes. This support is sometimes hindered by a lack of advance information about planned teaching and by the signing proficiency of the communication support worker. Termly reports are insufficiently detailed and do not clearly indicate the amount of support required during lessons. Behaviour plans are inadequate and do not give clear guidance or strategies to use to support the students' personal and social skill development

21. Personal support for students is good overall. Staff know the students well and students are confident in asking staff for advice and support. The college counsellor and residential care staff provide rapid and effective help and advice on personal issues. Good links are made with external agencies to support students such as social service departments, health services and connexions advisors. Complaints procedures are underdeveloped and there is little evidence to indicate how many complaints are made or how these complaints are resolved.

Leadership and management



22. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The head of post-16 provision is relatively new in post, having taken up office in September 2004. The management style at the college is open and supportive. Staff can ask for meetings and assistance from senior managers as needed. Communication is generally satisfactory. Many meetings of different staff teams take place on a regular basis, although most are on an informal basis and are unrecorded. Few meetings are held on matters such as quality improvement, equal opportunities or multi-disciplinary team working. Communication with parents is good and matters raised by parents are resolved quickly. Management is very responsive to requests for training or information from partner colleges and resolves any difficulties quickly.

23. Arrangements to manage the performance of staff are unsatisfactory. Teaching staff and communication support workers agree objectives with their managers at appraisal but these are not linked to operational objectives. A performance management procedure is not yet in place for learning support assistants. Care staff meet with their supervisors frequently, but do not have formal supervision at the appropriate intervals. The performance of the principal is evaluated annually through the chair of governors, but appraisal and performance targets are not in place for the head of post-16 provision. Staff training is satisfactory overall. Most staff have received some awareness training in one or more specialist areas such as dyslexia, epilepsy, counselling and autism, followed by some additional professional development on a team basis. Training is provided in British Sign Language, but insufficient training is provided on multiple and complex needs and on equal opportunities.

24. Strategic and business planning is weak. The focus is on the school, and planning is not yet in place for post-16 provision. An action plan linked to the self-assessment plan identifies some relevant objectives for improving provision, but the targets it sets out are not specific enough to bring about the changes needed. The college is aware that the mission statement does not adequately reflect post-16 provision or the range of students' disabilities and is currently reviewing this with staff. The focus of many policies, procedures and the annual report to parents is also on pupils at the school, and too few steps have been taken to forge a distinct identity for post-16 provision. However, in practice, many arrangements for post-16 provision are different from those for the school, and have a more adult focus.

25. Day-to-day operational management is good and contributes effectively to students achieving qualifications and progressing to appropriate destinations. Liaison with external partners such as colleges, employers and the Connexions service is productive in creating useful opportunities for students to learn in a wider variety of contexts and to progress into

jobs. However, there is not a member of the college allocated to the routine management and quality assurance of the extensive off-campus provision. Curriculum planning and review are largely informal and some aspects of the curriculum, as well as individual students' programmes, lack adequate structure and detailed planning.

26. The college does not have a formal literacy and numeracy strategy and its informal strategy is unsatisfactory in meeting students' varied needs. The college uses a strategy of total communication for the deaf, and aims to support students in using their preferred method of communication. The college is aware that the staff's levels of competence in using British Sign Language need to be improved and is taking steps to raise the quality of signing for staff and students. However, a significant proportion of students are not satisfied with actions taken to support their communication needs and to recognise deaf culture at the college.

27. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are unsatisfactory. The college has policies in place for equal opportunities and related matters such as the harassment of staff, but a suitable student version has not been produced. Almost a quarter of the staff at the college are deaf, and students are enrolled from a broad range of backgrounds. Several LSC-funded students have recently lived overseas, and they are assisted well in adapting to college life in England. Most students receive good support to help them to achieve through the curriculum but the college does not cater adequately for students with the most complex needs. The college is not meeting its anticipatory duties under SENDA and does not meet its legislative obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, as the race equality policy is not implemented and monitored. Staff have not received training about this legislation. Little formal monitoring of equal opportunities takes place. Promotion of equal opportunities through the curriculum is satisfactory and good use is made of naturally arising incidents to help students understand and cope with discrimination they may face in the hearing world. The college offers a range of training and support to external bodies used by students in order to raise deaf awareness. Nonetheless, more able students with higher levels of signing skills, feel the college does not pay sufficient attention to deaf culture and complaints made by students. Appropriate actions and training are in place with respect to legislation on safeguarding children. However the college does not have adequate complaints procedures in place to ensure the welfare of vulnerable students.

28. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. The quality of teaching and support is variable. Teaching observations are in place for formal teaching sessions on site but not for the extended curriculum. Memoranda of agreement are in place between the college and partner colleges but these do not provide adequately for quality assurance. Although most of the taught curriculum takes place at GFE colleges, the college does not observe any of the teaching that takes place there. Arrangements for collating and using learner feedback are weak and the college does not make adequate provision for enabling all students to give independent and confidential feedback. Insufficient use is made of management information to track students' progress, and to monitor the college's overall performance. However good monitoring of students' destinations is in place. The self-assessment report does not accurately reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the college. Staff are suitably involved in the self-assessment process but the report is not sufficiently self-critical and makes little specific reference to evidence to support its judgements. It does not include management information to evaluate the college's overall performance and to measure improvement over time.

29. The governance of post-16 provision at the college is unsatisfactory. Many changes have taken place in recent years which have successfully increased the involvement and commitment of governors. They are supportive of the principal, and provide oversight of finances. However, to date, the focus of the governors has been on the school rather than on post-16 provision. The board receives information about students' qualifications, but is not well informed about how to monitor and evaluate the range of students' achievements. Governors have not ensured that the college meets its legislative obligations under SENDA and the Race Relations Act and have not had training on this legislation.

30. Financial management is satisfactory. Appropriate measures are taken to monitor whether students are receiving the provision outlined in their learner schedules. Budgetary controls are in place, and best value principles are applied for purchasing goods and services. Managers and governors are updated regularly about the budget. Resources are deployed efficiently to achieve satisfactory value for money.

© Crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced verbatim without adaptation, and the source and date of publication are stated.
Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

