

Doncaster College for the Deaf

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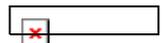
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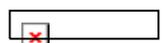
Basic information about the college



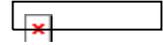
Name of college:	Doncaster College for the Deaf
Type of college:	Independent specialist college
Principal:	Alan Robinson
Address of college:	Leger Way Doncaster DN2 6AY
Telephone number:	01302 386720
Fax number:	01302 386752
Chair of governors:	Dr G H Curtis
Reference number*:	registered charity number: 0188060
Name of reporting inspector:	Dr Stella Cottrell
Dates of inspection:	22-26 November 2004

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

Part A: Summary

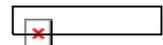


Information about the college



Doncaster College for the Deaf is an independent specialist residential college, providing education, training and support to meet the needs of deaf and hearing impaired students and those with communication difficulties. At present, the college does not provide for students who present extreme challenging behaviour. The college operates under the auspices of Doncaster Deaf Trust, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The college principal has responsibility for reporting to both the college's governing body and its board of trustees. The college is located on a 27-acre site on the outskirts of the town. Doncaster School for the Deaf, which provides specialist education for pupils aged 5-16 years, occupies the same site and functions separately. The college currently provides further education (FE) and training for 143 deaf and hearing-impaired students. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds 61 students, 3 students are funded by Education Learning Wales (ELWa), and 46 by the residential training unit (RTU) of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). A further 33 students are funded by local education authorities but were not included in this inspection. The college recruits from all areas of the United Kingdom. Of the 110 students covered by the inspection, 102 are residential students and 8 are day students. There are 32 female and 78 male students. Some 23% of these students are from minority ethnic groups. At present the college can accommodate 90 students in its three on-site residential lodges. A further 18 properties are available for student accommodation off-site in the local community. The provision includes nationally recognised pre-vocational and vocational qualifications from pre-entry level through to level 4. The college is committed to a total communication strategy so that students can learn within their chosen learning environment.

How effective is the college?



Overall, provision is good. Students produce high standards of work. It is good in construction, business administration, hospitality, sport and leisure, in health, social care and childcare, British sign language (BSL) and total communication for the deaf, and independent living skills. Provision is satisfactory in automotive engineering, information and communications technology (ICT), hairdressing, art and fashion, and in literacy, numeracy and communication. Teaching is very good overall, and assessment and support are also good.

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

Key strengths

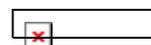
- very good achievement of vocational qualifications and skills
- effective development of students' communication skills, independence and confidence
- very good teaching that meets students' individual needs
- good use of the residences and the extended curriculum to enhance students' achievements
- good specialist assessments and support
- particularly caring and responsive staff across the college
- good strategic leadership
- well-managed curriculum areas
- effective use of self-assessment for continuous improvement.

What should be improved

- the range of assistive technologies used to support long-term independence
- the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through vocational programmes and the extended curriculum
- library resources and opening times
- the emphasis given to developing students' BSL/English vocabulary for more advanced programmes
- arrangements for professional counselling for students who need it
- cross-college operational management
- the use of management information to monitor the college's performance.

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

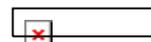


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Good: Teaching, learning and attainment are very good. Curriculum planning is successful in preparing students for the workplace and students progress well into jobs in the construction industry. Inadequate arrangements are in place for students who require counselling.
Automotive engineering	Satisfactory: Students benefit from practical classes that develop their skills in realistic situations. Students' attainment over time is good and they produce high standards of work. However, the range of programmes available and achievement of qualifications is unsatisfactory.
Business administration	Good: Pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) levels 1 and 2 are outstanding and students also gain excellent pass rates on a wide range of additional qualifications. Much of the teaching is good or very good. Assistive technology is not used sufficiently to aid communications relevant to the work-place. Curriculum leadership is particularly effective but arrangements for updating staff qualifications and experience to support level 3 programmes are insufficient.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Achievements in developing independence, acquiring additional qualifications and progressing into work are all good and students achieve high standards of work. Personal support from tutors is good. However, lessons are generally poorly planned and students' progress is not recorded adequately. Quality assurance is insufficiently rigorous and management information is not used sufficiently to identify areas for improvement.
Hospitality, sport and leisure	Good: Achievement of academic, vocational, personal and social learning goals is good. Teaching and learning are well planned, and resources to promote learning are good, although literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently reinforced through vocational lessons. Individual students are very well supported and their progress

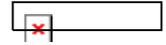
	is effectively tracked. The department has strong leadership.
Hairdressing, art and fashion	Satisfactory: Teaching is good and students acquire good practical, personal and social skills and achieve satisfactory standards. Students benefit from a wide range of additional opportunities to promote their independence and from effective support. In hairdressing, students do not have sufficient opportunity to learn communication skills relevant to the vocational area. Accommodation and resources for hairdressing are inadequate and self-assessment in hairdressing is unsatisfactory.
Health, social care and childcare	Good: Pass rates in vocational courses and additional qualifications are high and there is a good progression to employment and FE. Teaching and strategic leadership are good. Particularly effective individual support for students is well linked to close monitoring of their progress. In the early stages of their programme, students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop awareness of the broader occupational area.
British sign language and total communication for the deaf	Good: Provision in BSL and total communication is good. Teachers use very effective strategies to challenge and interest students. Learning is highly individualised and achievement in communication is good. Students are well guided and supported by staff, and the level of language support available to students is good.
Literacy, numeracy and communication	Satisfactory: In discrete provision, teaching is very good and students receive good individual support from staff. Students develop good personal skills and make satisfactory progress in developing literacy, numeracy and competence in English as an additional language. Literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently developed through vocational courses and the extended curriculum. Procedures for evaluating performance are insufficient and do not lead to effective planning.
Independent living skills	Good: Students make good progress in developing independent living skills and self-confidence and progression to employment, training and education is also good. The residential settings make an effective contribution to the development of social and independence skills. Teaching of pre-vocational studies is effective. Students do not have sufficient opportunities to use a the full range of relevant technologies to support independence.

How well is the college led and managed?



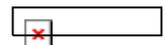
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and the governing body provide effective strategic leadership. In most curriculum areas, teaching and learning are very good, students achieve well and operational management is good. However, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of college-wide policies that affect the overall quality of provision, and gaps in cross-college operational management. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Self-assessment procedures are well established at curriculum and departmental level and lead to improvements, but are not adequately supported by information about how well students learn. Staff development is successful and improves the quality of teaching and support for students. The college pays satisfactory regard to promoting and ensuring equality of opportunity and diversity, although all the requirements of legislation are not fully met. The governing body fulfils its roles satisfactorily. Financial planning and management are effective in ensuring the college uses its resources to meet its priorities for development.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



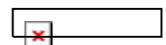
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The college takes students from all areas of the England and Wales who are deaf or who have significant hearing loss. Some students have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including visual impairment, autistic spectrum disorders and physical difficulties. The college recruits well from minority ethnic groups. The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is satisfactory. Students' views are well represented on self-assessment procedures and on some committees although they are not represented on most management or governing body groups. Educational inclusion is satisfactory. The college fulfils the requirements of the Children Act (1989) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). It does not fulfil all aspects of the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 since it does not monitor how well students from minority ethnic groups are learning. The needs of students who are visually impaired are not met as effectively as they could be. The college does not offer key skills at present. Social inclusion is very good, particularly through the range of work experience opportunities, partnership arrangements, and the additional activities available in the evenings and at weekends.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance are good and contribute successfully to the development of personal, social and independence skills. Tutorial arrangements are effective and staff readily offer support in addition to timetabled tutorial sessions. The college makes good use of specialist staff and services to identify and meet students' particular requirements, for example, audiology and speech and language therapy. Support for a wide range of individual needs is met through an on-site support and guidance centre. However, access to specialist counselling services is too slow. Induction for new students is successful and they quickly settle at college. Careers advice and guidance offered by college staff and through the local Connexions are effective. Punctuality and attendance are monitored appropriately and prompt action is taken to resolve difficulties.

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

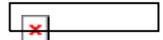
- the college's understanding of what it is like to be deaf and how deaf students learn
- excellent facilities and enrichment activities
- support from staff and peers
- the chance to get relevant qualifications and additional qualifications
- the relaxed environment that helps learning
- educational visits and trips, including foreign exchanges
- great social life
- the chance to be part of a community and to develop a positive sense of identity
- the independence and freedom given through studying at the college

- o work experience.

What they feel could be improved

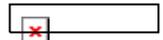
- o more homework and the chance for evening classes
- o more after-college activities
- o flashing doorbells for bedrooms in lodges
- o the variety, amount and quality of the food
- o access to on-site banking facilities
- o the level of BSL of some teaching staff
- o external lighting around the campus
- o quality of some areas of accommodation
- o access to a student union on site.

Other information

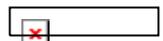


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring 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



Achievement and standards



1. Students learn alongside each other, irrespective of the source of funding. Any differences in the achievement of cohorts are indicated in the text.

2. Students make good progress and their overall achievement is good. At the previous inspection of the college in 1999, pass rates for vocational qualifications were good, as were progression rates into employment and FE. Overall, these strengths have been maintained. The development of personal and social skills has improved since the last inspection. Students are well-motivated, keen to learn and attendance is high for most lessons.

3. Retention rates at the college are satisfactory. The overall rate for 2003/04 was 87%. Rates for RTU students are very good, and higher than is typical for students funded by the RTU. Retention rates for LSC students are satisfactory for the student profile but have declined each year from a very good rate at 96% in 2001/02 to 86% in 2003/04. Retention rates for prevocational students are high, typically 100%, and in line with that for LSC-funded students at other specialist colleges.

4. Most students work towards one or more nationally recognized vocational qualifications.

Achievement of qualifications is good in most vocational areas. Pass rates are outstanding in business administration and catering, and very good in care, sport, and ICT. The college does not collate data on overall achievement rates for qualifications taken across the college. The standard of students' practical work is very good on all programmes. Achievement of additional qualifications are also good. In 2003/04, 70% of students funded by the RTU who started a programme at the college achieved their prime learning goal. At 54%, achievement rates for primary learning goals were low for LSC students in 2002/03, the last full year for which data is available. However, students' primary learning goals are now better formulated and current students are making good progress towards achieving these.

5. Students make good progress in independence skills. Before coming to the college, many are anxious about travelling unaccompanied. During their time at college, they learn, in supported stages, to make longer and more complicated journeys independently. Some students are also trained in the theory part of their driving tests. Younger students learn to cook, clean and take responsibility for themselves as adults. In subjects, for example, care and business administration, more advanced students are trained in supervisory roles and they support less experienced students.

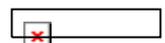
6. Many students progress to the college from a range of specialist schools for the deaf and are either anxious about working and studying in the hearing world or have had poor previous experiences of education in hearing contexts. They develop confidence in using resources available in the local community. In sports, catering and art, they work alongside hearing students from a local college. Realistic work settings in college, as well as work experience, are used effectively to help students develop independence in work contexts. Levels of support are gradually reduced as students become more confident and capable in the work-place.

7. Students acquire good social and communication skills that assist them to socialize and work in either the deaf or the hearing worlds. They learn to combine different modes of communication to increase their opportunities for communicating with different groups. Students learn new skills in BSL, Sign Supported English, voiced English, and lip-reading, in line with their preferences and capabilities. They improve existing skills, and can choose whether to work towards related qualifications.

8. Most students have very low levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy when they start at the college. They make significant progress in developing these skills to levels that support their current vocational qualifications and which improve their independence. Many have a weak grasp of spoken English and of underlying skills such as the sequencing of words and concepts. These skills improve over time but remain weak. In some instances, students do not develop BSL and/or literacy to levels that would ease progression into programmes or jobs at a higher level.

9. Of the 52 students who left the college in the summer of 2004, 15 have entered employment so far and 17 have progressed into further training or education. This represents a progression rate into work and FE and training of 62% overall and an increase over the previous year. Of students completing in 2003, 55% are known to have progressed to work or FE or higher education (HE). Progression rates were similar, overall, for students funded by the RTU and the LSC. The progression rate for students funded by the RTU at Doncaster College for the Deaf compares favourably with the national average for specialist colleges of a similar type, for which the rate in 2002/03 was only 40%. The college's data on progression is incomplete and may underestimate actual rates of progression. Overall, students' programmes prepare them well for progression into the world of work and further training, either in deaf or hearing contexts. However, the college has insufficient information about whether students are in jobs of an appropriate type and level, and on the relevance of its curriculum to their long-term destinations.

Quality of teaching, training and learning



10. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. Most lessons were good or better and very few were unsatisfactory. Some teaching in business administration, sports and catering was outstanding. Teachers use skilled questioning techniques to check and reinforce learning. They mark work quickly when it is completed, and feedback to students is prompt and effective. Students are given clear guidance about what they need to do to improve further upon their performance. Most teaching is highly individualised, often with separate lesson plans and activities for each student. Teachers make particularly good use of assessment to evaluate what has been learnt within a lesson and use this information productively in planning their next session. Support within taught sessions is good. Teachers are skilled in using concrete examples, practical activities and visual and kinaesthetic strategies to help students to learn. They use techniques such as mind-mapping and colour coding to help build memory skills. Some students have not learned to control their behaviour at the beginning of their courses, but are stimulated through well-designed courses, and are set clear boundaries to help them improve their behaviour.

11. Students on all programmes are highly motivated and teaching staff expect high standards of work. In the best lessons, teachers and support staff build students' motivation further. They work closely with the students to develop their BSL and English vocabulary and help them to understand the theory and background information for the subject. In the weaker classes, lessons are not planned to the same high standard and, in some cases, are not sufficiently designed to meet individual needs. For example, although students' learning preferences are identified during initial assessment, these are not used by some teachers to inform lesson-planning. In some cases, the students are not sufficiently challenged, encouraged and guided to build on their current achievements. There are no significant differences in the quality of teaching for students funded by the RTU, the LSC, or ELWa.

12. Staff resources are deployed effectively. Teaching staff are generally well-qualified and experienced in their vocational areas. All teaching staff have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. Residential staff work towards qualifications at level 3 in promoting independence. One member of staff is trained in behaviour management and advises other staff effectively. Six staff are trained as teachers of the deaf, and two more have started the training. All teaching and residential staff are required to work towards qualifications in BSL at level 2, and more than three-quarters of staff are qualified in BSL to at least level 1, although only a third are qualified at level 2 or above. BSL interpreters are used, as needed, in lessons for higher level work or where the teaching staff's signing is weak. Cross-college staff, such as catering and maintenance staff, can use basic signing and some also work towards BSL qualifications. Only 9 staff are from minority ethnic groups, a proportion which is representative of the local area, but not of the student population. Only one in ten of the staff is deaf or hearing impaired.

13. Specialist resources are satisfactory overall. Students have very good access to support such as speech and language therapy, BSL as an additional language, and audiology. On some programmes, great efforts are made to develop specialist and technical BSL vocabulary. However, the college does not have adequate links with the sign banks being developed in other institutions to promote higher level signing. The college makes appropriate use of assistive technology, such as minicomms and flashing fire alarms, to meet the needs of most students. In business administration and hairdressing, students do not have sufficient opportunities to try out equipment such as radio mikes, or to develop minicom skills to a level that would benefit them in the workplace. Adequate resources are not provided for the few students with visual impairments.

14. Resources for vocational education are generally good. Students learn in realistic work contexts on the college site, often performing work for real clients in preparation for starting their work experience. Equipment is generally of industrial standard. Teaching accommodation is usually spacious, but it is cramped for hairdressing and art students. Students' access to library resources is inadequate and library accommodation is in need of refurbishment. Although students make good use of English dictionaries, they do not have access to good levels of BSL signs, such as video dictionaries, either through the library, curriculum resource centres or the intranet to support their theoretical understanding. In areas such as hairdressing, social care and childcare, and business administration, staff produce individualised teaching materials of a high quality. The college has recently acquired some good technology to support learning, such as interactive whiteboards, but it

is too early yet to judge the impact of this. At present, insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons.

15. Effective use is made of the residences to support the development of students' independence. Younger students gradually take on more responsibility for themselves as adults, and progress to residences with higher levels of independence. As part of this training, they have opportunities to share studio flats with one other student and to learn to resolve the difficulties that can arise. The local community is used well to promote independence. The college has established links with many local businesses, and provided training in deaf awareness for staff in these businesses. Students shop for themselves, use community facilities and take part in relevant work experience near the college and in their home area. Social and leisure resources are very good. Students use a wide range of sports facilities on the college site and in the local community and have a student bar on site with an internet café. Lighting and signage around the campus are unsatisfactory.

16. Assessment processes are particularly good. Before starting college, students attend college for a day as part of their pre-entry assessment. Pre-vocational students visit for three days at this stage. When they start college, students have a period of six weeks to decide whether their programme suits them. Induction of new students is effective and results in most settling quickly into college life. Care is taken to make sure that new students find their way around the college campus, learn important aspects of daily college life and understand their timetable. Initial assessment is comprehensive and covers areas such as their ability to travel alone, literacy and numeracy skills, medical matters, vocational skills, and assessments by residential support workers. Baseline assessment is thorough and incorporates good levels of specialist assessment, such as audiological and speech and language therapist assessments for all students, and assessments by educational psychologists as needed. These assessments are used effectively to plan individualised programmes for students and arrange professional and specialist support. Students' needs are recognised at every stage of their learning through on-going assessment, reviews, tutorials and feedback. Many students enter the college with low self-esteem and little confidence, but challenging, achievable targets help them to gauge the progress they are making not only in their vocational areas but also in their communication skills and strategies for independence. They are encouraged to analyse and evaluate the quality of their own work and that of their peers, and benefit from frequent and detailed feedback from teachers. Particularly good links are made between assessment and lesson planning.

17. Reviews of students' progress are regular, frequent, and are usually rigorous. They are effective in identifying any new problems and monitoring progress. However, in a few vocational areas, targets set for students are vague, and feedback lacks precision. In some cases, information on students' progress is not shared with all relevant staff. The college ensures that parents or carers are informed of students' progress. Students show a good understanding of the assessment process, and interpret it as a means of support for their learning. They know what they need to do to achieve personal goals or pass examinations.

18. The range of vocational subjects is good, and meets students' needs and interests well. Almost all of these courses are undertaken on the college's own campus although art is taught at the local college of FE. Deaf students also work alongside hearing students from the local FE college on programmes in catering and sport, usually at Doncaster College for the Deaf's own campus. In most programme areas, there are courses at different levels to match students' varied levels of ability, and to provide opportunity for progression to more advanced courses. All programme areas provide valuable opportunities to extend skills beyond those learned on their main course and to work towards additional qualifications. Students can take lessons in a curriculum area other than their main subject. A good range of programmes is provided for developing independent life skills and personal development. These are individually selected as a result of students' initial assessment and include areas such as shopping and travelling independently.

19. Most students who would benefit take part in work experience placements both to meet the requirements of awarding bodies and also to provide valuable opportunity to apply and develop the skills they learn at college in a real work setting. Arrangements for these parts of their courses are good overall, although LSC-funded students in care subjects do not have sufficient opportunities early in their programme to gain a knowledge of realistic work environments. Work experience is staged effectively, with support reduced in later placements, to help students build independence.

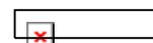
As students near the end of their programmes there are effective arrangements, particularly through the work of the employment liaison officers and local Connexions advisers, to ensure students are well supported through this time of transition. The college Connexions adviser attends all annual reviews and liaises with advisers in the students' home areas if they are unable to attend the meeting.

20. A good range of activities is available to students in the evenings and at weekends to develop their personal, social and independence skills including the Youth Club; the college's restaurant; and many sports activities. The college has teams in local and national leagues and performs well in these. Some activities are provided specifically for female students. The students' bar is very popular and provides less formal social events, including pool and darts competitions and watching DVD films. Outings, signed theatre performances, residential and outdoor events, and foreign exchanges overseas are arranged by the college. Students attend motor shows and can take part in slot car racing. Some take part in activities as Youth Achievers or Millennium Volunteers.

21. Students value the very high-quality of the tutorial support that they receive. This involves the timetabled weekly tutorial lessons and the informal support throughout their time in the college and in their residential accommodation. Staff always find time to listen to, and help, students. This dedication contributes very effectively to increasing students' self-esteem and the growth of their confidence and independence. Students' progress in literacy and numeracy is not always discussed effectively in the tutorials. The college's Sign Centre provides valuable advice and guidance on topics related to benefit entitlements. However, access to specialist counselling and psychological support, when these are required, is inadequate. While the college identifies students' problems effectively, they have too few opportunities to receive specialist support promptly. Very little counselling is available on-site and referrals for using counsellors from other agencies result in lengthy delays.

22. The college provides a good range of specialist services, including an audiologist and speech and language therapist to identify students' needs when they start college. In the light of these assessments, staff set appropriate targets for each student and receive advice and guidance on how to help students achieve these targets. Individual speech therapy is provided on a weekly basis for over a quarter of the students. Good support and guidance is provided by the college's nurse, who also arranges for students to see the educational psychologist when needed and arranges specialists to provide aspects of health education. Attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively and any problems are identified and resolved promptly. Careers advice and guidance are good, and are provided through the well established relationship with a local Connexions adviser and through the ongoing development of expertise in each of the college's programme areas.

Leadership and management



23. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The principal and the governing body provide good strategic leadership. In formulating the aims of the college, they have carefully considered the changing educational environment for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college has built on its long established partnership with the local college of FE as well as with other local education providers as part of the Doncaster Education City project. It has increased its influence in contributing to the planning of development in education and training in the area. For example, an information technology training centre has been established on Doncaster College for the Deaf's site and is shared by staff at the college of FE and local schools.

24. Since being appointed two years ago, the principal has led the college effectively and made significant improvements. These include establishing a new governing body and implementing a series of regular and effective management meetings. The changes introduced so far have improved the quality of the provision, and provided more effective communication and liaison across different areas of the college. Operational management is good in many curriculum areas. Regular

meetings involve all staff in action planning, implementing change, and reviewing the progress made by individual students. The college recognises that there are still areas to improve in its cross-college operational management and communications. Some aspects of cross-college management are not clearly allocated and monitored. A fully formulated strategy for developing students' literacy, numeracy and communication skills is not yet in place. The college does not offer provision in key skills.

25. Challenging targets have been set for recruiting students, increasing the achievement of students' main learning goals, and for increasing the number of work experience placements. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of actions taken towards achieving these targets. Programme areas have not set specific targets for raising students' achievements, based on detailed analyses of the current patterns and rates of achievement. The college has not used cross-college information to look for trends and variations in retention rates and achievement over time or by age group, funding body and other aspects of the student profile.

26. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. Procedures for verification meet awarding body standards and any recommendations for improvement are followed. Teaching observation is routinely carried out across all areas of the college. Staff are trained to carry out these observations and, in most areas, the college's judgements on the quality of lessons reflect inspection findings. Importantly, there are clear examples where these observations have resulted in improvements in the quality of lessons. However, not all part-time staff are observed. There is also too much inconsistency in other important areas of college wide procedures, such as in course reviews and risk assessments. Although appropriate risk assessments are in place for most college-based activities and for work experience, there are not always sufficiently thorough risk assessments in place for students who take part in work experience on the college site or for those who would benefit from an individualised risk assessment. The quality of assessments varies from one department to another. Staff have started to share good practice across departments but this is still in its early stages and many examples of good practice are not shared effectively.

27. Feedback is regularly sought from students and is included in the self-assessment report. However, students are not informed of the actions taken as a result of their feedback. Furthermore, the college does not gather sufficient information from students after they have left the college about the most valuable aspects of what they learned and how well their programmes prepared them for work and life after college.

28. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The procedure is well established for programme areas, involves all members of staff and promotes continuous improvement. Overall, the identification of strengths and weaknesses match those identified by inspection, although a few strengths were overstated and a few weaknesses were not identified in most areas of the curriculum. Self-assessment reports are not informed sufficiently by information about how well students are learning. There is inadequate collation and analysis of this information at the level of programme area and whole college. Consequently, clear targets for raising students' achievements are not set, and the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the provision cannot be fully evaluated. The college is not sufficiently aware of variations in retention and achievement rates between different groups and over time, nor the reasons for these. A computerised database has been introduced recently in order to improve liaison and planning between staff across the college and to meet students' needs more effectively. However, the college has not yet established how it will make best use of the new management information system in order to monitor and evaluate the college's effectiveness.

29. Doncaster College for the Deaf has reviewed its policies in light of the requirements of legislation regarding equality of opportunity and diversity. It has responded in a satisfactory manner to the SENDA. An access survey was carried out in July 2004 and many actions had already been taken to make the college and residences more accessible for people with disabilities. However, the college has not adequately anticipated and made provision for a few of its students, such as those with visual impairments and those who would benefit from additional assistive technology. The college has not met its responsibilities under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. While it monitors the ethnicity both of students and staff at recruitment, it does not monitor the achievements of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in order to identify any action required. There are

suitable arrangements to meet the religious needs of its students, such as making arrangements for Muslim students during Ramadan.

30. Students feel confident that any incidents of harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and any occurrences will be addressed promptly. The college deals with complaints and concerns well. Students know they can raise such issues with their tutors, support workers or other members of staff. Students are made aware of their rights through the curriculum.

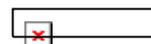
31. Overall, the induction of new members of staff is effective. They are given information and training about key aspects of the college's work, including deaf awareness and the use of BSL. Procedures for ensuring the protection of children and vulnerable adults also form part of this initial training. The mentoring system for new staff is particularly valuable to those who are inexperienced in working with students who are deaf. All staff are appraised on an annual basis, supported by information obtained from termly observation of their work. This process successfully identifies areas for training and, in most cases, staff can develop and update their skills and knowledge of current vocational practice. However, no overall plan of staff development is linked to college-wide objectives, such as training for teaching literacy and numeracy across all areas of the college. The college does not monitor the effectiveness of the appraisal system nor monitor whether its training policies are effective.

32. Since its formation two years ago, the governing body has worked hard to establish its role in monitoring and supporting the work of the college. Overall, it fulfils these roles in a satisfactory way. It has set up a range of sub-committees to improve its own effectiveness, although, because of the ill-health of some of its members, the board has not made the progress expected towards achieving its aims. Notwithstanding these setbacks, the governing body has been active in contributing to the strategic direction of the college. It regularly comments on, and approves, policies and has played an important role in helping the college improve its financial planning and management. The governors have embraced the college practice of self-assessment and have identified areas for improving governance. Their self-analysis has accurately identified that the governing body needs better information about students' achievements, as well as holding first hand meetings with students, if it is to fulfil its monitoring role effectively.

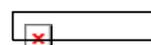
33. Financial planning and management are effective. Expenditure is based on areas identified for development through self-assessment. Financial planning and management are monitored effectively by the appropriate governors' sub-committee. There is appropriate concern that best value is obtained, for example, through regular reviews of providers of power and telephone services.

34. This is an effective college where most programme areas provide a high quality of education and training. Teaching and learning are very good and students achieve high standards in their work; their achievements are particularly good in personal and social development. The contractual requirements for individual students' provision agreed with the LSC and the RTU are met. Value for money is good.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high standard of students' work
- very good teaching
- good resources
- rigorous assessment
- good range of qualifications
- good management.

Weaknesses

- insufficient specialist counselling support
- too little marketing to under-represented groups.

Scope of provision

35. The construction department offers a range of courses in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, plastering and painting and decorating. These are all provided on the college site, in purpose built workshops. The main qualification is a City and Guilds 6000 series used as a multi-skills course to enable students to gain skills in several trades. Students take a minimum of two awards, depending on ability. There are five full-time tutors, one full-time education support worker, a part-time technician and the programme manager. Currently, 25 students take construction courses, most working in multi-skills, and with one student in brickwork, five in carpentry and joinery, and four in painting and decorating. One student in plumbing and two students in plastering attend a local FE college. In addition to their main qualification, many students attend BSL and driving tuition classes on a weekly basis. All students take part in work experience.

Achievement and standards

36. Practical work is of a very high standard and employers and subcontracted trainers have commented on the quality of students' work. Students develop good skills through taking part in challenging tasks for the level of their programme. For example, a joinery student made and installed an oriole window at the college, and a bricklaying student made a brick wall with a circular brick opening. Students develop skills in several trades and are entered for multiple awards. Historically, achievement of whole qualifications has been poor. However, achievement has improved from no achievements in 2001/02, to 44% in 2003/04. Students sometimes achieve additional units towards a further qualification, and students who do not gain a full qualification achieve units they can use towards a full qualification in the future. Current students are progressing well and many are nearing completion of their primary learning goal. They show good progress in their readiness for work and their levels of independence. Some students have been offered jobs as a result of work experience, and most go into jobs in the construction industry when they leave college.

Quality of education and training

37. Teaching and learning are very good. There are good individualised lesson plans and every student has their own lesson plan with clear, detailed information. Forward planning is updated after each lesson. Students take part in different activities according to their level of current skills and ability, work well independently, and take responsibility for their own learning. They select projects and readily question their tutors. In the very good lessons, teachers question students and promote interactive group discussion. In one particularly good lesson, a group of students erected tubular scaffolding. The members of one group communicated well using sign language and were guided well by the tutor who regularly questioned them and promoted discussion. In a small number of lessons, fewer questions were asked to confirm the students' understanding and there was little group work.

38. Resources are good. Workshops are spacious and are well resourced with tools and materials. Many improvements to the accommodation in the department have been achieved as student projects. For example, students built and furnished to a high standard a study centre for carpentry and joinery students. Good attention is paid to health and safety. Safety notices are well displayed on the workshop walls and near specialist equipment. The new Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations regarding machine braking have been implemented. Teaching staff are well qualified in their occupational areas. Six staff hold assessor qualifications and three have verifier qualifications. One further staff member is working towards assessor qualifications. All staff are qualified in sign language, three at level 2 and five at level 1. Two staff also are accredited with the construction skills scheme card. In bricklaying, information and learning technology is used extensively to record achievement of units and skills tests and to provide a photographic record of students' work. This process is not replicated sufficiently in some occupational areas within construction. Work experience is provided for all students. Employers are assessed for health and safety and briefed appropriately about what is required of them.

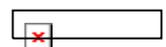
39. Assessment arrangements are good. Initial assessment is thorough and includes specialist assessments. Baseline assessment is carried out over the first six weeks for vocational skills. Assessment of students' work is carried out regularly and in accordance with awarding body requirements. Students receive formal progress reviews at eight week intervals and individual learning plans are updated following these. Students are active in self-assessments: these are very good and form an integral part of the assessment process. Assessments are planned with students well in advance and are documented well. Good use is made of charts to track students' progress and these are displayed on workshop walls. Students' progress is also reviewed at tutorials, with tutors and support workers.

40. Support for students is good. Teaching staff are dedicated to the progress of students and their welfare. They provide very good immediate support for them personally and in their learning. They also encourage an ethos of self-help and use this to develop skills through student projects. Tutorials are good, thorough and detailed. They review and set realistic targets for independent living and for coursework. The student support worker is present and contributes well to the review. Students' individual learning plans incorporate literacy and numeracy provision to improve understanding of background knowledge for the vocational programmes. Literacy and numeracy support is through discrete lessons which are good. Students do not receive sufficient specialist support for emotional matters. Of the five students who left early in 2003/04, three left due to personal matters and did not have ready access to specialist counselling support.

Leadership and management

41. Communication in the department is good. Regular, well-focused meetings are held in the programme area to discuss students' progress as well as performance and quality. Internal verification and programme performance are discussed monthly. Staff make risk assessments for college workshops and for employers when students take part in work experience. Staff appraisals are behind schedule but a new strategy is being implemented to improve tutors' performance. Observations of teaching take place every term and have led to marked improvements in teaching. The department's own grading of its teaching corresponds well to inspection grades. There is only one female student in construction. The college has appropriate marketing material but there is no strategy or targeted marketing to improve recruitment from underrepresented groups. Self-assessment is accurate. Most of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection were identified by the construction team. The development plan that accompanies the self-assessment report has already led to some improvements.

Automotive engineering



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high level of practical attainment on the vehicle body refinishing programme
- good planning of individualised learning activities
- good use made of realistic learning experience
- effective development of individual students' targets.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on City and Guilds programmes
- insufficient progression in the qualifications offered in vehicle body disciplines
- poor learning centre resources
- unsatisfactory arrangements for quality assurance.

Scope of provision

42. Of the 14 students in motor vehicle engineering, one student is female and one is from a minority ethnic background. The motor vehicle department provides vocational training towards qualifications in City and Guilds vehicle refinishing and allied garage skills, as well as for City and Guilds vehicle body repair skills and for the Awarding Body Consortium certificate and diploma in motor vehicle studies. For students who require them, programmes in basic literacy and numeracy are provided. The staff consists of three full time tutors and two education training support workers. All staff are able to communicate with students using BSL and four of the five staff have formal qualifications at level 1 or 2 in BSL.

Achievements and standards

43. Retention rates are good and students develop and demonstrate very good levels of attainment. The more capable students are able to produce a quality of work that is much higher than that required by their target qualification. For example, students produce particularly good quality designs and finishes on car panels. They use tools and equipment competently for the stage of the programme. In one lesson, a student completed a very good piece of work that successfully combined several different metal forming and joining techniques. Another student, who had recognized difficulties with concentration and motivation, was working on an individually designed programme to build a kit car. He demonstrated good improvements in behaviour and maintained focused attention on the task in hand. As part of the development of their practical work, mechanical and vehicle body students extend their range of skills and knowledge by working on customers' vehicles and respond well to the level of responsibility required.

44. The acquisition of qualifications is unsatisfactory: it has been poor historically but the five students who took a qualification in light vehicle body repair skills in 2003/04 passed this successfully. Achievement of the certificate in motor vehicle studies is poor, and only two of seven students acquired this qualification in 2003/04.

Quality of education and training

45. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Half of the lessons are good or better and no lessons are unsatisfactory. Tutors carefully prepare lessons and provide individualised activities to meet the needs of each student. In workshops, most students are involved in activities that allow them to progress at their own pace and on tasks that are appropriate for their level and ability. In one theory class, the tutor had prepared additional learning support material to be used only by one student. This additional material allowed the student's support worker to work productively with the student and to reinforce the lesson themes effectively. Tutors also use class profiles to plan for achievement against students' individual performance targets. Staff frequently arrange for students to work on vehicles provided by the public. This enhances the learning experience and introduces real pressures similar to those expected in industry. For example, in one session in the workshop,

different students were working on different tasks, preparing a vehicle's rear wing for painting, completing service and maintenance work to a vehicle in the mechanics workshop, and valeting customers' vehicles as part of their assessment activities, thus recreating the environment of a working garage. In the vehicle body repair workshop, rather than simply working from diagrams, students were manufacturing metal repair templates ready to be welded onto the under floor of a college vehicle.

46. Resources in the motor vehicle workshops are generally satisfactory. Teaching staff are well-qualified and experienced. They are able to use a combination of BSL and Sign Supported English to communicate with students. Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety. Resources in the learning centres for motor vehicle students are poor. A small student learning centre has been provided within the department. This room consists of one computer with donated software designed to provide workshop repair and maintenance information. There are a number of old vehicle repair manuals. The room is small and uninspiring with poor decoration and virtually no self-study materials. The library resources for motor vehicle studies are poor. Only a few relevant books are available. There are no motoring magazines or other learning resource materials. Neither the library nor the motor vehicle learning centre is normally open in the evening. Resources in the vehicle body repair and refinishing workshops are satisfactory. There is no exhaust extraction facility in the mechanical workshop and so engines can not be run, which reduces the effectiveness of learning.

47. When students join the college, their needs are assessed thoroughly. Baseline assessment measures students' vocational skills and includes assessments of students' hearing, language, literacy and numeracy. Assessment information is used appropriately to establish key learning and development targets and plan support. Arrangements for monitoring and developing students' targets are good. Targets are recorded and made available to staff through a recently introduced intranet system, as well as distributed by the curriculum programme manager in a written format. They are used well to plan lessons to meet individual needs, to measure students' progress, and to keep the programme manager informed about students' progress. Additionally, individual assessment records are maintained by curriculum staff. In some lessons, feedback to students was particularly good and gave students clear guidance about how to improve their work.

48. The range of programmes and courses available is not sufficient to meet the needs of students. Good arrangements are made for students with complex needs, as individually designed courses and projects are created as needed, matched to particular students' requirements. Good opportunities are also provided to enable students to develop panel painting skills in line with their interests. However, the current programmes in vehicle body repair and paint focus on the development and assessment of basic practical skills only. Some students develop beyond this level but are unable to gain qualifications that match their interests and that recognise their more advanced levels of skill.

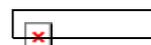
49. Support for students is satisfactory. They receive good individual support in lessons and staff understand the needs of their students well. They receive individual tutorials every two to three weeks with their personal tutor and key support worker to discuss progress together and to set new targets. Tutorials are good and are carefully managed to help students make good progress towards the achievement of personal development and learning targets. Relevant teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy takes place through separate courses. However, insufficient attention is paid to developing higher level technical signs and vocabulary to support more advanced programmes. Literacy, numeracy and BSL are not developed to a level that supports students' theoretical understanding in line with their practical achievements.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management of the programme area are satisfactory. Teaching methods meet students' needs and motivate them to achieve skills of a very high standard. The college has advertised the skills of its students well through local partnerships, with a view to increasing employment prospects for students over the longer term. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory overall. All staff can either use BSL already or are working towards qualifications in BSL. Good arrangements are put in place to provide individualised programmes for students with

complex needs. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that students are safe within training workshops. The manager has recognised that the achievement of qualifications was poor and has taken some action to bring about improvements. A new, more appropriate programme has been introduced for vehicle mechanical studies. Achievement rates for lower level qualifications have improved recently, but managers have paid insufficient attention to finding ways of helping students to overcome barriers to achieving higher level qualifications. Quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory and have not, for example, brought about significant improvements in resources or achievement rates. Self-assessment is well-established, and management and staff contribute to self-assessment and action planning. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify all the weaknesses found at inspection.

Business administration



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- outstanding pass rates on NVQ programmes at levels 1 and 2
- excellent pass rates on a wide range of additional qualifications
- good teaching
- good contexts for learning and developing vocational and independence skills
- particularly effective curriculum leadership.

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of assistive technology to aid communications
- insufficient updating of staff qualifications and experience to support level 3 programmes.

Scope of provision

51. The college currently provides vocational programmes through NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in administration and using information technology, and an Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) NVQ at level 2 in accounts. Additional qualifications offered include OCR single awards in text processing; word processing; text production; business presentations; document presentations; new computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT); CLAIT plus; Pitman book-keeping and accounts; and computerised accounts at levels 1 and 2. All students receive training in literacy and numeracy up to level 2. Sign language, speech therapy and daily living skills training are provided where appropriate. Training for driving theory tests and computer aided design or web design is also available. Of the 17 current students, six are funded by the RTU and 11 are funded by the LSC. Two students are aged 18, and 15 are aged 19 or over. There are eight female and nine male students and seven students are from minority ethnic groups. Seven full-time tutors deliver programmes in administration, accounting and information technology. Tutors from across the college provide other programme elements. Educational support workers provide individual in-class support where required.

Achievement and standards

52. Pass rates on NVQ programmes at levels 1 and 2 are outstanding and well above national averages. To date, of the 33 students who started since 2001, 100 NVQs have been achieved across the range of business administration, accounts and using information technology. Pass rates

on a wide range of additional qualifications are excellent. All students have gained at least three additional nationally recognised qualifications and in the last three years a total of 211 additional qualifications have been achieved, many of which were with first class passes and distinctions. Retention rates are satisfactory. The number of students who find employment or progress into HE is satisfactory and in line with national averages for similar specialist colleges. Attendance rates are high. Students make very good progress relative to their prior attainment. The standard of work is good and portfolios are well presented. Level 3 students demonstrate some good development of independent research skills.

Quality of education and training

53. The teaching in business administration is a particular strength. Almost all lessons are good or better, some teaching is outstanding and no lessons are unsatisfactory. Lessons are very well planned with individual activities and realistic challenging targets to meet particular needs. Tutors use imaginative strategies to interest and motivate students and reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, two students are organising a Christmas party. They have created a spreadsheet to record menu choices, sent memos to their peers if they have not received their order or deposit, and they count and record the money they have collected. Teachers break down words into visual components to help students improve their spelling. Students are encouraged to work as independently as possible and are assisted well in identifying and correcting their mistakes. All students make good progress in the development of information technology skills and use these skills effectively to support their learning. Tutors provide particularly effective individual support and coaching and there is very good collaborative working with educational support workers that further enhances learning.

54. Resources are satisfactory overall. Tutors are adequately qualified and experienced and all have, or are working, towards certificates in education and BSL. The college has a useful training office on site and students complete real work on-site for their work experience before going to external work placements. Other aspects of accommodation and equipment are satisfactory. Although a range of assistive technology, such as minicomms, is available, these are not used sufficiently in some instances to develop students' skills to a high level.

55. Assessment processes are good. Initial assessment is comprehensive and involves evaluation of medical, residential and social data; independent living, literacy, numeracy and vocational skills; and aspects of total communication. Baseline assessment is thorough and is used well to develop individual learning plans. Progress during lessons is carefully monitored and is used effectively to plan subsequent lessons and adjust individual targets. Assessment is thorough and rigorous, and meets awarding body standards. It is well-planned, the range of methods used to assess students is appropriate, and assessment judgements are valid. Regular standardisation meetings are held. Immediate positive, clear and constructive feedback is given to students that helps them to improve. Tracking records are clear and students have a good understanding of assessment and what they need to do to achieve well.

56. The college provides good contexts for students to learn and extend their vocational and independence skills. They are able to apply their learning in a real working environment in the college training office and in good organisations locally and near students' own homes. Effective links are made between learning in the classroom and work-place activities and these increase the opportunities for assessment. Most students demonstrate increased confidence and make significant gains in personal, social, learning and independence skills. The development of practical skills in administration and information technology is good for most students and is clearly demonstrated when they carry out duties in the college training office or in external work placements. Students enjoy and benefit from work placements, which provide enrichment, increase their confidence and help them prepare well for the world of work. The range of programmes and levels is good and meets students' needs.

57. Support and guidance are good. Induction is thorough and helps students to settle into their courses well. Students are provided with an appropriate handbook that includes information about their rights and responsibilities, the appeals procedure and the names of those responsible for their individual programmes. Students' understanding of their rights is regularly checked and recorded.

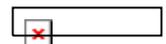
Tutors know students well and students' personal and learning needs are sensitively managed. Appropriate targets for all aspects of students' development are set and monitored in individual weekly tutorials in which support workers are also involved. Students are very positive about the support they receive. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory to support vocational programmes at levels 1 and 2 but is insufficient to support the language development required for more complex concepts and terminology for higher level NVQs.

Leadership and management

58. Curriculum leadership is particularly effective and staff share a clear focus and direction. Management of the area is satisfactory overall. Communication within the department is good and the team works together effectively and in a supportive manner. Best practice is shared within the team with other departments in the college. Curriculum development is responsive to students' changing needs. Changes have been made to the tutorial system so that support workers now regularly attend tutorials to discuss students' independence targets. The college has recognised that recent recruitment rates for business administration have declined and initiatives have been introduced to better promote programmes. However, insufficient use is made of information about students' achievements and destinations in order to set and monitor targets for curriculum planning, and to monitor equality of opportunity.

59. Insufficient arrangements are in place for updating staff qualifications and experience to support level 3 programmes. Although tutors are adequately qualified, many do not hold higher level specialist qualifications or do not have recent industry experience although all have previously worked in an appropriate business environment. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The lesson observation system has been effective in improving teaching and learning. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body standards. An adequate course review system makes appropriate use of student feedback to plan improvements. Staff are adequately involved in self-assessment and the report is broadly accurate but does not adequately recognise the weaknesses found on inspection. Promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Overall, students have a good awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and equality and diversity is adequately reinforced in lessons. However, not enough is done to raise students' awareness of current assistive technologies such as radio mikes, and their right to such equipment in the work place under current legislation.

Information and communication technology



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good achievement by students
- good personal support.

Weaknesses

- poor planning and recording of progress
- insufficiently rigorous quality assurance.

Scope of provision

60. The college provides programmes in ICT to 15 students, eight of whom are funded by the LSC and seven by the RTU. There are 14 students aged over 19, all of whom are male. Four students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The main programmes of study range from levels 1 to 4 and include courses leading to national qualifications in computer hardware and computer-aided design (CAD). Programmes last between one and four years. Further part-time courses leading to additional qualifications in using a range of computer applications and web design are also available, together with non-accredited courses such as driving theory sessions. Approximately half the students take part in work experience.

Achievement and standards

61. Retention rates are very good and, over time, have been particularly good for students funded by the RTU. Between 2002/03 to 2003/04, retention rates for students funded by the RTU increased to 100%. Achievement rates for students funded by the RTU for 2003/04 are good at 71%, although this represents a decline from an earlier excellent rate of achievement. Achievements of qualifications for LSC students are satisfactory and have increased since 2002/03 from 67% to 80%, of those students who complete the programme. Achievement in 2003/04 has improved. Students gain qualifications and acquire skills in literacy and numeracy; web design; CAD at levels 2 and 3; and BSL at levels 1 and 2. Students make good progress in personal development and grow in confidence, independence and coping skills. They demonstrate good note-taking skills and independent study skills as well as improving their understanding of hardware and software specifications and their ability to find faults in the technology. Students progress well when they leave college, with almost half of students leaving in 2003/04 going into work or FE. Most students who find work progress successfully into jobs where they did their work experience.

Quality of education and training

62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching was good or better in almost a third of lessons and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Students benefit from working in small groups and most teaching and learning consisted of group or individual activities. Students are well-motivated and make good use of opportunities for independent study. Staff support students well. All teachers are either able to sign or are in the process of learning BSL. In the better lessons, teaching staff show a greater awareness of students' individual needs and abilities and plan appropriately; assignments and activities are closely related to students' social interests and maintain their interest. However, in other instances, activities are not sufficiently matched to student abilities, and teachers do not make sufficient use of questioning to check and reinforce learning. Handouts and exercises do not always cater adequately for students' level of reading ability or the needs of a student who is visually impaired. Some lesson plans included objectives for literacy and numeracy but others did not.

63. Resources are satisfactory. The staff consists of six ICT teachers, all of whom have vocationally specific qualifications ranging from higher national diploma (HND) to Master of Science (MSc) levels. Half of the teachers are qualified with the remainder working towards teaching qualifications. Three of the six teachers are also learning BSL with the remainder qualified in BSL to level 2. Most computers are of industry standard, and there are additional older computers for students to carry out technical fault finding activities. Students learning Auto-CAD benefit from the latest software but have too few computers with flat screens and large monitors. Most computers have recent software but this is not consistent for all classrooms. Some chairs have arms which are not removable and restrict movement. Students do not have adequate access to user areas on the server in order to store work when working with graphics. The department does not have large keyboards or specialist resources to support a student with visual impairments. For some students, library resources and support for communications do not adequately support the development of the more advanced vocabulary required by awarding bodies in computing examinations.

64. The recording and planning of students' progress towards short and long term goals are poor. Students' achievements in class and over time are not well recorded. Where targets are set, they are not sufficiently specific and measurable. Individual learning plans do not contain sufficient detail and are not regularly updated. They have recently been introduced onto the Intranet to enable staff to see and update students' records more easily and here there are a few examples of better recording and documentation. Where students attend additional enrichment activities, details of their

progress in these are not linked to their main learning aims in order to help plan future lessons and measure attainment. Some students do not recall having an individual learning plan and are not fully informed of their own progress.

65. Students have good opportunities to gain additional qualifications in a range of ICT courses such as desk top publishing, web-design, word processing and spreadsheets. Many also learn basic driving theory using a CD-ROM with teacher support. Students are able to use a drop-in facility for existing classes and to work independently if they wish. All RTU-funded students have work placements for a minimum of four days and in some cases up to six weeks but there are insufficient work placements for LSC-funded students. Computer hardware courses are no longer available at level 1 from the awarding body and the level 2 course is difficult for those students whose current reading levels are low. Recruitment trends have declined considerably since 2003/04. Staff are discussing ways of attracting additional students through changes to the current course offer.

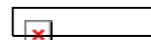
66. Personal support for students is good. Teachers are approachable and provide additional support outside of tutorial time. Students feel comfortable confiding in teachers and can request additional tutorials at any time to discuss welfare and personal issues. Two teachers have hearing impairments and relate particularly well to students. Students appreciate the support they receive in small groups and the supportive environment for learning. In taught sessions, students are generally relaxed, motivated and keen to learn. They are able to challenge and ask questions. Personal support received from key workers is also good. Students undergo a comprehensive induction and are given a pack which includes policies on health and safety and equality of opportunity. They are aware of how to make complaints and lodge appeals.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Continuing professional development is good. Staff who are not already teacher qualified take professional teacher training courses. All teachers learn BSL and take initial intensive training to learn basic signing skills over a shorter period of time. A mentoring process has recently been introduced to support new staff. Arrangements for appraisal are satisfactory. Students achieve their qualifications, produce good standards of work and are well-supported within the curriculum area. Arrangements for ensuring equality of opportunity are satisfactory although students' awareness of equal opportunities is not sufficiently promoted through the curriculum.

68. Quality assurance systems are insufficiently rigorous. Teaching observations are carried out annually and, although all teaching is satisfactory or better, observation grades given by the department were higher than those given at inspection. Staff do not receive detailed feedback to further improve their teaching. The quality of teaching varies and there is no system yet in place to help staff share good practice. Annual course reviews are insufficiently evaluative and do not make adequate use of data and student feedback to form judgements and measure performance. The college has recognised some of these weaknesses and taken action recently to train additional specialist observers and to involve staff more in course reviews. Internal verification has improved during 2003/04 and is now meeting the requirements of the awarding body. Self-assessment is well-established within the department and leads to some improvements, but the report is insufficiently evaluative and does not accurately identify strengths and weaknesses. The accompanying development plan identifies milestones only from Spring 2005 and its targets are insufficiently specific.

Hospitality, sport and leisure



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- very good achievement
- very good teaching and learning
- good resources and facilities to promote learning
- particularly effective monitoring of students' progress
- very good individual support for students
- strong leadership and commitment to improvement.

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of literacy, numeracy and use of ICT.

Scope of provision

69. The college provides a good range of courses for full-time students at levels 1 to 3. In sport, these include NVQs in sport and recreation, indoor and outdoor activities and operational services. Students can work towards national awards, certificates and diplomas in sport. A variety of other short courses are offered in first aid, sports coaching, sports leadership, as well as individual units from other awarding body qualifications. Partnership agreements exist with a local college, the metropolitan borough council's recreation unit, and local sports development officers. Sports-related enrichment opportunities are offered including residential trips. Catering courses include NVQ at levels 1 and 2 in food preparation, cooking, and food and drink services. Other short courses are offered in food hygiene, pastry cooking, licensee certification and cake decoration. Altogether, 18 students study in this area, 13 on sports courses and five in catering. Twelve students are funded by the LSC and six by the RTU. Two students are female and four are from minority ethnic groups. There are six full-time teaching staff, and two support workers.

Achievement and standards

70. Achievement on catering and sports courses is good. On almost all catering courses completed over the last three years, the pass rate was 100% and on levels 2 and 3 sports courses the average pass rate was 88%. Pass rates are also high for additional short courses in areas such as food hygiene, first aid, sports leadership and coaching. Over the last three years, the trend in the number of students achieving success has been increasing. The standard of students work is good. They make significant progress relative to their capabilities and competencies at the start of their programmes. Most are completing and gaining vocational qualifications at a higher level than their baseline assessments in numeracy and literacy. They also make good progress in their personal, social and independent living skills. Attendance rates on all courses are good. Retention rates are very good on catering courses and satisfactory on courses in sport. At the time of inspection the average retention rate in catering was 100% and in sport it was 84%. Recruitment and retention rates on level 1 courses in sport over the last three years have been low. Over the last three years approximately, 64% of catering students and 50% of sports students have progressed into relevant vocational employment.

Quality of education and training

71. The standard of teaching and learning is very good. Most lessons are good or better, almost a fifth of lessons are outstanding, and none are unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned and maintain interest and motivation through a variety of teaching styles and learning activities. Students develop skills and knowledge in their vocational areas which prepare them well for the world of work. In catering, these include learning how to prepare and cook food, follow recipes, understand the importance of food hygiene and safety, and identify and use specialist equipment and utensils. In sport, students learn technical and tactical skills in a variety of sports, as well as the principles of sports coaching, diet and nutrition, and awareness of health and safety matters. Tutors provide good individual support and use a variety of communication methods to ensure students' understanding. Most classes are led by tutors who are enthusiastic and who present lessons in a stimulating way. Assessments of literacy and numeracy are built into many assignments in sport

and catering. Students also attend good discrete sessions to develop literacy and numeracy skills. However, in most lessons, teachers did not make sufficient use of naturally arising opportunities to extend and reinforce students' literacy, numeracy skills. Insufficient use is also made of ICT to develop students' skills in using technology.

72. Resources and facilities are good and are used effectively to promote learning. All members of staff are experienced and well qualified in their vocational areas. Much of the equipment and facilities used, particularly in catering, has been recently upgraded to industry standards. These include the food kitchen and commercial restaurant. Good use is made of the resources such as the larder, bakery and retail shop at the college. The licensed bar and restaurant on site provide students with opportunities to develop customer service skills. They also learn to handle substances hazardous to health in a working environment, providing evidence of competency necessary for their vocational courses. In sport the facilities are of a high standard and are well maintained. These include a sports hall, multi-gym, good grassed playing fields, a swimming pool, and an all-weather floodlit training area which caters for netball, basketball, tennis and minor games. Some teaching rooms lack sufficient computers for the number of students. Visual learning materials are not used sufficiently in some catering and sports lessons. The college has recently acquired specialist equipment suitable for students who learn through visual methods but this has not yet been installed.

73. The monitoring of students' progress is particularly effective. All students have detailed learning plans. These are based upon the results of comprehensive initial and baseline assessments which are used to plan and monitor learning. Learning plans are reviewed at least every six weeks. Many tutors review students' progress after each lesson and use this information to plan subsequent lessons. Good use is made of target setting. Progress made towards targets is reviewed and students are given detailed verbal and written feedback on how to improve. Targets are agreed between the tutors and the students, and are challenging but attainable. Assessment processes are rigorous and internal and external verification procedures are robust.

74. The department offers a wide range of vocational and academic qualifications that meets the needs of students. Students value, and participate well in, an extensive programme of enrichment and recreational activities. They enjoy the opportunities to take part in competitive sports and represent the college in local and national student leagues. Residential trips provide opportunities for outdoor pursuits and to meet students from several European countries. These contribute to students' awareness of cultural diversity.

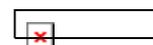
75. Support for students is good. All students receive individual support from tutors and support workers during every lesson. Tutorials are good and targets are discussed by tutors, students and support workers on a three-weekly basis. Support workers play a key role in ensuring that all tutors including those from a partner college are aware of individual students' needs and the outcomes of progress reviews. Students recognise and value the support provided by staff which improves their personal confidence and self-esteem. Support workers are trained in the vocational areas in which they work, understanding how to help effectively, and provide good quality support. Many students take part in work experience outside the college where they develop the skills and competencies required in the workplace. The transition into the workplace is effectively facilitated by departmental staff and the college's employment liaison unit.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership is strong and effective in sports and catering subjects. Staff have clearly identified roles and responsibilities and work hard to support each other. The curriculum, which provides a range of learning opportunities and access to industry relevant qualifications, is planned carefully. Partnership arrangements with a local college are good and improve the quality of the provision. Other partnership arrangements help staff to update their vocational experience and sharpen their awareness of changes in industry. Links with employers provide relevant vocational work experience in sport and catering. Through links with the local leisure services department and sports development officers, the college can offer students a good range of additional vocationally relevant short courses and thereby enhance their employment prospects. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Students benefit from good levels of support and programmes that meet

their needs. Students also learn alongside students from a local mainstream college at both sites, so that resources are deployed more effectively, students gain in confidence, social skills and their appreciation of diversity. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory and the department has made significant improvements in recent years. The self-assessment process is informed by student and staff evaluations. The outcomes of tutor observations of teaching are used effectively to identify improvements and staff development needs. A structured annual programme for staff development informed by the self-assessment report is not yet in place. Teaching staff have not received sufficient training to reinforce numeracy and literacy as an integral part of their lessons and to improve their confidence in developing students' skills. Insufficient time is allocated for the dissemination and sharing of good practice.

Hairdressing, art and fashion



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- particularly good teaching and learning
- good development of students' personal and social skills
- wide range of additional opportunities to promote independence
- good practical skills.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory accommodation and resources in hairdressing
- inadequate focus on communication skills
- weak self-assessment in hairdressing.

Scope of provision

77. Ten students are enrolled in hairdressing, art and fashion . Of these, two are male. Seven students are working towards an NVQ qualification in hairdressing at either level 1 or level 2. In addition, these students have lessons in reflexology, small beauty treatments and the development of self-presentation skills. One student is working towards a level 2 qualification in fashion. Two students attend graphic art programmes at a local college. Students are funded by the LSC and the RTU. All students have personal tutorials and lessons in literacy and numeracy. Hairdressing students have practical and theory lessons in the college and spend one day a week in a salon for work experience. They are visited in the workplace by one of the college hairdressing teachers who monitors their progress and, when applicable, carries out assessments of their practical work.

Achievement and standards

78. Most students demonstrate good practical vocational and creative skills. In hairdressing, they are very well motivated and work conscientiously on any task they are asked to do. Students on the NVQ course at level 1 demonstrate hairdressing skills normally associated with higher level courses. In most cases, level 1 students can dress, cut and perm hair at the level of a newly trained salon stylist. Students make good decisions about hairdressing problems such as cutting hair or sectioning for a perm. They all have a very good understanding of how the changes they make will affect the end result for the client. Students in fashion make well-designed clothes that are finished with a professional regard for shape, colour and style. Art students also produce work of a professional standard. They demonstrate good computer skills and free-hand art work and gain

relevant qualifications. Students develop good personal and social skills, and those with behavioural difficulties have learnt to manage them effectively. Few students acquire qualifications in hairdressing. Students in art progress well to HE. Transition into employment is satisfactory although the college has insufficient data on how many students obtain jobs that make use of hairdressing and/or transferable skills.

Quality of education and training

79. Teaching and learning are particularly good. Most lessons are good or better and no lessons are unsatisfactory. Teachers use effective and thorough planning to meet students' individual needs. Every lesson is supported with a lesson plan devised after evaluating progress made by individual students in the previous lesson. Students are clear about the objectives for each lesson. In fashion, students are motivated and can work well independently of the teacher, such as when cutting out fabric or choosing appropriate materials. Teachers help students to use their time effectively and employ a wide range of teaching methods to ensure all students remain focussed on the more difficult tasks. All students participate well, asking appropriate and timely questions to help them make decisions. They pay great attention to detail in their work, and are able to give and take criticism and evaluate their own work in a professional way. Teachers use skilful questioning to encourage problem-solving and decision-making, as when choosing the most appropriate hair style or dress design for a client or the most suitable graphic promotion for a multinational retailer.

80. The resources in hairdressing are inadequate and do not reflect industry standards. Accommodation is too cramped for practical work for the number of students on the programme, and it is difficult to heat at appropriate temperatures. The reception area is unsuitably placed in one of the salons and the phone can be heard in the teaching rooms. The training room has insufficient large electrical equipment. For students learning small beauty therapy treatments, the shower and hand-basin are inadequate. Facilities and resources in fashion are good but current accommodation for graphic arts students is also cramped. Arts students have nowhere to display their work either during the course or on completion and the lack of this facility has reduced the ability of students who are reliant on visual strategies to learn from the work of other students. Staff are appropriately qualified and, in hairdressing, have particularly good levels of deaf awareness and BSL. Teaching staff in hairdressing make handouts that use images and colour in ways that enable students to remember what they learn. However, computer software and paper resources which support the teaching of the theory of hairdressing and fashion do not match students' literacy and language levels.

81. Initial assessment is thorough and covers aspects such as students' level of hearing, communication skills, educational achievement, and personal and social needs. Students' progress and the results of assessment are recorded on individual learning plans. These are used effectively to set clear and achievable targets and to plan future lessons. Many students start the course with a history of personal and behavioural problems. During the initial assessment period, students and tutors agree a plan to manage these problems. Tutors are clear about what behaviour is unacceptable, immediately address any problem, reassure students of progress, and acknowledge improvements. Assessment of vocational work is satisfactory. Appropriate and frequent use of witness testimonies is used when students are on work placement. However, not enough use is made of work-based assessors.

82. A good range of courses is available to students. Students in hairdressing and fashion have lessons in personal presentation. These raise confidence and self-esteem for those students with poor communication skills, unsatisfactory personal hygiene or inappropriate dress sense. Reflexology lessons are used successfully to help students overcome anxieties about close contact with others. Most students work towards a youth achievement award through the college youth club.

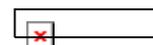
83. All students are carefully guided and supported through weekly tutorials. During these sessions, students are encouraged to discuss any issues or problems with their tutors or care staff. Staff respect students' wishes for confidentiality. Relationships between students and teachers are good and humour is used well to remove barriers and help students to share ideas with other students in the group. The college procedures on bullying are followed very rigorously and staff manage difficult behaviour well. All incidents are carefully and comprehensively recorded and kept secure. Personal

hygiene and other matters of self-presentation are dealt with discreetly. With the agreement of the student, relevant information is passed on to the care support workers or the nurse where this is appropriate.

Leadership and management

84. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum planning is good and meets the needs and interests of students. Programmes change to meet changing industrial circumstances and levels of demand. Students achieve good vocational skills and levels of independence whilst at the college. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Students receive good pastoral and academic support to help them overcome barriers to learning, to manage their behaviour, and increase their social inclusion. They receive good levels of BSL support. However, the hairdressing programme does not give sufficient emphasis to developing some communication skills that would help students to achieve their NVQ. Students are unaware of the variety of communication aids that are now available to help deaf people in the workplace, or have insufficient practice in using these. Quality assurance is satisfactory overall. Teaching observation and self-assessment have contributed to very good teaching and high levels of student attainment. All staff are involved in self-assessment. The self-assessment report did not identify most of the strengths and weaknesses found at inspection. The deficiencies in the accommodation for the hairdressing salons were identified, and a development plan is in place to remove these.

Health, social care and childcare



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good standards achieved by students
- good teaching
- close and effective monitoring of students' progress
- effective use of additional qualifications and enrichment to promote independence and self-confidence
- very good individual support for students
- good strategic management of the curriculum area.

Weaknesses

- insufficient links with occupational settings in the early stages of the programme
- lack of guidelines for referrals for counselling.

Scope of provision

85. Ten students are on vocational courses, four of whom are males. Students are funded by the LSC and the RTU. Programmes range from entry level to level 3 in care and early years and include an introduction to health and care, first diplomas in care and early years, and a national certificate in care at level 3. Students from the pre-vocational link course take some units at introductory level. Additional qualifications in, for example, food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, and the youth achievement award are also available. All courses take place at the main college site.

Achievement and standards

86. Achievements are good. Pass rates are high in both vocational qualifications and in courses offered as additional qualifications. For Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma courses, pass rates have been 100% since 2002. In 2003, pass rates were 100% in three out of four additional qualifications. The quality of the students' practical work is good, with a particularly imaginative use of visual and kinaesthetic activities that benefit deaf students. The standard of students' written work is generally satisfactory. Students work with concentration and focus. They are developing their research skills and find that ICT is an increasingly useful tool. Many students can identify the way in which their skills have improved in BSL, ICT and literacy. Students work well together and help each other with communication. Progression to employment or FE is good. In 2003, all students progressed onto courses at a higher level, and in 2004, half went into employment in the care sector, and a quarter to general FE. Students in care have graduated to the silver award of the youth achievement award through organising theatre trips, arranging and catering for parties and designing and producing posters for a recycling campaign

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching is good. It is very well planned to take account of students' individual needs and teachers employ good strategies to meet their needs. These include a variety of communication methods and appropriate intervention to support literacy. Teachers have produced good, accessible learning materials, which have a strong visual element. In one lesson, the care students met to look at topical issues. They spontaneously turned the debate on teenage pregnancy into a role play, taking the part of the teenagers and their parents, and using dolls that simulate the behaviour of real babies. This produced a lively and entertaining examination of the issues. Teachers create a supportive, friendly environment which promotes effective learning and develops students' self-esteem. There is a clear focus on improving students' general academic skills, as well as the acquisition of specialist vocabulary in both English and BSL. In most lessons, teachers monitored students' understanding well, but in a few lessons, teachers checked students' progress on tasks but not their understanding of the material.

88. Accommodation is fit for purpose and, in some cases, is good. Students' work is displayed well. Staff are appropriately qualified and occupationally competent. They hold, or are working towards, qualifications in BSL at level 2. Opportunities for staff development are good. For each course, one teacher is timetabled for all lessons. This provides continuity and good support for the students but prevents students' exposure to teachers with a range of occupational experience and knowledge. Resources for ICT are satisfactory. Students are aware of its particular usefulness for deaf and hearing impaired people. Students have good access to a specialist area library and relevant DVDs.

89. Teachers monitor students' progress closely and effectively. Initial and baseline assessment is used well to set precise targets for students. Staff incorporate individual targets into their teaching. Students' progress against their targets is evaluated at the end of each session. Close monitoring also takes place through weekly individual tutorials, where progress is checked and new targets are agreed. Students are encouraged to develop their own targets. A wide range of relevant assessment methods is used to meet the needs of individual students and the requirements of the awarding bodies. Alternative arrangements are made to support the needs of students during examinations.

90. Students' independence and self-esteem are effectively promoted by the range of additional qualifications which they gain. Some of these qualifications are mandatory when students enter employment and they benefit from obtaining them at college in a total communication environment. Students take part in further activities which enrich the curriculum and promote their self-confidence, such as assertiveness and complementary therapies. Care and early years students accompany link students on a residential week. This assists team building but also provides students with relevant opportunities to take responsibility for the care of other students. In the early stages of the course, students do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about occupational settings. For good reasons, students do not start work experience as early as would be required for their courses, but alternative methods of developing their understanding of realistic work contexts are not in place. When students are ready for work experience, care is taken to match them to a supportive setting.

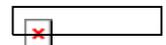
91. Support for individual students is good. Initial assessment includes appropriate assessment for

suitability for a care or early years course. Staff incorporate individual student targets well into their lesson planning, and into tutorial and enrichment activities. Staff have introduced an imaginative range of strategies to support students in all aspects of their college experience. These include 'talktime' at the beginning of each day, when staff and students meet to deal with any issues, concerns or news. The weekly open forum for all care and early years students provides a vehicle for the promotion of health education and broader care issues. Students also use a life choice pack in conjunction with virtual babies as part of personal and social education. Staff guidelines for referring students to specialist counselling are not adequate. Teaching staff spend a disproportionate amount of time in supporting students who would benefit from access to professional counselling. Students receive satisfactory support for literacy and numeracy, although some students would benefit from further development of their literacy skills.

Leadership and management

92. Strategic leadership of the curriculum area is good. Staff have a clear sense of direction and a productive focus on students' learning. A strong, cohesive staff team is committed to improving the experience of its students. Staff use weekly team meetings well for responding to students' immediate concerns. Management and quality assurance are satisfactory, although recording of actions taken is sometimes too brief. All staff are involved in course reviews and self-assessment and appropriate action is taken on aspects identified for improvement. For example, the self-assessment report identified a weakness in communication and action taken has already led to improvements. Actions recommended by external verifiers are followed through appropriately. Measures for promoting equality and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. The college has successfully recruited a higher proportion of males to its level 3 programme in care than is usually found. In addition to the procedures and policies, matters such as bullying are discussed through 'talktime' and open forum.

British sign language and total communication for the deaf



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**.

Strengths

- effective development of BSL and communication skills
- much good and very good teaching
- effective use of baseline assessment
- ready availability of specialist support
- good use of video assessment in BSL
- strong subject and pastoral support for students.

Weaknesses

- insufficient information and advice to students about the full range of available assistive technologies
- insufficient communication with cross-college staff about available resources.

Scope of provision

93. Seventy three students are taking courses in BSL and 29 students are receiving speech and language therapy, some with lip-reading. Both BSL and speech therapy are offered to students, but not all students who are eligible choose to participate. All students in the college use a range of techniques to communicate, including sign supported English and BSL. Some students develop skills in lip reading, though this is not taught discretely. Students can progress to level 3 in BSL and

17 students are studying for a NVQ at level 3. There are two full-time and two part-time members of staff teaching BSL, and one speech therapist who works part time.

Achievement and standards

94. Students make good progress in developing BSL skills. Many come to college with little or no BSL and become fluent very quickly. Total communication strategies help students with few prior communication skills. Almost all students who study for formal qualifications in BSL are successful, and they are able to retake elements in which they have not been successful. Many students progress to higher levels of BSL and some progress to teaching BSL. Students work at an appropriate level for achieving their main learning goals. Many enter college with low self-esteem and limited communication skills. These students quickly learn an appropriate range of techniques for communication which suit their particular needs. Students develop a strong sense of cultural identity which helps them to gain confidence in communicating with their peers and other people.

Quality of education and training

95. Teaching is good and is very focused on meeting individual students' needs. Most teaching is good or better and no teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching materials are well chosen to suit the needs of the group and there are good strategies for providing activities that suit individual needs and interests. Teachers use questioning techniques very well both to check for understanding and to encourage all students to participate as fully as possible in all class activities. They also teach students how to question each other to elicit responses from peers and to prevent some students from dominating discussions. Illustrations and charts are used effectively to explain underlying concepts. Tutors demand precision and great accuracy from students.

96. Resources are satisfactory overall. All BSL teachers at the college are professionally qualified, are deaf themselves, and provide good role models for deaf students wishing to communicate in BSL. Materials used in class are appropriate and well focused on students' needs. In some materials, the order of words and concepts follow BSL rather than English structures, so that students who wish or need to use English do not have accurate examples from which to learn. This has not been identified by the department's quality assurance system. Few teaching staff in vocational areas are competent to teach advanced concepts through BSL but students have good access to BSL interpreters as needed. The BSL department develops good resources to support classroom learning but these are not used sufficiently by staff in other curriculum areas.

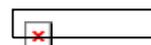
97. Initial assessment is good and identifies students who can benefit from speech and language therapy and from developing BSL. Students with residual hearing and any others able to benefit are offered speech therapy sessions that include lip-reading. Teachers set realistic but challenging targets and students make good progress towards achieving these. Liaison between the speech therapist and the vocational tutors is good and ensures that learning is reinforced in lessons. The speech and language therapist sets interim targets, which are shared with vocational tutors, for the small number of students waiting for individual therapy sessions. Students who do not want to attend speech and language therapy are encouraged by their tutors to consider it at a later stage in preparation for independence. Widespread use is made of video for marking, assessment and staff development. Feedback to students is constructive and precise. Teachers do not accept poor hand or lip shapes, and explain clearly why precision is necessary.

98. Specialist and pastoral support for students are good. Students have immediate access to good speech therapy provision. They also benefit from support for new hearing aids from the college audiologist. Tutors meet students' pastoral needs well both during and outside class. Levels of individual support are good and help students to develop precise signing skills. Students also gain from the support of their peers, especially in developing communication skills. They are given good information about some aspects of technology that improve hearing, such as digital hearing aids. However, insufficient information and advice is given to some students about the value of developing better minicom skills, the use of radio mikes and the support now available to them in the work place under disability legislation.

Leadership and management

99. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory and lead to good quality provision. Curriculum management is good and students can choose from a broad range of options for improving their communication. Good links are made between BSL and speech and language therapy. Staff are well qualified, experienced and competent. They update their skills regularly through continuous professional development. Partnership arrangements are good. BSL provision forms part of an effective strategy for training staff, partners and the community in deaf awareness and basic signing. This extends the number of people with whom students can communicate and contributes to their confidence in using the community and developing their independence. The total communication strategy is good and helps students to acquire new forms of communication, extend existing skills and learn to combine different modes of communication. Communication within the department is good but communication with vocational areas is not always effective. Equality of opportunity is good. Staff provide good role models for deaf students and respect students' preferred communication modes. Quality assurance arrangements are good although they did not identify the weakness in proof-reading learning materials. Teachers are observed frequently and good use is made of constructive peer and external observations to share good practice and develop teaching strategies. Staff are fully involved in self-assessment. The self-assessment report is generally accurate, although the development plan does not identify sufficient action to improve cross-college communication.

Literacy, numeracy and communication



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**.

Strengths

- very good teaching in discrete literacy and numeracy classes
- good individual support for students
- good development of personal skills.

Weaknesses

- weak literacy and numeracy strategy
- insufficient use of management information to measure performance.

Scope of provision

100. The college offers all students discrete provision in literacy and numeracy. This provision is linked, in each case, to the vocational area. Provision ranges from entry level 1 through to level 2 and all teaching is part of a total communication approach. Students have a minimum of two hours of lessons in literacy and numeracy each week with an additional one hour of BSL training. At each level, students have the opportunity to have their achievements accredited through national awards. The college does not offer key skills at present. In some curriculum areas, teaching staff also develop students' literacy and numeracy, and especially their vocabulary and communication skills, through the vocational subject.

Achievement and standards

101. Students start at the college with very poor levels of literacy and numeracy. They make significant progress in developing these skills at the college, with many students progressing from lower entry levels to level 1 or higher. This progress can be tracked for individual students, but information is not drawn together adequately to measure the college's performance overall. Most

students develop literacy and numeracy skills at a level that supports their current qualifications and vocational aims and, where appropriate, individual students have achieved key skills up to level 3. However, on some programmes such as in business administration, ICT, motor vehicle and hairdressing, students do not have sufficient opportunity to develop vocabulary and language concepts that support their theoretical understanding of the subject and which would enable them to progress to higher level qualifications. Students' language skills for using minicomms with the public are not developed sufficiently in some cases. Students work towards national qualifications in literacy and numeracy but the college was unable to identify overall achievement rates for these subjects.

102. Students with complex needs and communication difficulties make good progress in meeting relevant social and personal goals, as well as developing functional literacy and numeracy skills that will contribute positively to the quality of their lives. For example, a student with a tendency to interrupt has learnt to sign and say 'excuse me' to gain attention appropriately. Another student has learned to use objects of reference to communicate and has improved her eye contact and concentration. A student working at entry level 3 has learnt to use a calculator on her mobile phone to improve her money management skills.

Quality of education and training

103. Teaching within the discrete provision is very good. Most lessons are good or better and none are unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers create good opportunities for students to make choices and decisions in order to develop independent learning skills. They encourage active learning and participation in a wide range of activities. Lessons are well planned and most activities are matched to students' need. Students are well motivated in lessons and study effectively. In one numeracy lesson, for example, three students reviewed their progress through a 'quality circle'. They analysed, collectively, each other's achievements, noting past achievements and identifying how they had surpassed these during the session. In another numeracy lesson, three construction students held an independent and impromptu debate about the relative value of measurement skills in a range of construction trades. They exchanged ideas, listened to the opinions of each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect before resuming their work independently of staff input. Staff provide sensitive support in lessons, and consistently apply well-established classroom management strategies to good effect. Although many students have complex needs, they demonstrate appropriate and mature behaviour in classes.

104. Resources for literacy, numeracy and communication are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified as teachers for the deaf. They are also trained in literacy and numeracy, although no member of staff has a level 4 qualification in basic skills. ICT is used effectively to support learning in discrete sessions, and materials are adapted to meet the needs of deaf and hearing impaired students. The size of text, use of symbols and format are also matched to students' individual needs. Library resources include general fiction to encourage students to read but there are few DVDs with subtitles that could further encourage the development of reading skills. In some vocational areas, staff use good strategies and material resources to help students learn technical vocabulary. However, resources for the development of technical vocabulary, especially on higher level courses, are inadequate.

105. Initial and baseline assessment procedures are thorough and successfully identify students' needs in literacy, numeracy and communication in relation to their interests and curriculum area. These assessments are supplemented by assessments in speech and language therapy. Individual objectives are identified and built into the students' learning plans. Progress in lessons is recorded effectively. However, no procedure has been established to ensure that staff in vocational areas are informed of the particular strategies that assist individual students to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. Students are involved well in reviewing their own progress. In literacy, for example, they complete an end of session evaluation sheet that is clearly understood and valued and helps them to take charge of their learning goals. However, literacy, numeracy and communication goals are not reviewed adequately through the tutorial system.

106. Discrete programmes in literacy, numeracy and communication are good and generally support the vocational curriculum and students' needs. Strategies used to improve the

communication of prevocational students and students with complex needs are appropriate. However, the amount and quality of support for literacy and numeracy within curriculum areas varies significantly. Insufficient use is made of naturally occurring opportunities within the vocational areas to reinforce students' skills. In a few instances, students' vocabulary and levels of communication prevent them from progressing to qualifications in line with their abilities.

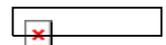
107. Individual support for students, some of whom have difficult personal and social problems and present challenging behaviour, is good. Induction is well planned and appropriate. Good support provides a secure environment and is used well to promote students' participation in a range of activities and learning. Students value being able to talk through anxieties and problems with teachers who know them well. Information relating to support needs and behavioural strategies is built into session planning. In one session, for example, a staff member suggested that a student turn off the timing mechanism on a software package she was using as it usually caused her to become flustered and frustrated. The student thanked the teacher for remembering and completed the task successfully.

Leadership and management

108. Leadership and management of the area are satisfactory overall. Staff development is successful for discrete provision. Day to day management of the area is satisfactory. Quality assurance arrangements ensure good provision within discrete provision. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Action is taken to ensure that materials, strategies and support meet individual needs within discrete provision. Some steps have been taken to improve other teaching staff's awareness of student literacy and numeracy targets, such as the recent transfer of individual learning plans and objectives to the new college intranet. Staff in each vocational area have now had some basic training in developing these skills, although a staff development programme for the college has not yet been devised. Staff awareness of literacy and numeracy has improved recently and in some curriculum areas, staff are well-motivated to improve these skills through the curriculum.

109. However, the college lacks an effective strategy for the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills across the extended and vocational curriculum. Good practice that exists in curriculum areas is not shared effectively. Some vocational teaching staff have a poor understanding of how literacy, numeracy and communication form an integral part of students' learning for their vocational subjects. Managers and staff do not have adequate management information to inform self-assessment or to measure students' achievement of qualifications and the overall performance of the department.

Independent living skills



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**.

Strengths

- good students' progress in developing independent living skills and self-confidence
- good teaching of independence skills
- rigorous assessment and monitoring of learning
- very good support and care that promote independence skills
- effective teamwork that motivates pre-vocational students
- effective promotion of equality and diversity in pre-vocational studies.

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of specific assistive learning technologies to support independence
- insufficient professional counselling support.

Scope of provision

110. A key strategic aim of the college is to maximise the opportunities for all its students to develop their independent living skills. These skills include living skills, independent travel, work readiness, study strategies, and managing new contexts as a person who is deaf in a hearing world. A structured programme of independent living skills is available to all those who need it. Independence is developed through curriculum areas, the residences and the extended curriculum. In pre-vocational studies, eight students with additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities are funded by the LSC. Two are female and two are from minority ethnic groups. These students undertake modules in life skills and skills for working life. Literacy, numeracy, and information technology in pre-vocational studies are taught separately but are also integrated into programmes that promote independence. All students also follow units in assertiveness and can take the youth achievers award.

Achievement and standards

111. Across the college, students make good progress in developing independent living skills. They develop effective social and communication skills, confidence and self-esteem. A key element of many students' personal development is the confidence to develop interpersonal skills and to operate within a range of contexts inside and outside the college. Programmes to promote students' personal hygiene, develop domestic skills, improve awareness of health and safety, teach money management and increase the ability to travel independently are assessed within residential settings. The curriculum is developed through residential life where appropriate. Good records are kept of students' individual achievement. Independent travel is a particular challenge for many students, and they learn to make increasingly complex journeys with staged reductions in support. Many students develop their work readiness through work placements. In 2003/04, the college organised 290 work placements of which 109 were in the local area and 181 in students' home areas. Students develop their ability to cope in the workplace and support levels are decreased as they gain in confidence. On many programmes, students learn good study strategies and demonstrate their ability to study independently.

112. Good progress is made towards independence in pre-vocational studies. Reviews of students' progress indicate the growth in confidence, maturity, communication skills and independent living skills. Students on work placements operate very effectively and benefit considerably from the challenge of operating within new contexts. Students make good progress towards achieving targets in their individual learning plans. They are encouraged to work within a range of settings. Some have established a very popular enterprise project by establishing a sandwich service for college staff. Pass rates are good for modules in skills for working life and essential skills. For many modules, retention and pass rates were 100% during 2002/03 and 2003/04. This is consistent with achievement levels for these programmes. Students value their achievements and progress well through the different levels of this provision.

Quality of education and training

113. Teaching within pre-vocational studies is good. Of the classes observed, 70% were good or better, and one class was unsatisfactory. Session planning is good and teachers set clear learning outcomes, linked to individual targets. In the better sessions, different activities are set to match students' targets and capabilities. Students benefit from good individual learning support from Educational Support Workers (ESW). Teachers and support workers have a detailed knowledge of the students, work well together to plan sessions and make timely, effective and unobtrusive interventions to help students to achieve. Students take increasing levels of responsibility for their learning. However, although teachers and support workers have a clear understanding of the objectives and aims of the session, these are not always shared sufficiently with the students. Students are well motivated and hard working. Many display effective abilities in working independently. They enjoy their studies and produce some good work. In the best sessions, students develop their communication and personal skills through practical activities set within a

vocational context, with good re-enforcement of their literacy and numeracy skills. In a very few sessions, the pace of activity does not fully challenge the abilities of students or maintain their attention.

114. Strategies for managing behaviour are good in pre-vocational and vocational areas, and support the development of individual life skills. In social activities and in residential settings, staff know individual students well and use constructive intervention methods to manage their behaviour. Within pre-vocational studies and in residential settings, staff create well-planned opportunities to develop students' skills. For example, they provide contexts for students to practice BSL through finger spelling, English language skills through spelling, writing, word recognition and the use of symbols. In the college youth club, students took the opportunity to use BSL dictionaries on the internet to develop their language skills whilst participating in a college re-cycling project.

115. The college has a range of residential accommodation and other facilities which are used effectively to develop personal maturity and independence. Students progress from more supported residential environments on campus, when these are appropriate, to residential settings with increasing levels of independence away from the college site. They take turns to share bed-sit accommodation in order to develop a different set of independence skills. Students learn to cook and clean for themselves, and learn on a variety of equipment. For example, they learn to use washing machines that would be used in the home and those used in a commercial laundry. Daily routines and learning programmes are well designed to equip students with the skills to continue further in education, employment or training.

116. ICT and assistive technologies are not used sufficiently to support learning and to promote independence in some areas of the curriculum. Minicomms and other assistive technologies are used well in many instances to promote students' independence and students make effective use of text, email and audiological aids to supplement their other communication skills. Students on work placement in their home areas can continue to use the college's email services. In some instances, students do not develop sufficient expertise in using minicom facilities to support them in the workplace. They do not have the opportunity to experiment with radio mikes to see whether these would increase their independence. The lack of hearing loops in parts of the college's teaching and living areas prevent some individual students from participating in key activities. Little use has yet been made of the intranet to develop aids such as video dictionaries. Many students have a good level of ICT skills but staff are not confident in their own skills and do not promote these sufficiently to help build students' independence.

117. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress in independent living skills and prevocational programmes are rigorous. Students are informed well of their progress in developing independence skills and are aware of their current targets. Many tutorials and review meetings take place every two or three weeks and include students, their key tutors and residential key workers. These reviews monitor progress towards achieving individual targets contained within learning plans. Initial assessment of students' independence skills is thorough and is used to set appropriate targets. For pre-vocational students, initial assessment is comprehensive and includes such aspects as assessments by the specialist audiologist and educational psychologist. Some individuals with more complex learning difficulties and disabilities may attend a further intensive assessment. Good information is gathered about pre-vocational students during the initial six-week assessment period. This is shared well between staff and used to identify baselines for further assessment.

118. Students receive very good support and care that contributes to the development of their independent living skills. There is a strong college ethos of respect and dignity for individuals. The college is developing effective communication processes to ensure that a complete picture is created of the support needs, progress and achievements of students in all aspects of their lives. There are good working relationships between teaching staff, residential staff and support staff. Students receive comprehensive support in welfare benefits and entitlements, including employment entitlements through the college's Student Information and Guidance Network centre. However, students entering the college have increasingly complex personal and emotional needs, and insufficient professional counselling support is available at the college to complement the support given by staff.

Leadership and management

119. Leadership and management are good within pre-vocational studies. The staff team is energetic and manifests a passion for good quality learning. It is very effective in motivating and promoting the interests of students. Communication is good. Arrangements for the quality assurance are satisfactory overall. Teaching observation, self-assessment, staff discussions and close attention to student views, have been used effectively to improve teaching, learning and support. However, not all part-time prevocational staff are included in the classroom observation schedule and formal reviews and evaluations of courses are not in place. At the start of each day, residential support workers join teaching staff to discuss any student's activities or issues. Staff are well supported in developing their skills and knowledge both by attendance at external events and in seeking additional qualifications. Regular in-house team training events are offered and are well attended. The promotion of equality and diversity is good within pre-vocational studies. Care is taken to represent diversity through images and information both in the learning and residential settings. Staff help students to develop self-advocacy skills and assertiveness, and place a strong emphasis upon dignity and respect for individuals. They focus appropriately on preparing and planning for students' long-term needs.

120. The programme for developing students' independent living skills, especially travel and domestic skills, is well-devised and co-ordinated. However, different staff teams are involved in developing separate aspects of preparation for independence, such as work-readiness, communications technology, awareness of benefits and entitlements in the work-place, and independent study. A forum for discussing these different aspects, identifying how they can be mutually reinforcing, and for sharing good practice across the college is not yet in place.