

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: RNIB Loughborough

Date of visit: 10 June 2008

Context

RNIB Loughborough received a full inspection at the end of February 2008 where its overall effectiveness was judged to be good. There are 44 full-time learners funded by the Learning and Skills Council; 38 are residential and six are day learners. With 32, aged 19 years and over, funded by the Residential Training Unit (RTU) and nine adult learners funded by the Residential Training for Disabled Adults Scheme of the Department for Work and Pensions services.

Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in improving the rigor of target setting and recording progress?	Reasonable progress
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Since the inspection in February, the college has reviewed its process for monitoring the quality of individual learning plans and individual learner targets, identifying it as a key priority for further improvement, along with teaching and learning. Increased audits of individual learning plans are now undertaken every half term, with a clear emphasis given to the appropriateness and relevance of individual learner goals. The first subsequent audit report, completed in April 2008, is very comprehensive and has given the college a clear agenda with which to support tutors and direct further improvement. As a result, all full-time and part-time tutors have received individual learning plan training, both on an individual and group basis, to heighten their awareness in using pre-admission information to set realistic and achievable learner targets. This training has been well received by staff and further training is embedded into the college's strategic staff development plan throughout 2008/09. The college rightly recognises that the additional training and monitoring has yet to impact fully and that some inconsistencies in the setting and recording of learner targets remain.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in improving the quality of lesson planning?	Reasonable progress
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The college has placed teaching and learning at the heart of its recently revised three year strategy to move 'from good to outstanding'. A significant programme of staff training which includes a focus on developing pertinent learning aims, better capturing learner progress and introducing more lively and creative teaching styles into lessons is planned to continue into the next academic year.

The college's internal observation system has been revised to improve the recording of evaluative judgements about teaching and learning. There is an increased emphasis given to judgements around lesson planning and learners' involvement in evaluating their own progress. The observation of teaching and learning is now more systematic. All teachers receive a graded observation at least twice a year, with a third observation undertaken if any lesson is deemed satisfactory. Good systems are in place which provide effective support for teachers and help them improve. For example, teachers are given additional feedback from observations about how well they are progressing against their own teaching and learning action plans and this progress is also graded as part of the observation process.

From September 2008, arrangements are in place to more formally link together some lessons in order to provide more combined and realistic assessment opportunities. For example, team enterprise sessions will automatically have a focus on information technology, literacy, numeracy and communication; mobility sessions will be linked to shopping-related sessions.

How well is the college monitoring specialist support to ensure learners are able to access services identified within their initial assessment?	Reasonable progress
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Considering the short timescale since the previous inspection, the college has made reasonable progress in this aspect. The college has recently restructured its middle management, creating three programme leader roles to provide clearer responsibilities and cohesion across the college regarding the monitoring specialist support.

In addition, a senior administrator has been very recently appointed to work with the assistant principals to ensure that learners receive the support that has been identified for them. From September 2008, a new post of senior learning assistant has been created to implement communication strategies and report on the progress made within specialist support. Many initiatives are in the early stages of development and although it is too soon to determine the full impact of the changes applied, quality assurance processes are comprehensive.

Leadership and management

How effectively is the college evaluating its quality assurance and other actions taken to improve provision since the inspection in February?	Reasonable progress
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The college has taken a number of steps to improve its evaluation of quality assurance procedures. For example, there is increased rigour in auditing the quality of individual learning plans and in the structure of the observation of teaching and learning. The outcomes from these changes are giving the college a much clearer focus on what requires improvement. This has enabled managers to more carefully plan and direct staff training and development over the next 18 months. A survey to evaluate the impact of overall cross college training is currently underway, although the college does not yet review and report formally on the impact each specific training event to gauge its success.

As part of improving self-assessment, curriculum review and self-assessment documentation has been reviewed and amended to help staff more effectively evaluate the college's provision and identify appropriate evidence to support their judgements. Staff have received training in the new approach, which aligns closely to the Common Inspection Framework, but it is too early to judge the impact on the 2008 self-assessment report. Staff and managers at all levels continue to be fully involved in self-assessment process and use it effectively as a tool to support continuous improvement.

