

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: RNIB Loughborough

Date of visit: 10 February 2009

Context

RNIB College Loughborough (RNIB) is a medium sized residential independent specialist college. Residential learners attend from across the country. The college is located, in purpose-built accommodation, on the campus of Loughborough College (LC) with the aim of enabling access to the full range of provision of a mainstream general further education college. The majority of learners has a visual impairment, although some have chronic illness, hearing loss, learning difficulties, mobility difficulties, mental health issues or mild to moderate autism. Most learners have multiple difficulties and/or disabilities.

The college provides, through its links with LC, academic and vocational courses for visually impaired learners supported by RNIB's staff and support services. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and complex needs has expanded over recent years and individual learning programmes are arranged based at the RNIB. Adult Learners also attend Residential Training Unit(RTU) programmes funded by the Department of Work and Pensions.

Achievement and standards

Have achievements and standards improved since the previous inspection?	Significant progress
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Overall achievements and standards are good and the college's thorough analysis of data indicates that there have been steady improvements across all aspects of provision. There has been a significant improvement in the achievement of qualifications and in particular key skills both within the RNIB College and LC. Retention remains very good and RTU learners progress well into employment. Progress against individual learning plan targets has improved. The college has identified, that overall, all learners are making good progress against individual learning targets and is taking appropriate actions to address where learners are making less progress than others.

Has target setting and recording progress improved as a result of staff training and development?	Reasonable progress
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The extensive development and support which staff have received to address issues raised at the previous inspection is starting to impact on the quality and consistency of target setting for learners' achievement. There is a clear link between longer term aims contained within individual learning plans and shorter term targets for learners to achieve. These targets are being successfully included in lesson planning. In a few cases, shorter term targets are still insufficiently precise to measure learners' progress. Regular quality audits of individual learning plans are successful at identifying where more work needs to be done and staff expertise in the setting of targets for achievement is steadily improving.

Quality of provision

Has the quality of lesson planning improved since the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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Lessons are more effectively planned with the individual learning needs of learners in mind. Individual learning targets are included in lesson plans both for subject areas and also in relation to generic skills that are in need of development across curriculum activities. Increased focus has been given to the quality of support provided in lessons, and plans include clear guidance for teaching assistants for their deployment. The college's own recent self-assessment of the overall quality of teaching and learning is still satisfactory overall. However, more recent lesson observations undertaken by the college indicate that improvements have been made as a result of improved lesson planning and the increased focus given to evaluating the quality of support given to learners.

Has the monitoring of specialist support improved?	Significant progress
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Systems to improve the monitoring of support are more rigorous. Learners' needs are clearly identified within pre-assessment and initial assessment processes and these are closely monitored to ensure learners receive the specialist support they require.

Leadership and management

Are quality assurance processes being used successfully in evaluating the impact of actions taken to improve provision?	Significant progress
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Outcomes of comprehensive quality assurance processes inform the college's self-assessment report which now contains much more robust evidence to support judgements in relation to the quality of provision. The areas for improvement identified within the latest 2007/08 self-assessment report are clearly based on a more rigorous approach to the evaluation of actions taken to improve college

provision and outcomes for learners. This has resulted in much better improvement planning. Learners feel empowered and much more involved in the life of the college due to an increased emphasis placed on capturing their views and opinions. The college recognises that quality assurance and monitoring of the residential provision are underdeveloped.

Does the college now fully comply with equalities legislation?	Significant progress
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The college now demonstrates good practice in relation to its duty to equalities legislation. Governors have received training and now receive impact assessments and action plans for their monitoring and approval. Immediate actions are taken to address areas in need of further improvement. The impact of these actions is clearly evident. The gender imbalance has been addressed with females now constituting around half of learners' numbers. Due to successfully targeted marketing the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds attending the college now stands at 24%.