

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Doncaster College for the Deaf

Date of visit: 2 June 2009

### Context

Doncaster College for the Deaf provides residential and day further education for primarily deaf and hearing impaired students and those with communication difficulties. The college operates under the auspices of Doncaster Deaf Trust, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The college is located on a 27 acre site on the outskirts of Doncaster. Funding is drawn from a variety of sources. In 2009 the college has 142 learners, of whom 97 are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), 35 through Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Regional Training unit (RTU) and the rest from other sources. The majority of students are male and approximately a quarter are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The college provides courses in a range of vocational areas and offers qualifications from pre-entry level through to level 4. The college was inspected in 2007 and judged to be good.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in maintaining the 'good learner achievement' noted in the 2007 inspection?	Reasonable progress
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Student achievement continues to be good, as evidenced in the college's self-assessment report. In 2007/08 most students entered for external accreditation achieved the qualification. For example, in design and technology 21 out of 33 students fully achieved City and Guilds or other external accreditation and eight partly achieved. Within sport, all students gained a recognised qualification, including a range of national vocational qualifications (NVQs). A small number of students did not complete their course at college or completed it but did not achieve. Measures put in place to boost students' confidence are having a positive impact on achievement. For example, in hairdressing, an assertiveness course has helped students to achieve the unit on reception skills. As well as accreditation, students are gaining wider skills through the enrichment programme, which has been extended since the previous inspection.

Has there been further progress in the monitoring and recording of non-accredited achievement?	Reasonable progress
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There is greater consistency in the application of the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) system. Following the inspection the college set

up a working group and appointed two co-ordinators for this work. There have been improvements in the formation of a baseline assessment, against which progress is monitored. This includes extended time on assessment and a simplified system of recording. As a result of these changes the system is more standardised and there is greater consistency in its implementation.

#### Quality of provision

What progress has taken place to further improve the monitoring of teaching and learning since 2007?	Significant progress
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There is an effective system in place to monitor teaching and learning and to bring about improvements in lessons. Formal observations, that take place twice a year, now focus more clearly on the extent to which learning is taking place. In addition there is a well organised system of peer observations. Staff and managers are aware of good practice across different curriculum areas and this is shared well to drive improvement across the whole college. Moderation of the outcomes of lesson observations is rigorous, with changes made to the team of observers where appropriate. Colleagues from other colleges are involved in the lesson observation and moderation process.

Teachers receive clear guidance to help them benefit from observing each other's practice. There is good use of videoing where appropriate, for example for staff to observe how well they are using signing skills. The evidence from lesson observations is collated well to produce a clear picture of strengths and areas for development, as well as good practice and any resource issues that have been identified. College records show a high proportion of teaching and learning to be good or better.

What progress has been made to integrate the development of literacy and numeracy within the curriculum?	Reasonable progress
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Effective work is taking place with residential staff as well as within lessons to integrate literacy and numeracy. Residential staff assess the literacy and numeracy skills of students within everyday activities such as laundering and transport training. They undertake appropriate training to carry out this work. The approach was piloted in one residence last year and is being rolled out with all residential staff this year. A traffic light system of recording alerts literacy and numeracy staff to where further work is required with individual students. There is now a Skills for Life tutor attached to each vocational area to help integrate literacy and numeracy within the curriculum. There are plans in place to develop further the literacy and numeracy skills of all staff, as well as to increase the use of specialist staff.

## Leadership and management

What progress has there been in developing management information systems to enhance the monitoring of college performance?	Reasonable progress
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Since the inspection, the college has carried out research into systems available and has set up a users group to establish needs within the organisation. This led to a decision to develop the college's own system, which is now ready for implementation. A training plan for staff is in place. The system is designed to make information more readily accessible as it brings together monitoring information currently held in a number of different formats. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the new system.

What progress has taken place to further improve self-assessment and quality improvement processes?	Significant progress
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In addition to the improvements to the monitoring of teaching and learning outlined above, the college has streamlined its quality assurance systems. This less complex approach has produced greater ownership of quality improvement across the college. Staff are involved well in a range of working groups set up to evaluate and improve various aspects of provision. There is rigorous self-assessment across the organisation and the format of the self-assessment report has improved since the inspection. The quality improvement plan now includes named areas of responsibility and timescales that are used to ensure regular monitoring of progress. There is clear evidence of action taken on areas for improvement identified at inspection, such as transition planning, and also areas for development subsequently identified by the college. Of particular importance is the staff training taking place to respond to the needs of increasing number of students with autistic spectrum disorder conditions. The college recognises the importance of monitoring the impact of this training as planned numbers rise significantly in September 2009.