

# Inspection of Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

Inspection dates: 30 April to 3 May 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at the previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Information about this provider

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education (ERADE), also known as The Deaf Academy, is an independent specialist college based in Exmouth, Devon. The Deaf Academy provides education and training to 16 learners aged 19 to 25 at a dedicated post-19 education centre. Most learners are profoundly deaf and use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first language. Learners have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Learners study individual learning programmes based on their needs and aspirations. They have opportunities to study vocational courses such as hairdressing, construction, animal management and land-based studies at a general further education college (Bicton College and Exeter College) alongside their main course at The Deaf Academy.

Learners receive a range of therapies that support their learning and are based on their individual needs. Therapies include occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and trampoline therapy (Rebound) for learners who have physical disabilities.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

During their time at The Deaf Academy, learners develop a sense of pride in being a deaf person. Learners learn in supportive and welcoming environments. They attend well and have positive attitudes to their studies. The newly opened post-19 centre is calm and provides learners with good opportunities to enjoy their learning in an adult environment. Most learners make good progress.

Learners develop the skills and confidence to communicate their thoughts, feelings, wants and needs. Tutors and communication support workers make the college environment inclusive for learners who are deaf. This is because staff teach learners BSL and use it well themselves to communicate effectively with them.

Learners are taught a suitable personal development curriculum that includes topics such as healthy relationships, consent, safety, radicalisation and extremism, British values, individual rights and responsibilities and reasonable adjustments. Consequently, they develop a good knowledge of their rights as a deaf person. However, leaders do not make sure that all learners study this curriculum and a few miss out on this learning due to other commitments such as work experience and studying at a partner college. As a result, these learners do not develop well enough new knowledge and skills in line with their peers.

Learners feel safe at college, on work experience placements and at partner colleges. They know who to go to for help if they have any worries or concerns.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Governors, leaders, and staff have high aspirations and ambitions for learners. Since the previous inspection, governors, leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve the provision. Leaders, through the implementation of robust quality improvement processes and plans, continue to improve the provision. As a result, most learners receive good-quality education and training.

Governors and leaders have invested well in new resources including a new centre near the main school so that learners are taught in an adult-focused environment away from the school. Leaders and managers have adapted effectively the curriculum so that it prepares learners well for adulthood through developing their skills and knowledge in English, mathematics and BSL. Learners become more independent by learning life skills such as cooking, shopping and travelling in the community. They take part in relevant work experience placements and work-related activities. As a result, they are well prepared for employment.

Tutors teach learners an effective wide-ranging curriculum that includes how to manage personal finances, book interpreters for medical appointments and social events, and use mobile devices such as phones to communicate with hearing people when in the community. As a result, most learners develop helpful new knowledge and skills.

Tutors plan good opportunities for learners to explore and learn about the wider world beyond college and develop skills so they can advocate for themselves as adults. These include opportunities for learners to participate in activities that develop their mental and physical health such as visits to the gym, dance and music events and sailing clubs. Learners visit national conferences and events that are specifically for deaf people, where they learn about different cultures and religions. These activities provide learners with the essential knowledge and skills they need for their future success in their adult lives.

Therapists work well with tutors and support staff to provide the therapeutic intervention and support that learners need. Therapists, such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists, conduct comprehensive assessments to inform the therapy that individual learners receive. Therapy plans are reviewed regularly with tutors to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies being used in the classroom. Therapists spend time in the classroom, providing tutors and support staff with training and development by demonstrating the use of specific therapeutic strategies. As a result, learners receive the therapeutic input they need to access the curriculum content and make good progress in their learning.

Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. They receive extensive training in BSL and specialist areas such as shape coding, multi-sensory impairments, deaf awareness, and target setting. However, leaders do not provide sufficient opportunities for staff to develop their SEND and pedagogical knowledge and expertise. In a few instances, tutors do not plan or teach the curriculum to best meet the needs of individual learners. As a result, a few learners do not make the progress they are capable of.

Most tutors use assessment well to review what knowledge, skills and behaviours learners develop over time. Tutors carry out thorough assessments at the start of learning programmes that include observations of what learners know and can do, and the review of previous education reports and EHC plans. Tutors use the results of assessments well to plan and sequence the curriculum. They set learners' targets based on their individual needs. Tutors frequently review and adapt the targets so that learners are challenged to achieve their learning goals. However, leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the overall progress that learners make during their course.

Tutors and therapists work well together to develop key teaching resources to support learners' progress. Resources contain helpful images and language that are at a suitable level for learners. Tutors and therapists develop 'communication passports' that they share across the multidisciplinary team to make sure that staff use consistent techniques to communicate and support learners' individual needs. However, in a few instances, tutors use resources that are not age-appropriate for learners such as plastic money and pictures of children in school uniforms. Leaders and managers engage well with a range of local employers to provide learners with ambitious work experience placements. Employers provide learners with valuable opportunities to apply what they learn in college when at work. As a

result, learners develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them well for employment. For example, learners who study animal care at a partner college successfully apply their new knowledge on work experience placements when they correctly and confidently handle birds of prey.

Leaders and managers make sure that learners receive suitable career advice and guidance from an external provider. This helps them to consider their interests and to explore the opportunities available to them after they leave college.

Governors have good oversight of the quality of provision at The Deaf Academy. Board members have a range of diverse skills and expertise, which include previous experience working in education. The quality of information the board members receive from leaders helps them to have secure knowledge of the strengths and areas for development. They utilise their skills and expertise well to hold leaders to account to continue to improve the provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Teach learners a comprehensive personal development curriculum so they develop the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions as adults.
- Provide opportunities for staff to develop further their SEND and pedagogical knowledge and expertise, and use resources that are suitable for young adult learners.
- Improve the oversight of learners' progress across all of the subjects they study so that swift remedial action can be taken if learners fall behind with their studies.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132001
<b>Address</b>	1 Douglas Avenue Exmouth Devon EX8 2AU
<b>Contact number</b>	01395203130
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thedeafacademy.ac.uk">www.thedeafacademy.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Sylvan Dewing
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 to 17 March 2022
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Bicton College Exeter College

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of the college, as the nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provisions at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Joanna Walters, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Esther Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Jojo Kingsbury-Elia	Ofsted Inspector

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