



Strategic Plan 2023–2028

(Summary)

A strategy to grow and develop the Deaf Academy to become an outstanding provider for education, care, wider practice and innovation for Deaf young people with additional and complex needs.

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Foreword



We are delighted to share with you the Deaf Academy Summary Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

The Charity has a long and committed history of seeking to improve education, training, care, accommodation, leisure opportunities, welfare and support services to Deaf people with the intention of enabling them to realise their full potential as individuals and members of their community and wider society. We also seek to educate the public in the needs and capabilities of Deaf people to achieve better integration amongst Deaf and hearing communities.

This commitment continues to be at the heart of all the work we do, made possible by the talented leaders, teachers, care workers and support service staff we employ across all our services and spurred on by the daily inspiration we get from the Deaf young people who use our services.

We cannot stand still, embracing change has helped get us to the place we are today. Successful organisations build on the sum of their parts, embracing the diverse contributions and attributes of many people and partners. We strive to develop and improve the service offer, seeking to achieve excellence in all aspects of our work.

The Deaf Academy seeks to be a beacon of good practice – our summary strategic plan 2023-2028 sets our road map to make this happen, detailing our key strategic objectives and the milestones on the way.

Dame Angela Pedder OBE
Chair of Trustees

Tony Alexander
Chair of Governors

1. Introduction



Founded in 1826, we are a charity that for almost two hundred years has supported Deaf young people in the southwest of England. We are passionate about Deaf Education and in more recent years have specialised in supporting Deaf children and young people with additional and complex needs. As a charity we provide a range of services to Deaf young people and their families including education, care, and support. In addition, we are also involved in research and development and training for professionals working with Deaf young people. We are a company limited by guarantee which is registered with the Charity Commission.

Our charitable objects are:

- to provide education, training, care, accommodation, leisure opportunities, welfare and other support services to Deaf people and people who are not Deaf but who, due to some other disability, would benefit from the same (principally though not exclusively from the counties of Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset) with the object of developing their personal, mental, physical and spiritual capacities so that they may realise their full potential as individuals and members of their communities and society as a whole and so that their condition of life may be improved; and
- to educate the general public in the needs and capabilities of Deaf people with a view to achieving greater integration between Deaf and hearing communities.

We provide the following services:

1. the Deaf Academy

- School 9-16 Middle and Upper school (*Ofsted registered, Non-maintained Special School status*)
- College (sixth form) 16-18 (*Ofsted registered, Non-maintained Special School status*)
- College (Adult) 19-25 (*Ofsted registered, Specialist Independent Provider status*)
- Residential Care 37 beds (*Ofsted registered*)

2. Fearnside House

10 bed adult care facility and preparation for adulthood learning centre, opened September 2023.

3. Rolle House

Ofsted registered Children's Home

Our Organisation

The Deaf Academy, Fearnside House and Rolle House are unique provisions in the UK, offering a specialist curriculum, teaching, support and residential care to Deaf young people, the majority of whom have accompanying additional or complex needs. This is a fantastic place for young people to learn, develop and be part of a diverse Deaf multilingual community. Our aim is to develop empowered, confident young people who are equipped to embark into adulthood with aspiration, skills and resilience.

The Deaf Academy is designed around the principles of inspiration, visual communication, and inclusivity. In September 2020 the Deaf Academy opened the doors of its new home in the vibrant seaside town of Exmouth, just a short drive or train journey from Exeter and 20 minutes from junction 30 of the M5. This truly 21st Century Deaf school and college campus places the Academy at the cutting edge of Deaf Education in Europe. Inspired by US-developed DeafSpace architecture, light and

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colour permeate the Deaf Academy school and college building, clear sightlines and wide corridors enable signers to communicate, and acoustics are carefully managed. Meanwhile, large classrooms and modern therapeutic facilities are designed to complement each other and provide state of the art education for Deaf young people, whatever their additional needs might be. Our new residential accommodation is modern, well-equipped and, above all, provides a true home from home for our young people. The inspiring buildings underpin our objectives to build confidence in our students, show them their value in the world and help them believe they can achieve anything they wish.

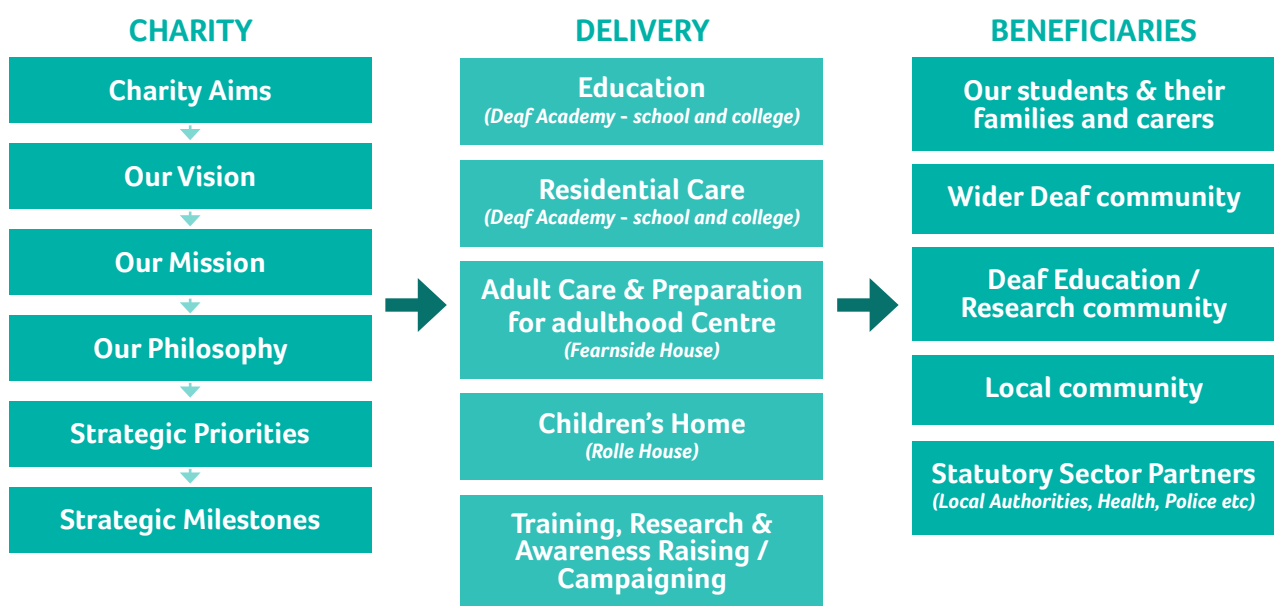
We encourage our young people to explore their passions and develop a strong Deaf identity, while also supporting them to achieve educationally. We were one of the first UK Deaf Schools to offer Supported Internships to our College students, and are one of the few which offer a truly bilingual environment, where our students learn in both British Sign Language and English.

Our Academy, Fearnside House and Rolle House are warm, friendly and safe places to live and study. We understand that our students are individuals, with unique needs and dreams for the future that deserve to be nurtured and encouraged. We want to ensure that every student who leaves the Deaf Academy family goes out into the world confident and with the ability to communicate and achieve their goals.

Our newest specialist provision Fearnside House emulates the design principles of the school and college and opened in September 2023. This centre is comprised of a ten-bed residential facility and preparation for adulthood centre. The main objective of this centre is to provide residential and learning experiences as an extension of the main Deaf Academy, to support our college students in preparing for adulthood/employment and future independent, semi-independent or supported living.

Rolle House operates independently and is a registered Children's Home specialising in caring for children and young people aged between five and seventeen years who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Our young people achieve emotional stability, greater independence, integration, and are active members of their own communities. We provide our young people with opportunities to be involved and be part of the wider community regardless of their hearing impairment. We also promote independence and confidence, helping them to achieve their hopes and ambitions.



Our Vision

An outstanding provider of Education, Support and Care for Deaf young people with additional and complex needs.

A centre of excellence for Education, Care and Support for Deaf young people with additional and complex needs, including research, sharing best practice, and providing information to the wider Deaf/Special Education Needs (SEN) sector.

A champion in promoting and celebrating the diversity of the Deaf cultural and linguistic community in all its forms and tackling discrimination where it occurs.

Our Mission

The charity's mission is to nurture and grow Deaf young people with a real sense of belonging who are confident, resilient, and independent, supporting their development of robust behaviours, knowledge and skills to live happily in the wider world. This informs everything we do across Education, Care, Support and the whole Academy.

We embrace the diversity of both our young people's communication needs and special educational needs and support them on a journey towards a strong sense of self and a clear personal identity.

Deaf with Additional and Complex Needs

Deafness is not a learning disability, and Deaf children/young adults can achieve just as well as their hearing peers. However, without the right support in place to aid Deaf young people's age-appropriate language acquisition (whether through signed or spoken language or a combination of both), Deafness can impact significantly on their cognitive, social and linguistic development, and psychological well-being.

In the UK, approximately one in 1,000 children are born with a permanent hearing loss and there are around 45,000 Deaf children with a permanent hearing loss in the UK (Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE), 2022), half whom are born Deaf, half of whom have acquired their Deafness during childhood. Between 30-40% of Deaf children have additional needs with the prevalence of severe multiple disabilities being at least 20%. Therefore, there are a significant number of Deaf young people in the UK with additional or complex needs. This group has often been under-represented, falling between Deaf and SEN discourses. They are a highly diverse group, varying widely as individuals in terms of their degree of deafness, additional/complex needs or language use (spoken, signed or both), cultural identity (whether in terms of being Deaf or their family heritage), use of technologies to hear, and the ways in which the impact of Deafness is filtered through responses of familial, educational and social environments.

There is very little research on the impact of Deafness on Deaf children with additional or complex needs, but the evidence suggests this group experience additional challenges in accessing services and support due to the multiple layers of complexity of their needs. The report *Complex Needs, Complex Challenges* (University of Manchester, 2011) gives a good explanation of the additional challenges for this group. These often result in delays in identification of need and/or lack of appropriate support, and can lead to children being placed in inappropriate settings where perhaps the hierarchical perception of need means that other more "visible" needs such as autism, behaviour or learning difficulties are prioritised over Deafness. As the Manchester research points out, Deafness needs to be understood as having a multiplier effect on other conditions, because not being able to communicate and delayed acquisition of language can have a significant impact on a child's development and behaviour.

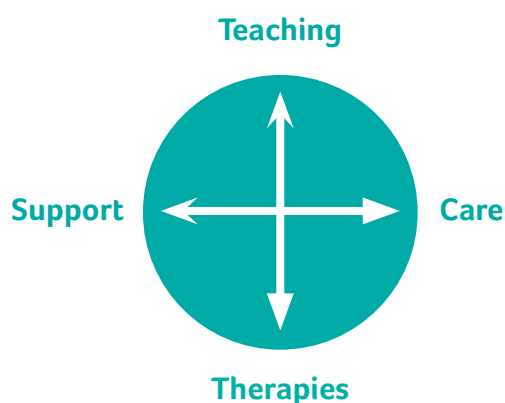
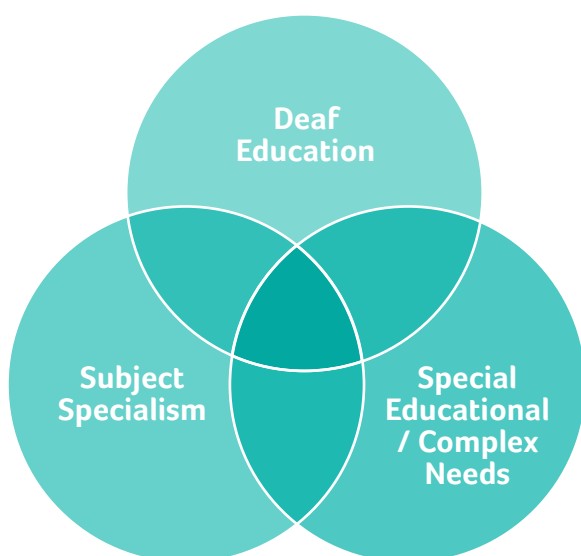
Our Philosophy

At the Deaf Academy we adopt a cultural-linguistic approach to education, care and support. This means we recognise British Sign Language (BSL) as being a language recognised in law and the community of its users as possessing a unique cultural identity. The BSL Act 2022 legally recognises BSL as a language for England, Wales and Scotland.

Due to the profile and experiences of our students, the key to our approach is giving our students a sense of belonging as part of a diverse, cultural and linguistic group. A sense of belonging is defined as being accepted, valued and included. We believe this is a key foundation to happier, higher-achieving, more confident, engaged students who have greater wellbeing throughout their education and beyond. This ultimately enables them to flourish to their full potential.

We also recognise that we are working in a very specialist field (Deaf with additional and complex needs) where there has been very little research into effective practice, curriculum or pedagogy. This is reflected in our strategy, which has an emphasis on research and development. We know that in order to create best practice, we need to create new knowledge through the generation of practice-based evidence. We have to be sure that our curriculum and pedagogy lead to the best possible outcomes for our students.

Our philosophy is therefore a fusion of three core strands, Deaf education, Special Educational/ Complex needs and Subject Specialism (English, Maths, BSL, Speech and language, etc). These are delivered through our multidisciplinary teams which broadly fall into four categories; Teachers, Care professionals, Therapies team and Support (a collection of other welfare, Communication, and student support staff). In addition a key part of our ethos is to “walk the walk” and ensure that our workforce is representative of our community with Deaf staff representation across the charity. This not only adds to the linguistic and cultural richness and diversity of the workforce but acts as a clear message to staff and students of the importance of representation. For our students you have to “see it to be it” and the role model aspect of seeing Deaf Staff achieving is very important to raising aspiration.



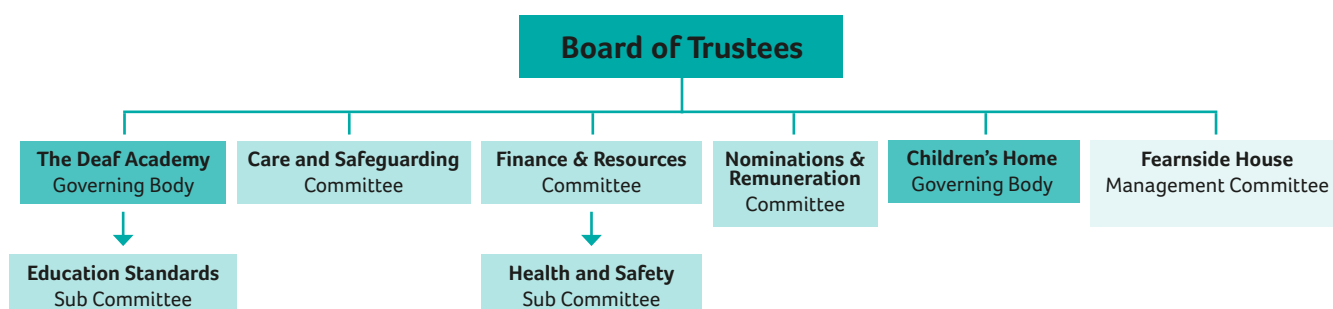
Our Organisation's Journey

The Charity has been through a major period of transition. The Academy operated in Exeter until April 2020 and moved to brand-new purpose-built premises in Exmouth during the Summer of 2020. This was a highly ambitious project and the most significant ever undertaken by the Charity. As part of this move the Academy was re-branded as the Deaf Academy.

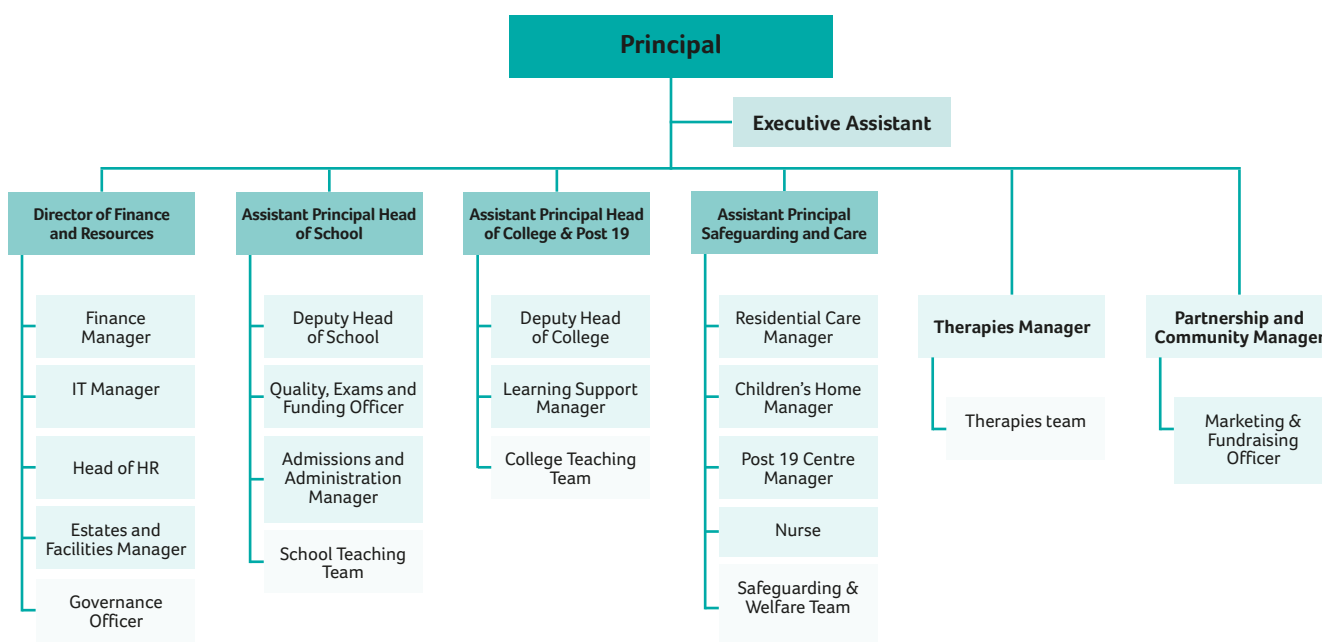
Our Principal, Sylvan Dewing, was appointed in January 2020. In anticipation of the move to Exmouth a review of the senior management structure was completed and since September 2020 a more streamlined management structure has been in place for all elements of the Academy's operations under the leadership of the Principal.

The Charity has an experienced and skilled Board of Trustees which has driven the organisational changes. The improved corporate governance arrangements provide effective challenge to the Senior Leaders and add to the culture of continuous improvement.

Governance Structure



Senior and Middle Leadership Structure



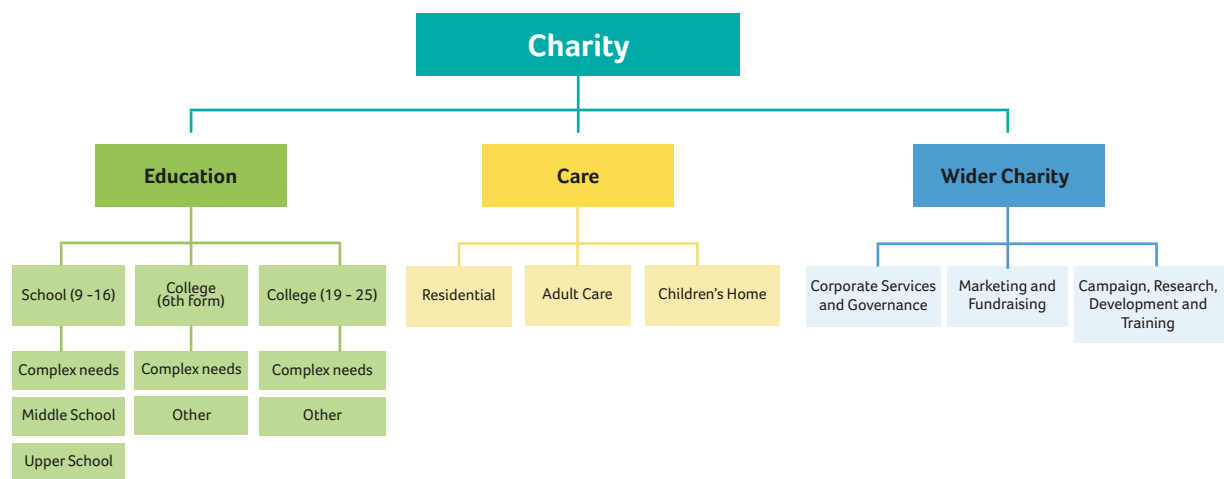


2. The Services We Provide

The Charity operates a Non-Maintained Special School, College and Adult pathway with residential care. We also operate a Children’s Home for Deaf children. We provide education and residential care for Deaf young people from the ages of 9 to 25 years. The Academy currently has 65 students and approximately half of our students reside in our residential accommodation for 38 weeks of the year. All our young people are Deaf with additional needs. These include social emotional & mental health (SEMH) (47%), learning difficulties (36%), autism (25%) and multi-sensory impairment (45%), including Deaf blind. In addition, many of our students have complex medical profiles including CHARGE syndrome, diabetes, and epilepsy. About 5% are PEG fed.

We specialise in supporting Deaf children and young people who also have multiple or complex additional needs, including multi-sensory impairment, autism and physical disabilities. We provide a full range of therapies on the Academy premises including physiotherapy, occupational therapies, speech and language therapy, and audiology.

Each student receives tailored support, ensuring they are able to meet their educational and personal goals, growing in confidence and working towards independence each day.



The Deaf Academy

Education

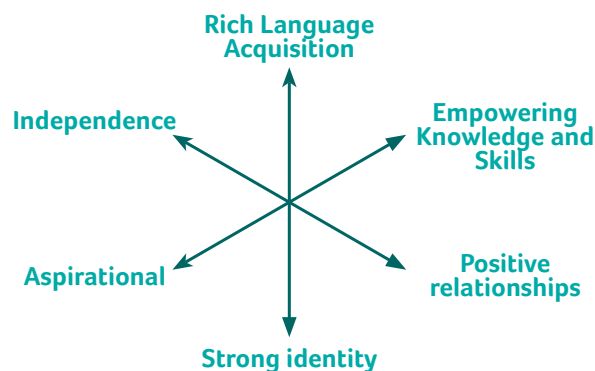
Our approach to the curriculum has two strategic priorities.

1. Developmental approach

We acknowledge that there is very limited research on effective curriculum for Deaf young people with additional or complex needs. Therefore, part of our strategic approach to curriculum is developmental and exploratory, aiming to bring together best practice in Deaf and SEND education and developing a “hybrid” curriculum that supports the overall needs of the young people. We cannot do this on our own and therefore have brought together a range of professionals across different disciplines to guide our curriculum development. We have set ourselves a strategic goal of having a fully bespoke Deaf/SEND curriculum in place by September 2025.

2. Curriculum underpinning values

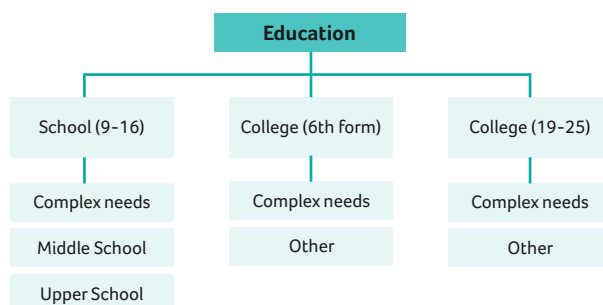
We’ve developed a range of underpinning values for our curriculum, based on our charitable mission and consultation with young people, parents and carers, and staff.



These six values underpin curriculum design and implementation across complex needs, school, college, and Post 19.

3. Education structure

The education structure is divided into three areas; School, College (6th Form) and Adult. We have complex needs groups in all three areas of provision. We currently do not operate a lower school and our starting age is 9 years old.



For further information on the curriculum intent please see Appendix 2

4. Residential Accommodation- 8 Flats and 37 beds

Residential Care at the Academy provides a safe and nurturing environment which allows our young people to become independent and develop their Deaf identity. We want them to feel at home here, and strive to build a homely and welcoming environment, with strong and trusting relationships with our staff. This begins as soon as a young person arrives and will continue until they leave.

Residential accommodation is provided in flats, spread over three floors in a separate building from the teaching areas. Each flat contains a kitchen, a living room, extra wide hallway, two communal accessible bathrooms, and individual bedrooms for each young person.

Young people are encouraged to bring pictures and posters to put on the walls in their rooms to personalise them. Rooms are private and young people are allocated their own key. Proximity cards are used in Residential so young people can access the main gates, the residential building and the flat that has been allocated to them.

The kitchens in the flats are accessible to all and are the perfect place to learn essential cooking skills, dinner classics and to socialise whilst cooking together.

Living rooms are homely, giving a social space to unwind after a busy day learning. Residential also boasts a Common Room which is multi-faceted and is a perfect place to play games, relax and socialise with friends.

All members of the Residential Care team have achieved, or are working towards, their BSL Level 3 and a Level 3 Diploma in Children's and Young People's Workforce. The Academy has a great Deaf community, with evening and weekend social activities helping to develop sign language and communication skills. With the support of our experienced care team, our young residents develop their independent living skills to prepare them for adulthood.

Young people in Residential can enjoy a wide range of activities beyond their core. We aim to tailor activities based on individual needs and interests. Young residents can also take part in enrichment and after-school activities such as football training, sports club, arts and crafts, driving theory classes, swimming and cinema.

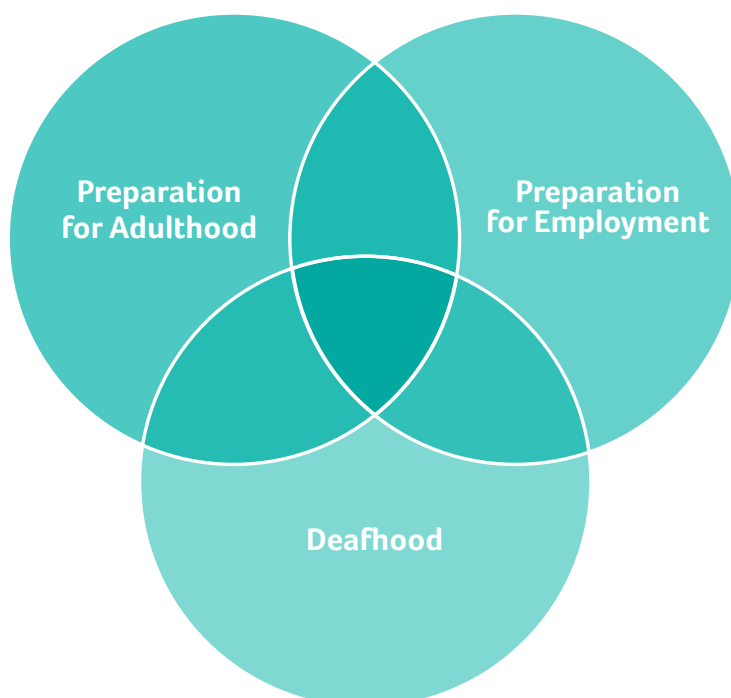
Fearnside House

Adult Care and preparation for adulthood centre

We opened a new centre in September 2023 to support older students in their preparation for adulthood. The Centre includes a ten-bedroom residential facility and preparation for adulthood centre.

Fearnside House is only a few minutes' walk away from our main campus and offers our older students a more adult environment to support their future independence and maturity. The developing curriculum (see Section 2 above) is a fusion of three key elements, Preparation for Adulthood, Preparation for Employment and Deafhood.

The new centre has a similar ethos to the main campus enabling young people to have greater degrees of independence in preparation for their transition to adulthood.



Rolle House

Children's Home

Rolle House is a specialist therapeutic Children's Home in Exmouth which was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2023. We provide placements within the home for young people aged between 9 and 17 who are Deaf and have complex needs. We have a team of skilled and experienced staff, hearing and Deaf, who promote a healthy safeguarding culture throughout the home and provide a friendly, nurturing environment to enable the young people to achieve their potential. Our maximum occupancy is four.

Rolle House provides a bi-modal, effective communication environment, taking account of individual needs and preferred modes of communication. All staff are either trained to a competent level or are training in British Sign Language.

The home has embedded the Thrive approach, which is a trauma sensitive behaviour approach used in homes/schools and residential settings. The Manager is a registered Thrive practitioner and uses the Thrive online tool to assess the emotional wellbeing of the children in the home. The data collected allows us to record the progress of emotional development of our young people. Thrive targets and activities are engaged with on a daily basis and reviewed and updated on a monthly basis.

The home has strong links with the Deaf Academy, where the Thrive approach is also embedded, and all the young people in the home can attend the Deaf Academy for their education which is just a short walk away. Rolle House works in partnership with the school to provide a consistent and measured approach across both settings to offer the best outcomes for the Rolle House residents.

Rolle House is in a pleasant and convenient location and is close to public transport and other local amenities including leisure centres, faith communities, shops and the beach. This location allows our young people to develop their independent living skills in a vibrant local and wider community.

Placements are subject to a robust and thorough impact assessment process to ensure the culture within the home remains optimum for all residing with us.

The ethos and philosophy of Rolle House is based on:

- Treating every young person as an individual, and creating a package of care and support which meets their individual needs.
- Ensuring a safe, supportive and nurturing environment which allows the young people in our care to feel secure and have opportunities to create happy memories.
- Preserving the dignity, privacy and individuality of every young person.
- Identifying the strengths, skills and abilities of each young person and creating an environment that enables them to achieve their potential.
- Ensuring that young people are encouraged to express opinions and, with support as needed and where appropriate, to make decisions and have choices, to feel heard and valued.
- Ensuring all staff provide effective communication in British Sign Language and, have a high level of understanding in Deaf awareness and Deaf culture, so that all young people can have the therapeutic benefit of living in a home without language barriers whilst developing their Deaf identity.
- Providing a range of opportunities for the young people in our care to develop socially and emotionally, enabling them to access a peer group and the wider community as appropriate.

Wider Charity

Our wider charitable ambitions have always been to go beyond being a provider of outstanding quality education, care and support for Deaf young people. We wish to change/influence not just the young Deaf people that we support but also to assist the wider Deaf community, in particular those with additional and complex needs. To this end we have four distinct strands.

1. Fundraising

In order to support the running of the organisation and our wider objectives we operate a small fundraising team. This tends to be project/capital based and supports with raising funds to ensure that we are able to provide our students with the best facilities we can. In addition, we raise funds to support wider research and development work.

2. Research and development

We recognise that the new generation of Deaf students that the Academy supports has a wide range of additional and complex needs. This is an area where there is very little research into effective curriculum or pedagogy. We are at the early stages of development of relationships with local universities, with the aim of developing studentships and wider collaboration to support research into area such as Deafness and Autism, to support more effective practice at the Academy and the wider Deaf education community.

3. Training and promotion of BSL and Deaf Awareness

BSL is at the heart of everything we do and we recognise the importance of raising awareness of this language, particularly to enable more people to be able to use it and communicate with the Deaf community. In addition we aim to support the wider business community and general public in their understanding of the Deaf Community through Deaf Awareness training. Some of our Deaf young people contribute to this programme.

4. Campaigning

Despite developments in the recognition of BSL as a language, there are still many areas in which Deaf people are unfairly disadvantaged. We aim to support national and local campaigns to improve access to services for Deaf people and to promote the advancement of their rights as a linguistic and cultural group.

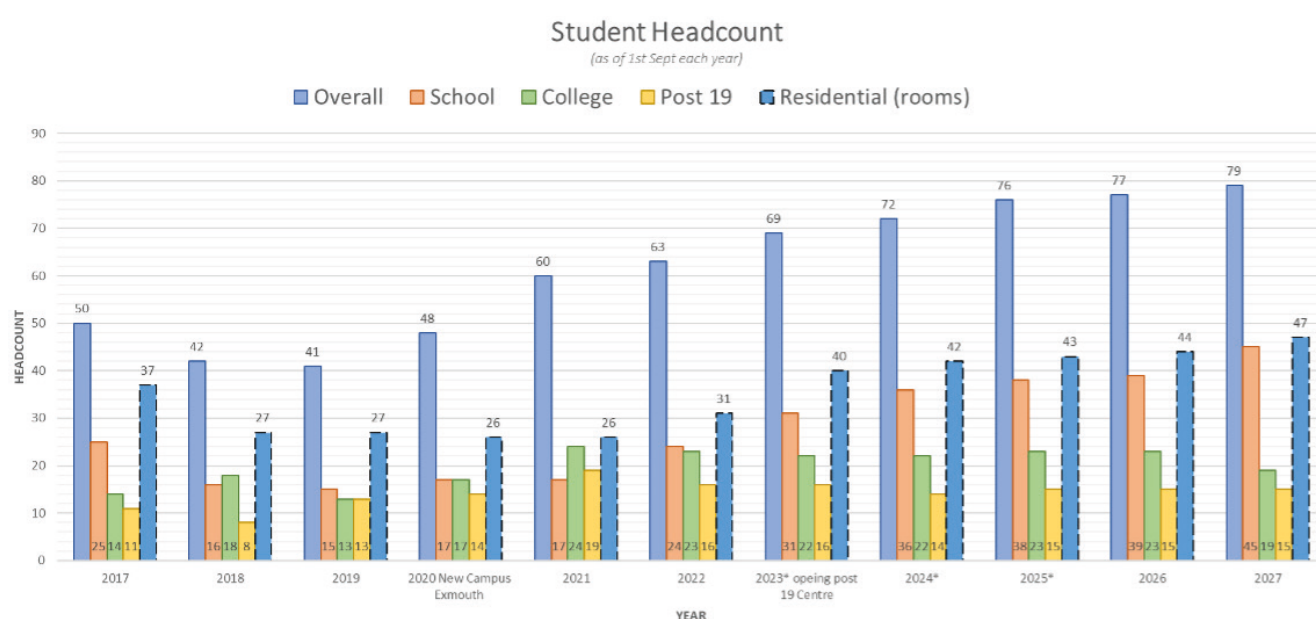
3. Key Facts and Figures



Our quality improvement Journey

					
	Exeter			Exmouth	
	2019	2020		2020-2022	2022-2023
Education Post 19	Full inspection Requires Improvement	Monitoring visit Reasonable Progress	New Deaf Academy Campus / Curriculum and relocation to Exmouth	Full inspection Requires Improvement	Monitoring visit
Education School and College	Full inspection Requires Improvement				Full inspection Good with Outstanding features
Residential Care	Full inspection Good X2			Full inspection Good (Sept 21)	Full inspection Requires improvement
Children's Home	Full inspection Good	Full inspection Good		Full inspection Requires improvement	Full inspection Outstanding

Our student numbers are growing



Our changing student profile

Smaller numbers and more complex students

- 65 students across School, College and Adult provision, about 50% of whom board. In addition we also operate a children's home which has two children who attend the school.
- All of our students have additional needs.
- Many with complex pathways including negative experiences of education, social disadvantage and some with safeguarding profiles.
- Our students now come to us from across Mainstream, Deaf education and SEN schools backgrounds.
- Wide bandwidth of students, some working at level 3 and some working at pre-entry curriculum.



47%

**Social, Emotional
& Mental Health
need**



45%

**Multi sensory
impairment**



36%

Learning difficulty



25%

Autism

NB: Some students have multiple additional needs and will be counted in more than one of these categories.

4. Market Analysis



Based on data from Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) Survey data England 2021/22 there are approximately 45,000 Deaf children in England of whom 10%, 4508, are living in the Southwest. About 40% of Deaf children (20,000) have additional needs, half of those (10,000) have complex needs. Young people over the age of 19 are not counted in this figure.

The majority of Deaf school aged children, 77%, are in Mainstream schools, with the next largest group, 14%, placed in specialist (non-Deaf specific) schools.

There are only 18 specialist Deaf schools.

As a non-maintained Deaf School, we are only one of five in UK; the Deaf Academy, Hamilton Lodge, Doncaster, Derby, Mary Hare.

In the Southwest there two specialist Deaf schools.

- Elmfield School for Deaf Children (Bristol) (3-5, 5-11, 11-16)
- the Deaf Academy (9-12, 13-16, 16-18, 19-25)

We are the only Deaf School in the UK to specialise in Deaf with additional and complex needs. We are the only provider of post 16 specialist Deaf education in the South West. In addition, we are the only provider in the UK to provide specialist Deaf education post 19.

Where are our students from?

Student numbers December 2022 - **Total : 62**

School : 24

Post 16 : 24

Post 19 : 14

Residential : 33

Children's Home : 2

(2 of which are attending the Deaf Academy)

Region	Number of Students	%
London	3	37%
South East	13	21%
South West	45	73%
West Midlands	0	0%
North West	0	0%
North East	0	0%
Yorkshire and the Humber	0	0%
East Midlands	0	0%
East of England	1	2%
Wales	0	0%

South West	Number of Students	%
Devon	23	37%
Torbay	1	2%
Somerset	4	6%
Dorset	5	8%
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole	1	2%
Cornwall	4	6%
Bristol	1	2%
South Gloucs and Gloucestershire	2	3%
Wiltshire	2	3%
Swindon	1	2%
Plymouth	1	2%

5. Strategic Priorities and Milestones 2023–2028



Strategic priorities

1. Redesigning our provision to better meet the changing needs of our students
2. Securing and maintaining high quality in all aspects of our provision
3. Becoming a research and professional development and training hub for professionals working for Deaf children with additional and complex needs
4. Maintaining a financial surplus, reinvesting in our staff, facilities and resources
5. Creating significant impact regionally and locally via the promotion of our wider charity objectives (raising awareness/promotion, tackling discrimination, campaigning)
6. Ensuring the Charity is a great place to work

Strategic milestones

1. Redesigning our provision to better meet the changing needs of our students

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • New Residential and Learning Centre | Sep 2023 |
| • Campus/Estates 3-year development/maintenance plan | Sep 2024 |
| • New fully bespoke curriculum Adult (19–25) | Sep 2024 |
| • New fully bespoke residential care model | Sep 2024 |
| • New fully bespoke therapeutic children's home model | Sep 2024 |
| • Middle leadership programme | Jan 2025 |
| • New fully bespoke curriculum School | Sep 2025 |
| • New fully bespoke curriculum College | Sep 2025 |

2. Securing and maintaining high quality in all aspects of our provision

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • All provision to be Ofsted/CQC rated Good or Outstanding | Sep 2024 |
| • Achieve Gatsby Benchmark | Sep 2024 |
| • Achieve Eco Schools recognition | Sep 2024 |
| • Creating Carbon Neutral action plan | 2024/25 |
| • Corporate Service areas to achieve appropriate external accreditations | Sep 2025/26 |
| • All teachers to achieve or be working towards Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QTOD) status | Sep 2026 |

3. Becoming a research and professional development and training hub for professionals working for Deaf children with additional and complex needs

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Develop and Fundraise for a PhD Research Assistant | Sep 2024 |
| • Development/launch of research and development centre/team | Sep 2025 |
| • To run applied SEND QTOD professional qualifications with university partner | Sep 2025/26 |
| • Launch of Deaf Academy professional development and research Hub | Sep 2026 |

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4. Maintaining a financial surplus, reinvesting in our staff, facilities and resources

- To achieve Budget targets Sep 2023
- Review of fees structure Apr 2024
- To achieve annual student recruitment targets across all areas Sep 2024
- Development of Fundraising strategy and achievement of income goals Sep 2024
- To deliver a Financial surplus 2025/26
- Maintaining Financial recovery 2023-2028

5. Creating significant impact regionally and locally via the promotion of our wider charity objectives (raising awareness/promotion, tackling discrimination, campaigning, research and development and bespoke professional and non-professional training)

- Agree campaigning priorities and alliance and action Sep 2023
- Creating Digital Marketing Strategy Feb 2024
- Reviewing charity objectives, including name Sep 2024
- Develop and Fund Deaf internship programme Sep 2024
- Deaf Academy Bicentenary celebration 2026
- Mount Radford Lawn Development (TBC) Sep 2026/27

6. Ensuring the Charity is a great place to work

- Workforce 3-year Development Plan Apr 2024

6. Strategic Plan and Milestones 2023–2028



Objectives	Specific areas	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28
1 Redesigning our provision to better meet the changing needs of our students	New Adult residential and learning centre (Fearnside House)	Purchase and Development	Opened				
	Campus/Estates 3-year development/ maintenance plan	Development	Development	Sep 24 launch			
	Middle leadership programme	Development	Development	Launch			
	New fully bespoke curriculum Adult (19-25)	Review and Development	Review and Development	Launch			
	New fully bespoke residential care model	Review and Development	Review and Development	Launch			
	New fully bespoke therapeutic children home model	Review and Development	Review and Development	Launch			
	New fully bespoke curriculum School	Review and Development	Review and Development	Review and Development	Launch		
	New fully bespoke curriculum College	Review and Development	Review and Development	Review and Development	Launch		
2 Securing and maintaining high quality in all aspects of our provision	School and college (16-18) (education)	Good/outstanding Features/Outstanding					
	Post 19 (education)	Monitoring Visit - making Reasonable Progress	Monitoring Visit	Full Inspection Good		Good/Good with Outstanding Features/ Outstanding rating	
	Adult Care CQC		CQC registration complete	Full Inspection Good			
	Residential Care	Requires Improvement	Good Inspection		Good/Good with Outstanding Features/ Outstanding rating		
	Children's home	Good	Good	Good/outstanding Features/ Outstanding			
	Creating Carbon Neutral action plan			Plan created and launched			
	Achieve Gatsby Benchmark			Achieve			
	Eco schools recognition			Achieve			
	Corporate Services to achieve external accreditations				Achieve external accreditations (Investors in People) etc)		

Objectives		Specific areas	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28
3	Becoming a research and professional development and training hub for professionals working for Deaf children with additional and complex needs	All teachers to achieve or be working towards Qualified teacher of the Deaf (QTOD) status					Achieve or working towards QTOD	
		Develop and fundraise PHD studentship			Studentship to start			
		Development/launch of research and development centre/team				Launch research and development Centre/ Team		
		To run applied SEND QTOD/MAs/MSI professional qualifications with university partner				Start QTOD programme		
4	Maintaining a financial surplus, reinvesting in our staff, facilities and resources	Launch of Deaf Academy professional development and research HUB					Launch of Professional development HUB	
		To achieve budget targets	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Surplus	Surplus	Surplus
		To achieve annual student targets	60-65	65-70 Children's Home 3rd child placed	70-75	75-80	75-80 Children's home 4th child placed	75-80
		Development of Fundraising strategy and achievement of income goals.	£50,000 Target & develop fundraising strategy	£50,000	£75,000	£75,000	£100,000	£100,000
5	Creating significant impact regionally and locally via the promotion of our wider charity objectives	Maintain Financial recovery	Refinancing loan	Capital & interest payments CAF loan	£100k working capital loan repayments start			Consider partial repayment of loan facilities
		Reviewing charity objectives, including name			Complete review			
		Create Digital marketing strategy		Launch Feb 24				
		Agree campaigning priorities and alliance and action		Agreed campaigning priorities				
		Develop and Fund Deaf internship programme		Develop internship programme	New intern starts			
		Deaf Academy Bicentenary celebration				Bicentenary event		
6	Ensuring the Charity is a great place to work	Mount Radford lawn development.		Options review	Review and Development	Opening		
		Workforce 3-year Development Plan		Jan 24 - launch				

7. Student Numbers



Education

- Student numbers dropped to the lowest point in 2019 to 41 students due to the impact of the Ofsted inspection inadequate rating in 2016, which meant low numbers were being placed each year and leavers were not being replaced with new starters. Since moving to the new Exmouth site student numbers are growing. In the last few years, we have seen student numbers grow by over 50%, with an additional growth in their complexity. In 2023 the Academy has 65 students (60.84 annualised FTE due to some students being part-time placements and in year starters and leavers). 30 students are resident in the Academy residential block and 2 are resident at the Children's Home.
- For the 2022-23 academic year we had 17 new starters including 12 residential placements.
- A 5 year forecast prepared in 2019 planned our financial journey, including starting at the new Exmouth site. The forecast assumed modest levels of growth however, the targets were soon exceeded.

YEAR	5 year plan (20/21) Education FTE	Actual Education FTE
2020-21	47.00	47.04
2021-22	49.00	55.90
2022-23	52.64	60.84

(FTE Full time equivalent (adjusted for part-time students and in year starters and leavers))

- An updated financial plan incorporating the additional capacity achieved through the opening of the new Adult residential and learning centre is shown in Section 9.

Student numbers analysis – 2022/2023

Provision	Headcount	Annualised FTE* 2022/23	% of total provision (based on FTE)
School (9-16)	27	24.97	41%
College (16-18)	22	22.29	37%
College (Post 19)	16	13.58	22%
TOTAL	65	60.84	

*Adjusted for in year starters and leavers

Residential

The Academy residential block has 37 student bedrooms and is currently at 81% occupancy (30 rooms). The table below shows the actual FTE compared to the 20/21 5 year financial plan. Residential numbers have not grown at the same rate as education.

Year	5 year plan (20/21) Residential FTE	Actual Residential FTE (Equivalent full time students staying 7 nights)	Rooms occupied	% residential compared to actual education FTE
2020-21	23.98	24.00		51%
2021-22	24.96	23.30	26	42%
2022-23	26.88	24.57	31	40%

The new Post 19 Centre allows for 10 residential students, giving a total residential capacity across the two sites of 47. See section 9.

8. Financial Review



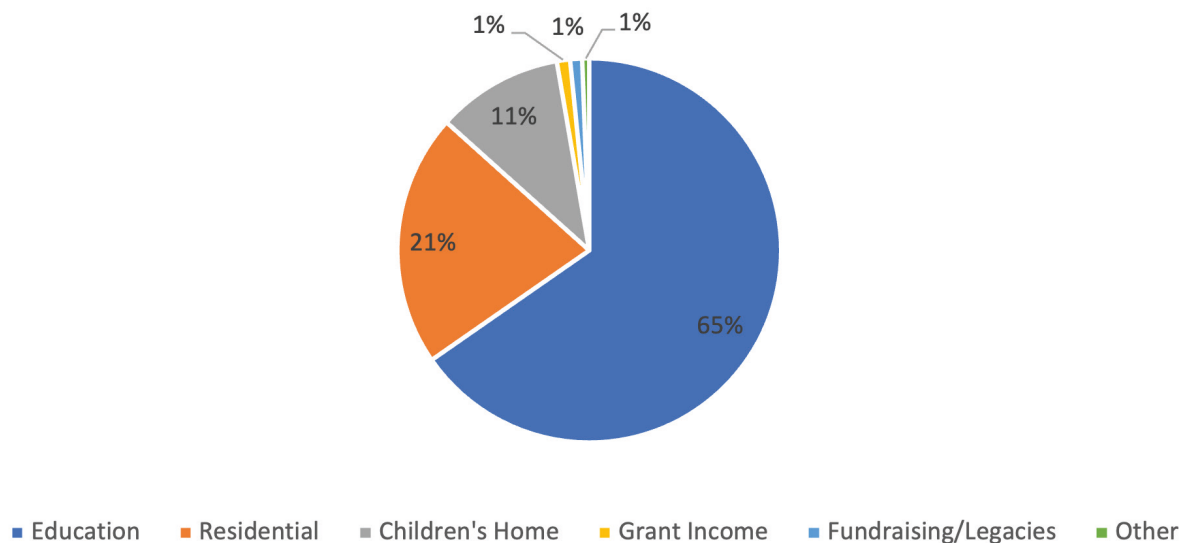
The Charity's financial position has been in recovery since 2016 and is reaching a level of stability to enable investment to increase capacity. Completion of our major capital scheme in 2020 and increased student recruitment has contributed to significant improvements in the charity's underlying financial position.

- 32% increase in student numbers from 20/21 to 22/23
- Accounting and cash surpluses achieved 19/20 to 22/23
- 22/23 forecast out-turn £195k surplus
- Improved financial position allowed the 22/23 budget to include investment in highest pay award in over 10 years at 5%
- Due to expansion in capacity and investment in infrastructure during 22/23, deficit budgets are forecast for 23/24 and 24/25
- Five Year Financial plan demonstrating a return to surplus budgets from 25/26
- Secured long term financing to replace short term interest only facility
- Financial health rated 'good' by the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Generating sufficient cash surpluses to fund loan commitments and invest in capital expenditure
- Growth in student numbers has led to increased income levels of £6.5m 22/23 (£5.6m 21/22, £5.5m 20/21)

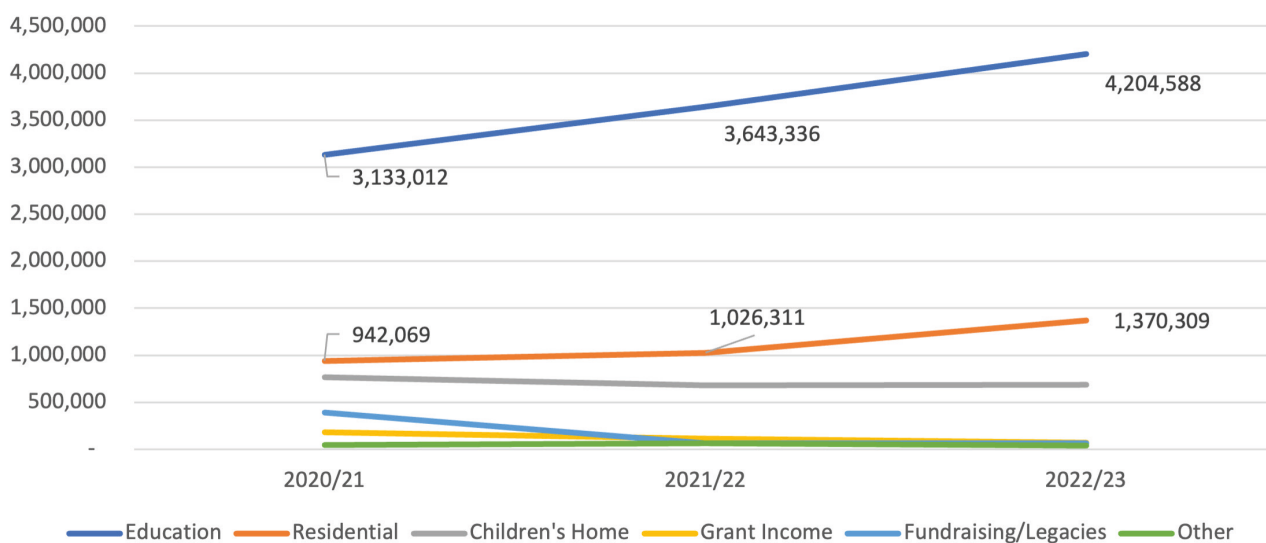
Income Analysis

Income	£'000 22/23	% 22/23	Income Source
Education Fees	3,615	55	Local Authorities
Education Fees – Place Funding	612	9	Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
Residential Care & Respite	1,420	22	Local Authorities & parents
Grants/Other Income	133	2	ESFA, Trusts, Access to Work (Government funded)
Children's Home	685	10	Local Authorities
Fundraising & Legacy Income	66	1	Mainly legacy income
Letting of facilities/ other income	45	1	
TOTAL	6,576	100	

2022/23 Income Analysis



Income Growth



Reserves

An updated reserves policy was agreed in 2022. The target level of reserves is £500-£750k. The freely available reserves at 31 August 2022 were £1.35m. Reserves were utilised in 22/23 to purchase the property and fund the redevelopment costs for the Adult Residential and Learning Centre. Reserve levels are expected to return to the target level by 31 August 2023.

Loan Financing

The Charity has two loans.

1. £500k interest free unsecured working capital loan from a Charitable Foundation - repayable £100k p.a. commencing March 2025.
2. £1.6m loan from the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF Bank).
This arose from the finance arrangements for the 2020 new Exmouth campus. The Charity planned and was on track to repay a £1.4m interest only loan by 31 August 2023, however, due to expansion of capacity through purchasing the Adult Learning Centre the loan has been re-financed. The loan is secured on the 1 Douglas Avenue site. £1.4m relates to re-financing the interest only loan, with £200k additional cash injection for development works for Fearnside House. The CAF Loan is for a 15 year term commencing in May 2023, with interest and capital repayment. The re-financing of the loan gives longer term financial stability. The loan includes flexibility for early repayment which may be exercised if the financial position allows.

Future

Expectation is that student numbers continue to grow for the next 2-5 years. Fearnside House creates additional residential capacity and two additional classrooms. It should be noted that the Academy buildings will soon reach capacity. Depending on student age/class mix, there is a maximum of approximately 80-85 students who can be educated across the two sites. No further expansion is currently envisaged, but if it is eventually required then additional accommodation would be needed.



9. Financial Plan 2023–2028

As noted in the financial review the Charity has invested in additional capacity through the purchase of the new centre and creation of new class spaces to accommodate the growth in student numbers and their complexity. This growth in capacity and the associated additional staffing costs and infrastructure result in a deficit budget for 23/24 and 24/25. The 5 Year Financial Plan demonstrates a return to surplus position from 25/26.

Financial Goals

- Achieve budget targets set out in the 5 Year Financial Plan 2023–2028
- Return to surplus position from 25/26 and maintain in future years
- Sustainable and market competitive levels of staff pay increases and consider becoming a real living wage employer
- Continued commitment to comprehensive programme of Staff Professional Development and funding the improvements identified in the Workforce Development Plan

Income Growth

- Achieve annual student recruitment targets across all areas of provision
- Continued growth in residential places to maximise the occupancy of the increased residential capacity
- Review of fee structure – reflecting provision delivered to each student whilst maintaining overall target fee income levels
- Application of annual inflation fee increases to Local Authorities at a fair and reasonable level
- 4th young person placed in the Children's Home in 26/27, taking the home to full capacity

Fundraising and Research

- Target fundraising income levels achieved through development of the Fundraising Strategy

Capital Investment

- Significant increase in capital expenditure over the next 5 years for Campus/Estates Development Plan
- Carbon Neutral Action plan and Eco Schools recognition

Financing and Cash

- Generate sufficient cash to service loan capital and interest payments
- Commence annual loan repayment of working capital loan in 24/25
- Consider partial repayment of loan facilities or investment in new capital projects in 27/28 (Year 5)

Reserves

- Maintain reserves level at a minimum of £500,000

Target education student numbers (FTE)

Year	School	College (16-18)	Post 19 (19-25)	Total	Headcount
2022-23 (Actual)	24.97	24.77	11.1	60.84	63
2023-24	31.58	22.33	12.5	66.41	69
2024-25				68.00	72
2025-26				71.50	76
2026-27				73.00	78
2027-28				75.00	80

Target residential numbers (FTE)

Year	School 4 nights	Respite	College 4 nights	College 7 nights	Academy Residential Total	Fearnside House	Total	% residential v education
2022-23 (Actual)	2.00		4.57	18	24.57	0	24.57	40%
2023-24	3.95	1.14	4.00	11.67	20.76	7.07	27.83	42%
2024-25					22.56	8.0	30.56	45%
2025-26					24.42	8.5	32.92	46%
2026-27					25.22	8.5	33.72	46%
2027-28					26.28	9.5	35.78	48%

Target residential student numbers (Rooms)

Year	School 4 nights	Respite	College 4 nights	College 7 nights	Academy Residential Total	Fearnside House	Total	Capacity	Utilised
2022-23	5.00		8.00	18	31.00	0	31.00	37	84%
2023-24	7.25	2.83	7.00	12	29.08	7.50	36.58	47	78%
2024-25					31.59	8	39.59	47	84%
2025-26					34.20	9	43.20	47	92%
2026-27					35.32	9	44.32	47	94%
2027-28					36.81	10	46.81	47	100%



10. Strategic Plan Monitoring and Evaluation of Progress

The five year strategic plan enables the Charity to set out in longer terms its ambitions and direction. The plan will be published for all our parents/carers, students and wider stakeholders. The plan will be fully accessible and will be available in British Sign Language.

The overall monitoring of progress against the plan will be the remit of the Trustee Board. This will be conducted via an annual monitoring report submitted to the Trustee Board of progress against the milestones in the action plan. In addition, this report will be published on our website and disseminated to key stakeholders.

The plan aims to be ambitious, with clear milestones, however we acknowledge the political and economic environment in which the Charity operates (Education/Care) is dynamic and under significant reform. This requires our strategic approach also to be dynamic and able to adjust and adapt as required with changing priorities. Moreover we should be open to respond to new, currently unforeseen opportunities, if they arise.



Appendix 1 : Consortium for Research Into Deaf Education - Data 2022

Deaf Children by Region

Region	Deaf Children 2022	Percentage
East of England	4405	10%
East Midlands	3558	8%
London	7408	17%
North East	2409	5%
North West	6354	14%
South East	5787	13%
South West	4508	10%
West Midlands	5722	13%
Yorkshire and Humber	5367	12%
Total	45,680	

Deaf Children by Educational Provision

All Deaf Children/Type of Educational Setting	Deaf children	Percentage	Percent of school age (excluding pre-school age and post 16)
Supported at home	2777	6%	
Early years setting	2254	5%	
Home educated	225	1%	1%
Mainstream included state funded and independent schools	27245	63%	77%
Mainstream provision (resource provision)	2111	5%	6%
Special schools for deaf pupils	992	2%	3%
Other special schools (not specifically for Deaf)	4947	11%	14%
All other post 16 provision	2230	5%	
Other (PRU/NEET)	788	2%	
Total	43569		

Appendix 2 : The Deaf Academy Curriculum Intent

Charitable aims

- To provide education, training, care, accommodation, leisure opportunities, welfare and other support services to Deaf people and people who are not Deaf but who, due to some other disability, would benefit from the same (principally though not exclusively from the counties of Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset) with the object of developing their personal, mental, physical and spiritual capacities so that they may realise their full potential as individuals and members of their communities and society as a whole and so that their condition of life may be improved; and
- To educate the general public in the needs and capabilities of Deaf people with a view to achieving greater integration between Deaf and hearing communities

Vision

- An outstanding provider of Education, Support and Care for Deaf young people with additional and complex needs.
- A centre of excellence for Education, Care and Support for Deaf young people with additional and complex needs, including research, sharing best practice, and providing information to the wider Deaf/Special Educational Needs (SEN) sector.
- A champion in promoting and celebrating the diversity of the Deaf cultural and linguistic community in all its forms and tackling discrimination where it occurs.

Mission

The charity's mission is to nurture and grow Deaf young people with a real sense of belonging who are confident, resilient, and independent, supporting their development of robust behaviours, knowledge and skills to live happily in the wider world. This informs everything we do across Education, Care, Support and the whole Academy.

A Deaf SEND Provision

At the Deaf Academy we embrace the diversity of our students' communication needs and special education needs. We support them on a journey towards a strong sense of self and a clear identity. Our curriculum is designed with our students at its heart, with preparation for their future in the wider world as its driving force:

- Deafhood: a unique personal journey to discover and understand themselves as a Deaf person (a term coined by Paddy Ladd in 2003)
- Special Needs: those who require special educational provision and experience to achieve their full potential
- Deafness as a multiplier: we recognise deafness has a multiplier effect on the impact of other special educational needs.

The Key Principles of the curriculum

Rich Language Acquisition	Empowering knowledge and skills	Positive relationships	Developing identity	High Aspirations	Independence
Intent		Implementation		Impact	
The needs and aspirations of our Deaf/SEND students are at the heart and centre of our curriculum. The curriculum is fully tailored to their needs, adaptable to personalisation, underpinned by students' pertinent next steps, as identified in their EHCP. We recognise that being Deaf with additional complex/needs can lead to overshadowing and under/misdiagnosis. We therefore recognise the importance of effective initial and ongoing assessment including screening for needs that may not have diagnosed at an earlier date. Through our ambitious, broad and balanced, bespoke curriculum students will develop and consolidate new knowledge and skills built on prior learning. By prioritising multi-modal communication and rich language development, our students can enjoy and maximise their learning opportunities. They gain independence in their learning, social communication and improve their interpersonal skills and relationships. The design of the curriculum and provision ensures that students develop a strong sense of self, feel proud of their unique Deaf Identity, and feel valued as part of the Deaf Academy and wider community. They will have opportunities to gain accreditation and/or qualifications to support them in the next stage of their education. Life and employability skills are key in ensuring students can make meaningful choices and engage successfully in the wider world. In addition the curriculum equips our students to become confident, independent, healthy, engaged young adults, ready for their futures.		Our staff will: Be skilled communicators, adept in a variety of modes, matching student need Be increasingly confident in their knowledge/skills about Deaf education and SEND Approach Learning is delivered through highly engaging, learning projects to support students to make connections in their learning and deepen understanding. Core subjects (Maths and English and BSL) are delivered as focused lessons and skills learnt are applied in project work. Students are assessed initially and monitored on a regular basis to ensure learning builds on prior knowledge and skills, maximising their learning potential. Environment We have a specially designed DeafSpace building, creating an optimised learning environment for Deaf/SEND students. Opportunities for concrete learning are regularly planned within the wonderful local environment. Pedagogy Our pedagogy is constantly adapting to the needs of Deaf/SEND students, based on current research and SEND information and our understanding of each student's needs. Currently our priorities are: Total Communication Approach Active classroom assessment Retrieval of knowledge Multisensory approaches to learning Opportunities for formative and summative assessment to inform planning and next steps in learning		Our students will: Short Term (within their first year) Develop their sense of Deaf Identity Feel reduced anxiety in an environment which meets their needs Form positive relationships with peers and staff Actively engage in their learning Begin to address gaps in their prior learning Medium Term (their educational journey at the Academy) Continue to develop their Deaf Identity Achieve academic and EHCP outcomes Develop social interactions/ healthy relationships Develop their understanding of personal, social and health issues and how to make positive choices about themselves Develop an understanding of their opportunities in the wider world, how to access these and make informed choices Grasp opportunities to gain accreditations and qualifications Long Term (when they launch from the Academy) Successfully transition into the wider community, feeling prepared and equipped for the journey ahead Feel part of the Deaf community in their local areas, and connected to the wider community Gain employment and/or be able to contribute to wider society Have the Life skills needed to live as independently as possible Have healthy adult relationships	

Intent	Implementation	Impact
Many of our students are coming to us with previous negative/traumatic experiences of education. Often coming from mainstream or non-specific SEND settings where they have not had access to Deaf community or BSL. They may have been out of education and school refusers. We start from a restorative empathetic approach, they are not just coming to a new school/ college but often a new setting and linguistic community. This informs the way we approach assessment and supporting the whole student with social emotional needs and their identity.	Therapeutic Meeting students EHCP needs with embedded therapeutic intervention led by the specialist therapeutic team. The Thrive and PACE approaches ensure our students successfully engage in learning, with specific programmes and interventions used to gap developmental gaps in social, emotional learning. Transition support We recognise the transition support for when students graduate from the academy is important. We therefore have a dedicated transition support team with ensure that each student is supported in their next steps after leaving the Academy.	Families and Carers We wish to support all our families and carers to learn BSL and be able to communicate with their children. This connection is the bedrock of supporting students as they progress in life after the Academy. Be confident, competent communicators Our local community will: Be more aware and engaged in issues relating to Deaf young people Work closely with us to support students and value their contributions to local businesses and organisations. Feel part of a strong and vibrant Deaf community Hold the Deaf Academy in high esteem as a centre for excellence in Deaf Education

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