

Royal moment for brave Sara

# Diana to meet quiet princess



WHEN Princess Diana meets Brighton school teacher Sara Head she will be in the company of a very brave and very modest young woman.

For 23-year-old Sara is no ordinary teacher.

At the age of 16 she discovered she was going deaf. Without telling anyone Sara stayed at her ordinary school and passed her A levels.

And she admits it wasn't easy.

"I became isolated and withdrawn because I thought no one was talking to me.

But later I realised a lot of communication is out of eye shot so people probably thought it was just me not answering them."

But Sara's secret was out when she found she had been rejected by every teacher training college she applied for. The reason being that her former school in Romford had informed the colleges that she was going deaf although she never knew they were aware of it.

Rather than backing down she persevered and thanks to missing school notes was accepted by Avery Hill College in Eltham.

"The interview was easy. I could still hear a bit and besides it was a one to one so I could lip read fairly well," she laughed.

by  
Caroline Sweeney

Eventually the college discovered her progressive deafness and after much debate decided to keep her on. With the help of part-time ILEA sponsored interpreter Sara not only finished the course but got the highest grade in her year.

Now Sara who lives in Lewes Crescent, Kemp Town, works with other deaf people at Brighton's Hamilton Lodge School at Walpole Road and teaches sign language to adults at evening class.

As a result of her untiring efforts Sara has been given the award for the South's Deaf Achiever of 1988 and will be presented with it by Princess Diana at a special ceremony in London later this month.

Although honoured by the award Sara said: "Not all deaf people go to college and go on to teach but they achieve on their own level. It's a very personal thing.

"For children in my class to learn a poem or concentrate on spelling it takes as much effort as it did for me to sit in on a lecture.

"I am very honoured but there are so many other deaf people who go unrecognised," she said.



● Sara and pupils Nicky Carnock and Andrew Rose and above, as herself.

The best stories  
are in the Leader

Brighton and Hove Leader,  
Thursday November 3 1988