

Lostock College

Selby Road, Stretford, Manchester, Lancashire, M32 9PL

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides very strong strategic leadership, setting a clear direction and high expectations for staff and students. She is supported ably by other leaders and governors.
- Constructive relationships and a strong sense of teamwork add to the 'family feel' of the college that is so appreciated by students.
- Good teaching is underpinned by teachers' strong subject knowledge and in-depth understanding of the personal needs of the students they teach.
- The nurturing environment, together with the drive to raise achievement, support students to make good academic progress and excellent gains in their personal development.
- Students' attainment at GCSE is improving. They make good progress from their various starting points in nearly all subjects. Students who are in the college from the start of Year 7 make particularly good progress.
- Students' behaviour is good. They are motivated in lessons and are especially adept in discussions because their social and oral skills are developed so well.
- Procedures to keep students safe are outstanding; students feel extremely safe, well cared for and valued.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Students show great respect for each other and have a mature understanding of moral issues.
- Governors understand the performance of the college well and provide good support and challenge to leaders.
- Leaders and governors have improved teaching, raised achievement and tackled areas for improvement from the previous inspection successfully. They have good capacity to secure further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Occasionally, students complete activities in lessons that do not extend or deepen their knowledge and skills as well as they possibly could.
- The most able students do not always make the rapid progress they are capable of.
- Achievement in mathematics lags behind achievement in English. Assessment is not always precise enough to ensure teaching builds on prior attainment systematically and rapidly.
- There are insufficient opportunities to promote mathematical skills in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in most subjects and all year groups. They looked at students' work in lessons and conducted a detailed scrutiny of a random sample of work across Years 7 to 10. The headteacher joined an inspector in an observation of teaching and subject leaders joined an inspector in the work scrutiny.
- Meetings were held with leaders, governors, teachers and two representatives of the local authority. Inspectors met with groups of students and spoke with many other students during lessons and at break-times.
- Inspectors considered 16 questionnaires completed by staff, 32 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents) and calls from parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement plans. They analysed data relating to students' achievement, looked at policies and checked safeguarding systems and procedures to promote students' well-being.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Denis Oliver

Additional Inspector

Christine Veitch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lostock College is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It is located in an area with a large number of selective grammar schools, but does not stipulate entry criteria and is open to all students.
- A significant proportion of students join the college at times other than the usual time at the start of Year 7. A relatively large number join at Key Stage 4.
- The majority of students are White British. The proportions from ethnic minority groups and those speaking English as an additional language are broadly average although increasing. Around 30 languages are spoken in the college.
- The proportion of students with disabilities or special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to the school to support students entitled to free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- A small number of students are educated off-site currently. They attend specialist courses, for example in jockeying and construction, which cannot be accommodated in college. The college occasionally uses the local Pupil Referral Units.
- The college is affiliated to two teaching alliances and works closely with Altrincham Girls Grammar School and Loreto Grammar School.
- There have been changes to the senior leadership team and in the leadership of mathematics since the last inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to ensure all groups of students make the most rapid progress possible, by:
 - ensuring students, especially the most able, are provided with the right amount of challenge in lessons
 - ensuring the activities provided for students deepen or extend their knowledge, understanding and skills consistently in lessons.
- Raise students' achievement further in mathematics by:
 - using assessment effectively to identify gaps in students' understanding, knowledge and skills and build on their prior learning systematically and rapidly
 - promoting mathematical knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have established a nurturing environment where students grow in confidence and participate fully in their learning. Students feel valued and are supported effectively to make good academic progress and excellent progress in their personal development. Students who enter the college at times other than the start of Year 7 are welcomed; they make friends quickly and care is taken to make sure they receive academic and personal support suited to their needs.
- The college is highly inclusive. Staff strive to make sure all students succeed and have equality of opportunity. Discrimination is tackled robustly and the excellent relations in the college enable students to thrive and feel extremely safe.
- Leaders and governors have a detailed understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching based on good systems to check quality. There are effective processes to manage the performance of teachers and leaders at all levels; leaders set aspirational targets and support improvement with effective professional development. Development planning is focused on the right priorities and there is good capacity to improve the college further.
- The organisation of subjects into faculties enables staff to share best practice and ensure policies are consistently applied, for example with regards to behaviour management and marking. Middle leaders check students' progress by giving them regular assessments and looking at work in their books, so students who are making less than expected progress are given effective additional support. However, in mathematics, the assessments are not always matched exactly to students' age and ability, so next steps in learning are not identified as precisely as they could be.
- The curriculum is broad and has a suitable focus on GCSE qualifications. Students' experiences are enriched with a range of clubs, trips and visits, which extend their learning and experience. The additional 'period 6' provided by teachers outside the college day reflects teachers' high level of commitment to students. In these sessions, small groups are able to pursue GCSE courses or interests that cannot be accommodated within the college day.
- A small number of students attend a range of alternative provision; the quality of teaching and attendance of students is checked carefully. Students benefit from opportunities to participate in courses that cannot be provided in college, such as jockeying or motor cycle maintenance.
- The good information, advice and guidance students receive about further education and careers, together with the broad and relevant curriculum, equip students extremely well for their next steps. For the last three years, all students have entered further education or training when they have left Lostock.
- Leaders ensure that students are prepared well for life in modern Britain, through careful curriculum planning and by reinforcing British values through the ethos of the college. They promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well in all aspects of their work.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements. Staff receive thorough training and leaders deal swiftly with any concerns relating to students' safety and well-being. The procedures to ensure the most vulnerable students are safe are exceptionally thorough and include work with outside agencies.
- The local authority stepped up the support to the college following the previous inspection. The brokered support from other schools, including coaching and specialist leader support, has helped to improve teaching and strengthen middle leadership.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the college to other parents. Those who contacted inspectors are extremely pleased with the education and care their children receive, stating for example that 'my child has come on in leaps and bounds', and 'I can't praise the school enough'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors reinforce the high aspirations for students. They have a good understanding of data and the college's performance, including how well different groups of students achieve.
 - Governors set aspirational targets for leaders, based on students' outcomes, and provide good challenge and support to make sure targets are met. They know how well teachers perform, robustly tackle under performance, and only allow staff to progress through the salary scale when there is clear evidence it is merited.
 - Governors are kept very well informed about the impact of pupil premium spending on the achievement of disadvantaged students. As a result of careful planning and regular checks for impact, disadvantaged students do just as well as others in the college. Governors make sure spending extends their experience and meets their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students uphold the behaviour code and are appreciative of the support that can be gained from the college's 'student services'.
- Positive relationships and mutual respect support teaching and learning throughout the college. Teachers are adept at making sure all students feel their contributions are valued and they experience success. This motivates students to engage well in lessons and to do their best. Students take pride in their work and present it to the best of their ability.
- Students are courteous and polite to each other around college. They look smart and look after the environment, including the many stimulating displays.
- Exclusions have reduced markedly following the introduction of an internal inclusion facility. This facility supports students at risk to stay in college and continue their education until they are ready to go back to the classroom. As a result, there are rarely severe disruptions to learning and occasional minor disruptions are dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- The vast majority of students are highly motivated to attend regularly, including those who had poor attendance in previous schools. Attendance is usually above average, although there are dips in some year groups. In Year 10, for example, 'student services' are working closely with students and their families to improve attendance and punctuality, which is having a positive impact.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Students have a mature approach to discussing issues and dilemmas. Their social skills are developed very effectively in all subjects and attention to their spiritual and cultural development is embedded in the ethos of the college. Students have diverse experiences, needs and backgrounds and they are highly respectful of individuality and cultural differences.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students feel extremely safe and secure and often refer to the 'family feel' of the college. Students grow in confidence and self-esteem because they feel extremely well cared for and valued.
- Many of the students who join the college at times other than at the start of Year 7 have moved because their previous schools were unable to meet their specific needs. The nurturing environment at Lostock helps all students develop the skills they need so they can move to the next stage of their education with confidence. They are able to stay in school, stay safe and achieve success.
- Students who spoke to inspectors said bullying is extremely rare. Where there have been isolated incidents in the past, they have been dealt with quickly in order to ensure students' safety and welfare. There have been no racist or homophobic incidents recorded in recent years and students are clear that they would not tolerate such infringements of the behaviour policy. Students are confident that any concerns they have will be acted on effectively.
- Students know how to avoid dangers associated with alcohol, drugs and violent behaviour. They develop a good understanding of fundamental values and laws of British society and of risks associated with extremism and radicalisation, through life skills lessons and associated topics in each subject.
- There are robust procedures to ensure students' safety and well-being at all times, including thorough risk assessments and child protection arrangements. Leaders act swiftly if there are any concerns.
- Leaders have reduced the use of alternative provision because they were not satisfied that students were thriving. Such provision is used only when it benefits the student, for example to attend specialist courses that cannot be offered in college. Students' attendance and achievement is checked very carefully.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching is based on teachers' strong subject knowledge and in-depth understanding of their students' learning and personal needs. Teachers usually plan interesting activities that meet students' varied needs. They question students effectively to probe and deepen their understanding and enable them to learn from each other in high quality discussion. In history, for example, students enjoyed playing the roles of American settlers based on their in-depth understanding of the context and challenges.
- Students enjoy the varied opportunities they have to solve problems and share ideas. This is seen frequently in English, science and subjects across the curriculum. In a Year 8 dance lesson, for example,

students planned together very effectively to translate a poem into dance.

- Staff are well informed about students' specific needs and set the same high expectations for achievement and behaviour for all students. Students with disabilities and those with special educational needs are included fully and supported effectively in lessons so they make good progress academically and grow in confidence. Where appropriate, students receive additional support to learn English or to fill gaps in their learning, helping them to learn quickly. 'Art therapy' and 'talking therapy' have proved effective in raising self-esteem and motivating students to attend.
- The most able students in each set usually make good progress but do not always make the rapid progress they are capable of. This is because activities are not always challenging enough and students are not given enough guidance on how to improve the quality of their work to reach the highest levels.
- Literacy and oral skills are promoted very well across all subjects. Teachers ensure students can use key vocabulary effectively, and speak and write about topics with confidence. Students are happy to share their ideas because they know their contributions are valued.
- Mathematical skills are not taught as effectively in other subjects. Leaders have recognised the need for further professional development to support the promotion of mathematics across the curriculum.
- There are some gaps in students' mathematical knowledge because teaching has not been good enough in the past. Teaching has improved recently, but assessment is not being used as effectively as it could be in order to make sure teaching builds systematically on students' prior knowledge.
- There are good systems to track students' progress and make sure support is given if students fall behind. However, assessment is used with varying success to plan lessons from day to day. There are times when students complete activities in lessons that do not extend or deepen their learning as well as they possibly could. This is because there is more of a focus on completing the set tasks than there is on deepening students' learning about key concepts or extending their skills.
- Teachers' marking has improved and attends to key literacy skills very effectively. It continues to be a focus in leaders' checks on teaching, in order to ensure it has maximum impact.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the college with varying prior attainment; however overall attainment on entry is well below average for each cohort. A relatively high proportion of students enter the college at times other than the start of Year 7, often into Key Stage 4 and often with gaps in their experience and learning.
- Students who are in the college from the start of Year 7 make very good progress from their starting points. There are good procedures to assess the needs of those who join the college at other times, so they receive targeted support to help them fill gaps in their learning.
- In 2014 students' attainment at GCSE improved significantly; the proportion of students attaining five GCSEs including English and mathematics at grade C and above, was closer to the national average than it has been for the last three years. College data and students' work indicates that this better performance at GCSE is being sustained. The college does not enter students early for GCSE.
- Students' progress in English is consistently good in all year groups, due to good teaching. In 2014 the proportion of Year 11 students who made expected and better than expected progress in English was above national, showing significant improvement from previous years.
- Teachers have made a concerted effort to improve students' literacy and oral skills in all subjects. As a result, students develop a wide vocabulary and contribute to discussion in lessons confidently and maturely. They learn from each other effectively; raising questions, respecting and building on ideas. In a Year 10 English lesson, for example, high level discussion enabled students to learn new vocabulary and develop their thinking about how Shakespeare used language features for effect.
- Students' reading and writing are also improving rapidly due to increased opportunities to reinforce skills in all subjects and guidance from teachers' marking of their work.
- Students' progress in mathematics is not strong over time, but shows recent improvement brought about by changes in teaching and leadership of mathematics. In 2014 the proportion of students who made expected or better progress from their starting points was below national. The current Year 11 have made better progress, especially those students who received additional support.
- Students' progress in mathematics is being checked carefully and college data show progress has quickened in each year group. However, there are still some gaps in students' knowledge and skills because teaching does not build on students' prior learning systematically enough. There are missed opportunities to promote students' mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- A small proportion of students enter the college with higher levels of attainment at Key Stage 2. These most able students make good progress in English, history, performing arts and sciences. Their progress

in other subjects is not as strong. There are also times when the more able students in each of the teaching groups do not make the most rapid progress they are capable of.

- The high proportion of disadvantaged students currently make just as good progress as the other students in college. There are no gaps in the attainment and progress of students in Year 11 and gaps are narrowing in other year groups. In 2014 disadvantaged students were half a grade behind others in college and other students nationally in English. In mathematics, disadvantaged students did just as well as others in college but were over a grade behind others nationally.
- Students from minority ethnic groups make at least as good progress as others in the college. Those speaking English as an additional language often make more rapid progress as their knowledge of the English language increases as a result of effective personalised support.
- Students with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress from their various starting points. Staff plan effective strategies to help students, including those with behavioural or communication difficulties, to engage fully in lessons.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------|---------|----------------------|--|
| | Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| | Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 106365 |
| Local authority | Trafford |
| Inspection number | 462301 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 280 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jenny Kilvert |
| Headteacher | Dawn Farrent |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 June 2013 |
| Telephone number | 0161 864 5700 |
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