



Joseph Leckie Community Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104243
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277113
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Philippa Francis HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Walstead Road West
School category	Community		Walsall
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Midlands WS5 4PG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 721071
Number on roll	1431	Fax number	01922 641497
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Keith Whittlestone

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 277113
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Joseph Leckie is a specialist technology college. It is larger than average, with 1374 pupils, including 215 in the sixth form. Many of its pupils are drawn from areas of significant economic and social deprivation. Around two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Pakistani and Indian heritage, and speak English as a second language. Over a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than average. The pupils' attainment when they join the school is well below average.

Many of the school's buildings are in need of renovation but the school has improved facilities where it can afford to and has plans to do more. The school experiences difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. Their turnover is high.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards.

Joseph Leckie Community Technology College is an inclusive school and provides good integrated care and extended services. Although standards in Year 9 are below average, the pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 3. This rate of progress is not sustained at Key Stage 4 and the pupils' achievement and standards are inadequate despite a slowly improving trend. The pupils make satisfactory progress in the sixth form.

The senior leadership team provides satisfactory leadership and management. Its members have had a positive influence on improving the personal development and well-being of pupils and on raising standards at Key Stage 3. The school's self-evaluation identifies the main strengths and weaknesses accurately, but is overgenerous in its assessment of the outcomes at Key Stage 4. For this reason, the inspection team does not agree with the school's view of its overall effectiveness, which the team judges to be inadequate.

The pupils enjoy their lessons. Attendance has improved strongly and is in line with the national figures. Behaviour is good. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory, with several strengths as well as a few areas of weakness.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall and especially successful in some instances, such as the provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, whose achievement is now satisfactory. A high turnover in staffing has hindered developments in some areas but the school remains focused on raising standards and has the capacity to improve. Very recent improvements in the teaching of literacy and in strengthening the quality assurance of lessons are starting to have a beneficial impact. The school is continuing to make improvements to its accommodation through careful use of financial resources and it provides satisfactory value for money. The governors are supportive but have not challenged the school sufficiently to account for the slow improvement at Key Stage 4.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school judges the effectiveness of the sixth form as satisfactory and inspectors agree. Standards are too low but results for the small number of pupils who take GCE AS and A-level examinations in mathematics are good. Achievement has improved in the last two years from a low point and is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The retention of pupils on sixth form courses is good. The recent addition of vocational courses and collaboration with a local college has broadened the

curriculum in line with the needs of pupils. Video-conferencing allows pupils to study a wider range of subjects, including law and psychology. Improvements in leadership and management mean that there is now a strong focus on improving standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve standards and achievement at Key Stage 4
- improve standards in the sixth form
- embed the recent improvements in monitoring and evaluating the pupils' performance
- strengthen governance to ensure that the school is held to account more rigorously for the performance of its pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Although standards in Year 9 are below average, the pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 3 from their low starting points. Their achievement is much better in mathematics and science than in English, but even in English, the pupils make satisfactory progress. Both boys and girls, and all the major ethnic groups, make faster progress than expected nationally. No groups underachieve. Standards have risen in all subjects, and particularly strongly in mathematics and science.

There has been far less improvement at Key Stage 4. In 2000, 30% of the pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C. The proportion rose to 39% in 2 of the intervening years but has fallen since 2003 and was 32% in 2005. On other measures, such as the average total points score, there have been similarly small rises. The gap between the national figures and the school's has barely narrowed and standards remain low. More significantly, the pupils have not sustained the rates of progress established at Key Stage 3 and their achievement is inadequate. Boys and girls make less progress than expected nationally, as do white British and some minority ethnic groups. A relatively high number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 join the school other than at the usual time and this contributes to the low level of achievement. A significant number of pupils from minority ethnic groups take extended holidays, meaning that they miss essential time in the school. The progress of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory because of good support they receive from teachers and support staff. In a few subjects, such as art and design, pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Skills in literacy have recently improved but not enough to enable pupils to tackle work of the expected standard in most areas of the curriculum.

Pupils start the sixth form with well below average attainment. The results on Level 3 courses are considerably lower than average. However, in relation to their starting points, most pupils make satisfactory progress. Retention rates are good and a high proportion of pupils successfully move into higher education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges personal development and well-being to be good and inspectors agree. The majority of pupils attend regularly, are punctual and enjoy their education. Pupils behave well in lessons and during informal break times. However, a few parents and pupils express concern about aspects of behaviour. There is very little bullying and pupils feel safe and confident in the support of staff should problems arise.

The school is working hard to encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle and this is starting to take effect. For example, pupils are encouraged to drink water as opposed to carbonated drinks. Since the last inspection, more students are participating in regular exercise because the number and range of clubs offering physical activities has improved. Pupils value these opportunities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies, tutorial sessions and lessons encourage pupils to develop spiritually. A 'Thought for the Day' shared at registration stimulates pupils to reflect on important features of daily life. Pupils relate well to each other, cooperating and collaborating well in group activities. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong because the school's expectations are made clear.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and to the wider community. They are responsive to the needs of others and willingly set about raising funds for charities. They are responsible and work hard to improve life at the school. An effective school council promotes the contribution of pupils' ideas. Pupils are mature and sensible when given responsibilities. The school regularly consults them and takes their views into account. Through work experience and the increasing use of work-related learning, pupils are adequately prepared for future employment. The number of pupils who go into further education is high.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching is effective in ensuring better progress in Key Stage 3 but not so successful in Key Stage 4. Learning in the sixth form is satisfactory. Teachers promote good attitudes and behaviour so pupils learn in a positive atmosphere. The majority of lessons are well managed with effective use of questioning that involves almost all of the pupils.

A recent focus on strengthening teachers' planning for literacy and for improving assessment is beginning to have a positive effect on learning. Other aspects, such as improving pupils' independent learning, need further emphasis because learning skills are not well developed. In less effective lessons, teachers dominate activities and do not ensure that pupils think for themselves. Initiatives to improve learning are too

recent to have had an impact on pupils' progress and examination results at Key Stage 4.

Planning for some groups, for instance pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, is good, often enabling them to make better progress than others. Able pupils are identified and planning for their needs is satisfactory. Planning for underachieving groups, for example, for Pakistani pupils, is inadequate. Planning to improve literacy, especially for pupils whose first language is not English, varies in effectiveness and is sometimes unsatisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. The personal development programme enables pupils to develop proper understanding of citizenship and work-related learning. They also know how to stay fit, safe and healthy.

Recent weaknesses in curricular planning for subjects, including English, information and communication technology, and design and technology are being resolved through new management appointments. These are too recent to have had an effect on outcomes for all students. Other subjects, such as art and design, provide a very effective curriculum where pupils achieve very well. Many pupils' standards of literacy remain too low because difficulties in staffing for English and literacy have hindered effective curricular development.

Suitable vocational courses exist in Years 10 and 11 and in the revised curriculum for the sixth form. For instance, pupils can study childcare courses in Years 10 and 11 which are helpful to their future employment opportunities. Pupils in the sixth form can now take foundation and intermediate vocational courses which are often more appropriate to their levels of attainment. Good links with a local college widen opportunities in areas such as hairdressing and construction. Extra-curricular activities are good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and welfare of pupils is given high priority in the school and is good. This means that pupils feel well supported and safe. These factors contribute considerably to each pupil's personal development. The fully extended school service is effective in improving the lives of a number of pupils and their families.

Procedures for protecting pupils are well established. Staff notice pupils who may be distressed or anxious and take appropriate and effective action. The few incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively because the school has well established procedures to identify and deal effectively with any instances that occur. A 'community cohesion' working party works effectively to combat racism.

The school works well with a wide range of support services and this contributes to the overall high quality of care provided. There are effective links with parents, carers

and support agencies. Health education is emphasised through a well considered personal, social and health education programme.

The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance for pupils in relation to the courses and programmes on offer is good. However, procedures to check on pupils' progress in tutorials to ensure they all reach their full potential are underdeveloped.

The school prioritises campus improvements in line with health and safety requirements. An overgrown and litter-filled brook that runs through the campus remains a significant health hazard. Risk assessments take place and the brook is fenced off and cleaned out annually but the potential for harm is high.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge leadership and management of the school as satisfactory, in contrast to the school's view that they are good. The school runs smoothly and leadership and management have had a positive impact on the personal development and well-being of pupils and the progress they make from Year 7 to 9 and in the sixth form. However, managers have had too little impact on improving the pupils' progress at Key Stage 4. The governors are aware of weaknesses in standards and achievements but have not challenged the school sufficiently to ensure improvement.

Recent changes to the leadership team have led to a more rigorous approach to seeking improvement. This is already enabling teachers to understand what makes a better lesson and how to challenge all groups of pupils to ensure that they achieve equally well. Teachers show a real enthusiasm and commitment to improvement.

The school correctly identifies its main strengths and weaknesses but is overgenerous in its assessment of its overall effectiveness. For instance, its evaluation of provision and outcomes at Key Stage 4 is not confirmed by an analysis of the data. Planning for improvement is adequate but does not focus with sufficient rigour on tackling the underachievement of specific groups.

The strengthened leadership team is now better placed to monitor the work of the school and to increase the school's capacity to improve. Much improved procedures, including rigorous faculty reviews, are now in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and there is a good track record of improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and in achievement at Key Stage 3.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Joseph Leckie Community Technology College Walstead Road West Walsall West Midlands WS5 4PG

4 November 2005

Dear Pupils

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your politeness, co-operation and assistance during our visit. We appreciated your comments and opinions. Most of you enjoy school, attend regularly and behave well in lessons. A few of you are worried about the behaviour of a small number of pupils in lessons and around the school but you told us that staff at the school support you and take action when needed to sort out problems.

Your teachers work hard to help you develop your personal skills and to teach you about the importance of having a healthy lifestyle. Many of you are thinking more carefully about what you eat and drink and how much exercise you take, but you must continue to take note of what your teachers tell you and take their advice seriously to improve your health.

Most of you make good progress from Year 7 to Year 9 and in the sixth form but do not do so well in Years 10 and 11. The results you obtain in examinations are not as good as they ought to be and these need to improve. We think your teachers can help you to improve by having higher expectations of you and encouraging you to think more for yourselves. Some of you told us that a few lessons do not challenge you enough. We think that your school needs to make some major improvements in your progress and results to make sure you all do as well as you can. We expect the senior leaders and the governors to look more carefully at what is working well and what needs to improve. Your school will be inspected again in a year's time to see how well it has tackled the areas which need improving.

We were impressed by the range of activities you are involved with outside the school day. Your efforts to help others through charitable work and fund-raising are good and this helps the school to be an important part of the community.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Francis HMI Lead Inspector