



New College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131945
LEA Leicester City
Inspection number 284337
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Colin Humphreys HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Glenfield Road
School category	Community		Leicester
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Leicestershire LE3 6DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2318500
Number on roll	1125	Fax number	0116 2322286
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Andy Brecon
Date of previous inspection	11 March 2002	Headteacher	Mr David Kershaw

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	22 March 2006 - 23 March 2006	284337

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

When New College was inspected in December 2003, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on five occasions to monitor its progress. The inspection of March 2006 was carried out by one HMI and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

New College is a larger than average secondary school situated in an area where there are significant levels of unemployment and social deprivation. A high proportion of students are entitled to free school meals. The school admits some children from traveller and refugee families, as well as pupils who have been excluded from other schools. The attainment of the students on entry to the school is well below expectations. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties is significantly above average.

The school has had to employ large numbers of temporary and unqualified teachers because of recruitment difficulties. A major building programme has caused a number of operational difficulties. Last year the governing body stepped down and the school is now being managed by an interim executive board (IEB). A new principal and executive principal have recently been appointed. The local authority and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), along with a number of seconded senior staff, are working with the school to help solve long standing and persistent problems.

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(4) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the 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 all areas of the school's work, including the sixth form.

The recently appointed executive principal and principal have skilfully stabilised the school, already made demonstrable improvements to the way in which the school is organised, carefully identified what needs to be done, and planned well for the future. They have been exceptionally well supported by experienced and well qualified senior managers who have been seconded to the school. Already these new leaders have made a significant difference and the school now has a strong capacity for further improvement. It is for this reason the school no longer requires special measures.

The school and inspectors agree that all areas of the school's work are inadequate. Standards in the school are very low and the students make poor progress. This has led to an unacceptable level of underachievement. The students lack confidence and high aspirations. Recently, behaviour has improved slightly but the students' attitudes and behaviour remain unsatisfactory. Levels of attendance are exceptionally low.

Although there are some well taught lessons, teaching is inadequate. The curriculum has been badly organised in the past and, despite recent improvements, still does not properly meet the students' needs. The care, support and guidance provided by the school have been inadequate because it has failed to help the students achieve their best.

Since the last inspection in 2003, the school has made insufficient improvement. Progress has quickened since the appointment of the new leadership team but, at present, the school gives poor value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 4

The sixth form provision is inadequate. The quality of teaching is frequently inadequate and unimaginative. The curriculum has been poorly managed and does not meet the students' needs. Students' personal development is inadequate and students are not sufficiently helped to develop the learning skills they need, particularly in working independently. Students do not have a coherent programme of planned activities outside their main areas of study. There are serious weaknesses in the guidance students are given in relation to how well they are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help students make better progress by improving teaching and learning and developing a well organised curriculum that meets their needs.
- Improve the students' personal development so students are more confident and have higher aspirations.
- Improve the sixth form provision.
- Raise attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards in the school are extremely low. Pupils have particularly poor basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Many speak poorly. The 2005 national test results for 14-year-olds were the lowest for three years and well below the national averages, particularly in English. The 2005 GCSE results were also poor, with just 10% of Year 11 gaining five or more A* to C grades. Too few students gained A* to C grades in information and communication technology, mathematics or physical education. A fifth of students left the school with no GCSE passes at all. Many students do not reach the targets the school predicts. Although the proportion of students passing examinations in the sixth form improved in 2005, standards are very low.

Students make unacceptably slow progress as they move through the school. Some achieved lower results at the end of Year 9 than they had achieved in their primary school. A few pupils make satisfactory progress but the overall picture is one of widespread underachievement. The White British students achieve less well than those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students with learning difficulties make much less progress than they should.

Sixth form students do not achieve as well as they should and some have been put on courses which are inappropriate. Recent attempts to improve this situation have made some modest improvements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 4

Students' personal development is inadequate and most students are not well prepared for their future life and well-being. Too many students lack confidence and self esteem and very few have high aspirations or believe they can do well at school. Levels of attendance are exceptionally low and many students' attitudes to learning are too casual. The number of fixed term exclusions is high although there has been some slight improvement of late. Whilst there has recently been some noticeable improvement in behaviour, a significant minority of students are still too disruptive. There is some bullying but students feel most staff will listen to them and take appropriate action. Students enjoy lessons where teaching is good but derive little enjoyment from school at other times. The recent introduction of a college council is a positive development but there are still too few opportunities for students to take on responsibilities. Most know how to adopt safe practices. Some students make a satisfactory contribution to

the life of the school. For example, sixth form performing arts students recently organised a successful school production involving younger students.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate. Students are beginning to show respect for the needs of others but not always as a matter of course. Feelings of trust and positive relationships are being nurtured through regular assemblies, structured tutorial activities, and personal development programmes. For some, the breakfast club provides a welcoming start to the day and an opportunity to build up social skills. Students have a very limited awareness of the cultural richness of society. Very few opportunities exist for students to make a contribution to their local community. Despite adequate awareness, many students do not adopt healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

There are examples of good teaching and some individual teachers have improved aspects of their work. However, students generally do not make enough progress because too much teaching is inadequate. Where it is good it is due to teachers' individual skills rather than to a consistent whole school approach to teaching and learning. In too many lessons work is ill matched to students' needs. For example, there is often insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils or the work is too difficult for lower-attaining pupils. Too much work is unfinished and poorly presented, showing that many students fail to take pride in their work. Some lessons are dull and not all teaching methods engage and encourage the students. Basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, are not consistently promoted. Teaching in the sixth form is frequently inadequate and unimaginative.

Teachers' inadequate management of low level disruption in some lessons leads to the students making poor progress. Some teachers are too ready to accept compliant behaviour as an indicator of a successful lesson instead of evaluating what the students have learnt. Assessment information is not always accurate and is not consistently used to plan lessons by building on students' previous learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate because it is not enabling students to achieve well enough. The leadership team has recently restructured the timetable, making some valuable improvements. Some sixth form groups are very small and do not provide value for money. Students in Years 10 and 11 are not guided skilfully enough into the right courses and so too many do not succeed. Aspects of GCSE coursework have been managed badly. There is a range of worthwhile extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport. The school has developed an alternative curriculum for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 but this is not sufficiently well coordinated. Year 10 students participate in

work experience placements but not enough has been done to ensure these placements are productive. Too many statutory requirements are not met. For example, there is no programme of education for sex and relationships and there is inadequate provision for special educational needs, religious education and daily acts of collective worship. The management of the programme for personal, social and health education is inadequate and in need of review and better coordination.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Care, support and guidance are inadequate. Unsatisfactory academic guidance contributes to the students' underachievement. The school has a wide range of data about the students but it is not used well. The school is introducing a more rigorous and accurate system for the collection and use of data for monitoring students' progress but this is in the early stages of development. Too few teachers explain to students what they have to do to improve their work. Many students are still not sufficiently aware of their targets. However, students in Year 11 are receiving valuable support from a range of extra classes, many of which are outside school hours.

A new and improved pastoral system is being developed. However, the quality of form tutors' work is too variable. Recent work to strengthen links with outside agencies to support the most challenging students is already having a positive effect. Students are well supported at transition from primary school to ensure they settle into the school satisfactorily. However, students in Years 9 and 11 are not always well supported with advice on the courses and career options that are available and some end up taking options that are not suited to their needs.

The school's internal arrangements for managing the most challenging students have recently improved but have a long way to go. Students with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. There are properly detailed child protection procedures and appropriate staff training is taking place, although this is not completely up to date. Arrangements for risk assessment are inadequate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Until recently, leadership and management have been weak because students have not been offered an acceptable standard of education. Last year the governing body was ineffective in taking the necessary action to stop the school's decline and failed to ensure that all statutory requirements were met. A few months ago the governing body stood down and an IEB was formed to become the responsible body for the school. The IEB took a while to become established but has recently taken some decisive action to address the school's problems.

Previously, the senior staff of the school and most middle managers had failed to ensure that students made enough progress and achieved improved results in national tests and examinations. At the time, many staff were unsure of their specific responsibilities and some lacked proper job descriptions.

However, in recent weeks, there has been a truly remarkable change in the school. The new executive principal and principal, with effective help from a team of experienced and able senior staff seconded to the strategic leadership team, have successfully started the process of turning the school around. Their self-evaluation is incisive and accurate and their diagnosis of what needs to be done has been very sharp. The leadership team has started to create a common sense of purpose across the school, raised the morale of staff and students, and stabilised the worst features of the students' behaviour. The team members have already made demonstrable improvements to the way in which the school is organised and drawn up coherent plans for the school's future development. There is now a clear strategic direction and a strong commitment from the leadership team to provide the school with the support it needs until such time that it can stand on its own two feet. It is a remarkable achievement for the leadership team to have made such a good start. Staff and pupils mostly speak very positively about the recent improvements. Even though there is still a great deal to do to improve the consistency of middle management, the effectiveness of the current leadership team gives the school a strong capacity for further improvement.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	4	4
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4	
The behaviour of learners	4	
The attendance of learners	4	
How well learners enjoy their education	4	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	4	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	4	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4	4

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	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	No	No

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	No
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	No
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	No
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	No
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	No
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

As you know we recently inspected your school and I am writing to say what we found. First I want to thank all of you who helped with the inspection. You were very honest about your school, which was helpful.

We think your school still has a great deal of things that need to be put right. The school does too little to help you make progress and many of you do not achieve as much as you should. We thought that behaviour was a little bit better but it is still not good enough. Your attendance is very poor overall. We think the school should build up your confidence a good deal more and create an atmosphere where you believe you can do well. Although there is some good teaching, it is not good enough. Many things have been badly organised in your school and things have been left in a bad state for far too long.

I know this paints a very gloomy picture. The good news is that we think that the school now has people running it who can really make a difference. Mr Kershaw and Mrs Brown are good principals. They know what needs to be done and have good plans for the future. Many of you said that you thought things were already getting a little better and you liked the improvements. This is why we have said that the school should not be in special measures any more. Of course it takes more than a few able leaders and managers to turn a school around. You have an important role to play and must take your responsibilities very seriously. The school will never be as good as it could be unless you all contribute to making it better.

We have told the school it still has to work hard to improve all aspects of its work. We have given the school a notice to improve which means we will come back again to see if things are any better.

Best wishes for the future.