



Lostock College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106365
LEA Trafford
Inspection number 284708
Inspection dates 8 February 2006 to 9 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Austin HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Selby Road
School category	Community		Stretford
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Manchester, Lancashire M32 9PL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 864 5700
Number on roll	473	Fax number	0161 864 4975
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jenny Kilvert
Date of previous inspection	7 May 2003	Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Farrent

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 8 February 2006 - 9 February 2006	Inspection number 284708
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors accompanied by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Lostock College is a smaller than average secondary modern school for students aged 11 to 16 years. There are more boys than girls on its roll of 473 students. It has specialist status for performing arts and holds the Artsmark Gold award. The college is situated in an area of Trafford where the level of social deprivation is above the national norm. The proportion of students eligible for free schools meals is above average. The mobility rate of students entering and leaving the college at other than the usual times is well above average. There are 38 students at the early stages of learning English as an additional language; a figure which is in line with the national picture. The range of students' attainment on entry is restricted by the local authority's policy of selection. The college includes a resource base for nine students with moderate learning difficulties. Although the proportion of students with statements of special educational need is average, overall the percentage with learning difficulties is well above average.

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, HMCI is of the opinion that this college requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The college is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

Significant improvement is required because the standards students reach in English and mathematics by the time they leave the college are not high enough. Girls make poor progress in developing the basic skills in these subjects. In Years 7 to 9 students do not do well enough in the foundation subjects, including performing arts, which is the college's specialism. Overall, teaching and learning is not consistently of sufficient quality to ensure that all students make the progress of which they are capable. In too many lessons, teaching does not engage and enthuse students so that many lack a positive approach to learning. This is compounded by the lack of consistently high expectations regarding standards of both work and behaviour. The curriculum offered is satisfactory overall with strengths in vocational provision at Key

Stage 4. Staff know the students well and appropriate support is available when needed. Good provision is made for students with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language.

The college has not made adequate progress in addressing the issues raised by the previous inspection. However, its capacity to improve is satisfactory because the recently appointed headteacher has articulated clearly an ambition for the college and is leading staff resolutely in pursuit of this. Aply supported by a new senior team, suitable systems are being established to bring about the range of improvements required.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to engage students more effectively in their learning.
- Improve the use of assessment in lessons to raise expectations and ensure that all students reach their potential.
- Ensure that behaviour is managed consistently well across the college in support of students' personal development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Students join the college with levels of attainment that are well below the national average. During Key Stage 3 they make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science, maintaining the standards expected from their starting point. In English they make good progress, improving to reach standards that are closer to the average although still below it. However, there is widespread underachievement in the foundation subjects at Key Stage 3. Students do not make sufficient progress because

the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects, including the performing arts, is too variable and not good enough taken as a whole.

Overall, students make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 4. GCSE results have risen substantially over the last 5 years from very low to below average in 2005, following the introduction of a range of vocational courses. However, only 14% of students gained 5 or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. Standards in these subjects declined and are well below average; those reached by girls are very low. For all groups of students progress in English slows markedly at Key Stage 4. Students leave the college with basic skills which are very underdeveloped. The strongest performance is in subjects related to the expressive and performing arts, although the college did not meet its targets for these subjects in 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 4

The personal development of students is unsatisfactory. There is no systematic planning to promote and monitor students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Instances of good practice were observed. For example, a

Year 10 assembly was effective in raising students' moral and social awareness. The personal, social, health and religious education programme does not provide sufficient continuity to support students' well-being to advantage and tutor periods are not used well enough to set expectations. Attitudes to learning are inconsistent. Behaviour in lessons is unsatisfactory because teachers often do not manage students effectively, nor do they always engage their interest in lesson activities. Behaviour in social areas is generally better. The college's exclusion rate is high as leaders have adopted stricter policies. This approach has slightly improved behaviour overall. Attendance is currently well below average. Punctuality to college and to lessons is slack. Students are involved in the running of the school through the College Council by, for example, their involvement in staff appointments. They have access to a suitable variety of extracurricular activities but continuous participation is affected through the absence of students. The college is making good efforts to promote awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Work related learning has been established in Key Stage 4 but is not yet fully developed across the curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate leading to significant underachievement in lessons, particularly in the foundation subjects, in Years 7 to 9. There are examples of good practice but the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. Students make good progress when lesson planning ensures there are clear, manageable steps in learning; teachers make the objectives clear; students are given the opportunity to explore issues themselves in a variety of

group and independent work and plenary sessions are used effectively to reinforce and review learning. Teaching assistants support students well in lessons. Students make particularly good progress when they are given the opportunity to discuss and explore ideas amongst themselves or are challenged to explain to others. In a Year 11 science lesson, for instance, an animated audio-visual presentation, coupled with effective questioning by the teacher and a practical experiment, enabled students to understand rapidly not only how enzymes work but also the effect of temperature changes on their efficiency.

Where the quality of teaching and learning is inadequate teachers' expectations of behaviour and standards of work are too low. Students fail to stay on task because activities are not always well matched to their needs or capabilities or do not adequately engage their interest. Control and management of students is often weak and this inhibits learning. Objectives are unclear and teachers' planning does not always indicate how students are to build effectively on previous learning. The specialist area of the college's work is not acting as an effective catalyst to improve teaching and learning.

There is a good system of setting annual targets based on students' prior attainment and their progress towards these targets is monitored closely. This process effectively identifies students in need of further support. In lessons there are examples of good practice where assessment information is used well to plan for the progress of groups of differing ability in lessons. In the best lessons pupils are involved in evaluating their own work and that of others. However this is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is well tuned to students' needs, aptitudes and aspirations. At Key Stage 4 a large proportion of students take the opportunity to pursue a broader work related curriculum, not only through the GNVQ courses offered by the school but also through attendance at local colleges. Students are also able to take GCSE examinations in French in Year 9. Good provision is made for students with English as an additional language and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Individual tuition and support in class are effective in enabling these students to take a full part in lessons and make good progress. Similarly pupils with learning difficulties have effective support in lessons and achieve well. Provision for gifted and talented students is undeveloped. Staffing difficulties hamper continuity and consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. There are college policies for developing literacy and numeracy, as well as dedicated lessons in Years 7 to 9 for literacy, but the policies are not implemented consistently across the curriculum.

There is a satisfactory range of extracurricular activities such as clubs for making animated films, drama and science as well as sporting activities. Students have the opportunity to exercise responsibilities as prefects, take sports and dance leaders' awards, and help with dance lessons in primary schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The college provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its students. Statutory procedures and policies are in place, but some systems are too informal, for example, the recording of fire drill outcomes and there are persistent, potentially hazardous defects in the shabby D-block. Induction systems for Year 7 students are sound. Learning mentors and other staff provide good support to meet the diverse pastoral needs of students and the college has developed useful new initiatives to promote the inclusion of 'at-risk' groups. There are suitable contacts with external agencies to offer extra support to vulnerable children. Most students feel safe from bullying and feel they have an adult who will provide an effective 'listening ear'. Parents and carers are broadly supportive of the work of the college but would welcome closer ties to support their child's learning. Procedures for tracking and monitoring the progress of students are good. Older students are well informed about a broad range of options for continuing their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The recently appointed headteacher has set a clear direction for the college and rapidly gained the commitment of the staff to this. She has recruited a capable senior team with the range of skills required to move the college forward. Working collaboratively, appropriate priorities have been established and planned for. These arise from the college's commitment to inclusion and an effective evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. Well considered systems to address these are at varying but early stages of development and implementation. More urgency is required in embedding them fully at all levels. In a number of key areas, including performing arts, staffing difficulties have hindered developments significantly. The role of middle leaders is developing appropriately with robust procedures in place to hold them to account. Suitable training opportunities have been provided to assist them in meeting these new responsibilities.

The governing body plays a satisfactory, supportive role in the leadership of the college. The quality and breadth of information provided for governors has improved so they are well placed to extend the challenge they provide to the senior leadership team. Sound financial management systems are in place and resources are focused efficiently on the college's priorities, so that it is now giving satisfactory value for money.

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

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

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

Following our recent visit to your college, we would like to thank all of you who helped us during the inspection. We would also like to tell you what we found. We have decided your college should be given a 'Notice to Improve'. We believe it is important that you understand what this means, what we are asking the college to do over the coming year and, most importantly, how you can help.

A Notice to Improve means that although your college does some things well, in some important areas there are weaknesses that need to be put right.

We have asked the college to improve by

- raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics, so that you leave school with better examination results
- making learning as interesting as possible so that you pay attention and are keen to do well
- helping you to behave well, attend regularly and arrive on time.

What you can do to help is:

- work as hard as possible
- listen carefully to your teachers
- complete your homework
- behave sensibly so that everyone can get on with their work in class
- attend college every day and come on time.

It is important to stress that there are many good things about your college. For example, those of you who find learning difficult get the help you need. Many of you in Key Stage 4 benefit from the range of vocational courses provided, including those held at other colleges. We think that the college can improve quickly with your help. Inspectors will return next year to find out how well you are doing.