



# Joseph Leckie Community Technology College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 104243  
**Local Authority** Walsall  
**Inspection number** 294505  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Nigel (Nick) Pett

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Walstead Road West
<b>School category</b>	Community		Walsall
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		WS5 4PG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 721071
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1234	<b>Fax number</b>	01922 641497
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	231	<b>Chair</b>	Michael Sweeney
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Whittlestone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2005		

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<b>Age group</b> 11–19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 February –1 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 294505
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a large college. Many of its pupils are drawn from areas with significant social problems. The college provides a full range of extended services to its pupils and students and the local community, and has specialist status for technology. Around two thirds of the pupils and students are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian heritage, and speak English as a second language. Many of the buildings are in need of renovation. The college experiences difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving college. Many of its aspects are good and the leadership and management have effectively addressed the key issues from the last inspection report and have been a key factor in the progress made. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the college no longer requires significant improvement.

Pupils' achievement and standards are satisfactory. Attainment on entry is well below average and many pupils have limited literacy skills and learning difficulties. Although achievement is stronger in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form it is now broadly satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results improved markedly in 2006. However, although this is an inclusive college that works very hard to help its pupils, there are still pockets of underachievement amongst the different groups of pupils. The improving achievement reflects the better use of assessment data to identify those pupils who are underachieving, which has improved teaching and learning. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, many lessons are good. Improvements can be linked directly to the effective monitoring of lessons and the very good support given to teachers. This has improved the level of challenge in most lessons but is not uniform enough across all lessons at the moment. Despite the school doing all it can to deal with the problem, the recruitment and retention of staff is difficult and this undermines the continuity of some pupils' learning. Although the benefits of technology college status are being increasingly felt, particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), not all subjects have embraced the benefits to improve learning and in encouraging pupils to develop, plan and communicate their ideas more effectively. Some poor accommodation restricts opportunities in this respect.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good. Pupils from the many ethnic backgrounds mix well and most enjoy good relationships, both in class and around the college. Behaviour is generally good and most pupils are very polite to visitors and want to talk about their college, of which they are proud. They support college activities well, and take advantage of the courses provided in the good curriculum. It is well designed to meet pupils' interest and aspirations and to develop self esteem. The care, guidance and support systems are good. Pastoral care is a strength and the full extended school services support pupils and the community very well. The procedures for tracking pupils' performance are good. However, there is insufficient involvement of pupils in assessing their own progress to help them understand what they have to do to improve further. Academic guidance is satisfactory, although improving.

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior staff give good direction and monitoring of the college's work is good. Subject and pastoral leaders are also good and are working well to continue to improve pupils' achievement. The governors now have a very clear understanding of the college's strengths and the areas it needs to improve. They are supporting and challenging the college well. The college has good capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision has improved and is now good because of the good leadership and management. Three quarters of the pupils in Year 11 stay on to the sixth form despite competition from local grammar schools and academies. Students' attainment on entry is much lower than average but there are many able students who perform well. Fifty six gained university places last year, including to Oxford and Cambridge. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall and, although standards have improved, they remain below average overall. Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding lessons. The curriculum is good. The retention of pupils on the wide range of courses is excellent. The monitoring of students' progress is good with a strong focus on care, support and guidance to improve standards.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all groups of pupils are consistently challenged to raise their achievement.
- Improve the way that pupils are involved in assessing their own performance to speed up their progress by consistently helping them to understand how they can raise their standards.
- Improve the way that subjects are using the technology specialism to improve learning methods.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average. Many pupils enter the college, both in Year 7 and in other year groups at different times of the year, with limited English language skills. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good and standards in the national tests are broadly average. GCSE results and pupils' achievement were a concern at the last inspection and there has been considerable improvement as shown by the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A\* to C grades increasing from 32% in 2005 to 44% in 2006. The percentage gaining 5A\* to G passes also rose. This is satisfactory achievement. Targets for 2007 are equally challenging. Given their starting points, there is still further room for improvement in the proportion of pupils that reach the very highest levels. There are still some inconsistencies in the achievement amongst different groups of pupils, especially white boys and girls. Pupils with high prior attainment in Year 9 continue to do well. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, although the small number of hearing impaired pupils do well. In the sixth form, attainment on entry is below average although there are some very able students. Students' progress is at least satisfactory, and although standards are below average overall they are above average on vocational courses.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Pupils enjoy college, and attendance is satisfactory. The majority of pupils respond well in lessons. Behaviour and pupils' attitudes towards each other and to adults are generally good, although a minority of pupils do not respond sensibly. Although parents and pupils report a small amount of bullying and racial incidents, pupils know how to deal with it and say that they feel safe in college. They know and respect the sanctions and rewards used to promote good behaviour. They are confident and considerate of the feelings of others when asked to evaluate each others' work. Most pupils take living a healthy life style very seriously. Pupils enjoy being part of the college and the student council operates well, putting across its ideas and those drawn from year groups about college life very successfully. Pupils participate well in the wide range of clubs and make a good contribution to the college community as well as supporting charitable activities in the wider community. They take good advantage of opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to help them prepare well for their future learning and employment. Other relevant skills are fostered through participation in work experience, Young Enterprise, which includes the sixth form, and through use of some high quality ICT facilities. The contribution of the sixth form to college and the community is good through involvement in the student council and the responsibility they undertake for mentoring younger pupils.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Although teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form, good and outstanding lessons were seen throughout showing that improvements have been effective since the last inspection. However, the difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers still leads to the quality of some pupils' learning being inconsistent and pupils not being challenged enough in a minority of lessons. Where teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects and plan lessons well with clear objectives, the work matches pupils' and students' needs well. This is helped well when teaching groups are set by ability and lessons are brisk and interesting, but learning slows when work is too similar and lessons are slow. Occasionally, behaviour is not well managed. Equally, in some lessons, pupils are far too dependent on their teachers and are not encouraged to develop their answers to raise their literacy standards. Assessment procedures are beginning to be used effectively to set targets and review pupils' progress but the quality of written feedback still varies too much. Learning is good where pupils and students take the opportunities to share their ideas and evaluate their own work and that of others, but there is scope for greater use of such valuable methods to focus on the next steps in raising standards. There is increasingly good

use of computers and interactive whiteboards to allow different teaching approaches and make learning more exciting. In other respects there is insufficient focus on exploring what the benefits of technology college status can bring in terms of new approaches to learning. Some sixth form lessons use video conferencing well, incorporating some of the benefits of the school's thrust for the greater use of technology in learning. Teaching assistants give pupils good support so that those who find learning difficult or who have limited command of English are fully included. Those pupils with hearing impairments are especially well supported.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum meets the particular needs and aspirations of pupils and students well. There are good opportunities for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through booster classes and clubs. There are already significant benefits from technology college status in terms of better resources and improved expertise in ICT. Pupils benefit in preparing for their future by all having to study a design and technology subject at Key Stage 4. However, although there are examples of subjects across the curriculum using problem solving approaches to learning prompted by the approaches being used in technology subjects, there is not enough innovative thinking in that respect in order to give pupils greater responsibility for their own learning. The shortcomings in accommodation are limiting the development of technology and science. There are good progression paths into the sixth form and a wide range of academic, vocational and college based courses are offered at foundation to advanced levels across the 14 to 19 age range. Such opportunities increase opportunities for success across the whole ability range. Distance learning is used successfully in the sixth form, for example in law and psychology. The numerous opportunities for pupils and students to take part in visits, sporting, musical and drama activities enrich their experiences. Personal, social and health education programmes are good, including in the sixth form.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The pastoral care of pupils is very good. Pupils have confidence in the staff and feel that they can express their concerns. They benefit from the codes of conduct which are generally consistently applied around the college but there is some inconsistency in lessons. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are good, with thorough risk assessments. Support systems are very well developed and vulnerable pupils are very well supported to maintain their education. The behaviour and learning mentors and links with professionals from a wide range of services provide effectively for pupils' and students' diverse individual needs, and support the community. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Tracking systems which inform teachers of pupils' progress and identify those who need additional support and guidance have been used

well to identify underachievement and some Year 11 pupils, for example, have been profitably earmarked for concentrated individual support. However, assessment data is not always used effectively to inform lesson planning and to ensure that pupils are always challenged appropriately to tackle the underachievement amongst different minority ethnic groups. The support for pupils with learning needs and disabilities is well organised and for pupils at an early stage of learning English is satisfactory. Pupils are well advised about different opportunities in courses and careers. In the sixth form, students are guided carefully to start appropriate courses and then closely monitored and supported by their tutors to complete their studies to enter higher education or a career path. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory and most feel that their children are cared for well. Links with other organisations and external agencies also contribute well to the quality of care through the college's extended support services.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The good drive for improvement at all levels of leadership is seen in the way that weaknesses highlighted at the last inspection have been tackled, and the way that the college supports pupils and students to improve. The impact has been seen to good effect, for example in the recently improved results in Key Stage 4. The good leadership of the headteacher and the senior leadership team, including in the sixth form, give a clear sense of direction and purpose. The good procedures for monitoring and evaluating provide senior staff and governors with an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. There is a healthy realism of what has still to be achieved in order to maintain the momentum of improvement. Because of staffing difficulties, the school knows that pupils will be not stretched fully in all lessons and, therefore, being given equal opportunities. Consequently, senior staff are vigilant in their monitoring of lessons, clear in their feedback to teachers on strengths and weaknesses, and prompt in follow up action. Meeting with middle managers during the inspection served to illustrate another equally competent level of leadership and management in the college. The middle managers are well equipped to ensure that the benefits of technology college status are felt even more and to build further on assessment through the greater involvement of pupils. Many staff are involving themselves voluntarily in support groups, sharing their methods which are improving overall practice. The governing body has worked very hard to improve the way that it operates and is now working well in partnership with the college both to support and challenge where necessary. It offers very well informed support in the quest to secure continuing improvement in standards and accommodation.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
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

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

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the very courteous way in which you received us during the inspection. We appreciated the willingness of all of you to talk to us about the college and the good humour which many of you displayed. We found that your college no longer needs the Notice to Improve which was given at the end of the inspection in November 2005. This is because your progress and examination results have improved. But, there is still the need for those of you in Years 10 and 11 to improve even more.

- Here are some of the good points.
- Most of you behave well, enjoy college and feel safe there.
- You are given very good support when you have personal problems and the full extended school services are very helpful to you and the community.
- Most of you are aware of what it is to have a healthy lifestyle and try to have one.
- The teaching you receive and the progress you make are satisfactory and, importantly, are improving.
- The curriculum is good and gives you opportunities to continue in education or to find suitable careers, with many of you staying on to the sixth form.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working very well together to improve your opportunities.
- These are the things we would like the college to improve.
- Ensure that all of you are consistently challenged fully to do your best in all lessons as happens in many lessons at the moment.
- Involve you more in working out how well you are doing and make sure that you really understand how you can improve your work.
- Improve the way that the specialist technology status is helping all subjects to improve your learning as it has begun to do with your opportunities in the use of ICT.

We hope that you will continue to play your part in improving the college by working well with your teachers.