

John Leggott Sixth Form College

Inspection Report 14 – 18 May 2007

Audience
Post-sixteen

Published
June 2007

Provider reference
130588

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on students and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. John Leggott Sixth Form College is a large, well subscribed, open access sixth form college located in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, serving a mixed urban and rural community. Established in 1968, its primary focus is on the education of full-time students aged 16-19. The college's mission is 'to be a centre of excellence providing high quality educational opportunities in a supportive environment'.
2. North Lincolnshire has a population of around 153,000. The majority of students at the college come from the North Lincolnshire area, although the college draws enrolments from a wider geographical catchment, including parts of Lincolnshire, East Riding of Yorkshire, Doncaster and Nottinghamshire. There are 11 local schools and one special school within North Lincolnshire and the college is situated adjacent to North Lindsey College of general and further education. In 2005/06, 38.5% of pupils in North Lincolnshire achieved five general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, lower than the national average for England.
3. The college offers a range of academic and vocational programmes, with a significant proportion of students aged 16-18 studying subjects at general certificate of education advanced (GCE A) level and general certificate advanced subsidiary (GCE AS). In addition, there is a small part-time adult education programme at its West Common Lane site and outreach teaching centres at two local schools, with the majority of these students enrolled to either level 1 or 2 courses.
4. At the time of inspection, there were 1,914 full-time students, mostly aged 16-18, and 382 part-time students, most aged 19 or over, enrolled at the college and also 110 international students. Some 5% of students were of minority ethnic heritage, higher than the local community of 2.5%. Since the last inspection, the college received the Queen's Anniversary prize for further and higher education and the Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Award for effective partnership working with local primary schools.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: grade 1
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

5. John Leggott College is a good college with some outstanding features. The college successfully raises the aspirations of students who have previously not succeeded in education and gives them a sense of genuine accomplishment. Achievements for those aged 16-18 on advanced programmes of study are outstanding, based on the significant progress made by the majority of students in relation to their starting points. For the small proportion of students aged 19+ who study at the college, achievement and standards are generally good. On some AS and A level subjects success rates, high grade passes and value added are low. Level 2 success rates have improved, although performance is variable by subject. Students develop a wide range of skills that effectively contribute to their future social and economic wellbeing and a significant proportion progress to higher levels of study or employment.
6. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers effectively build up students' knowledge incrementally, giving a solid foundation for further study. Students enjoy their lessons and develop good study skills, although in some lessons, the most able students are not always sufficiently challenged.
7. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. Very strong partnerships exist with local primary and secondary schools. The range of courses and flexibility of the curriculum is outstanding and well designed to meet the needs of students aged 16-18. Support and guidance for students are good. There is a wide range of well used services to support students' academic and pastoral needs. There is very good one-to-one support both in and out of lessons. The quality of group tutorials for students on advanced level courses is too variable. The college is not sufficiently thorough in communicating learning support needs and evaluating the impact and quality of its support.
8. Leadership and management are good. The principal and managers at all levels provide clear leadership. There are very good specialist resources that are utilised particularly well. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. Quality assurance processes are generally good, but the college does not sufficiently systematically monitor and review some important aspects of its work. Financial management is strong.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

9. The effectiveness of the college's quality improvement procedures is good. The quality assurance process has strong features, such as a comprehensive internal inspection process. The college has managed growth in the number of students effectively, with a significant number of students continuing to make progress well beyond that expected, given their prior qualifications. The college has clearly identified curriculum areas that are underperforming, and strengthened staffing where needed. However, the college does not systematically monitor and evaluate some important aspects of its provision. Self-assessment in subject areas is thorough and largely accurate, but for the whole college, a few areas for improvement are overlooked and some key strengths are overstated. Staff are very supportive of the leadership shown by the principal.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

10. The college has made good progress in tackling areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) success rates show steady improvement since 2004, for students aged 16-18, and lie broadly in line with the most recent national average. There has been significant refurbishment and expansion of accommodation with an impressive new foyer and improvements in areas such as art, design, textiles and science and in extending the refectory. However, general growth in student numbers has brought added pressures, particularly in students' social areas at peak times in the day. The provision of management information and data to subject areas is now good. The college recognises that the monitoring of equality and diversity has been inconsistent. Overall, the promotion of equal opportunities is good.

Key strengths

- excellent achievement by students aged 16-18 on level 3 programmes in relation to their starting point
- good teaching and learning
- outstanding approach to social and educational inclusion
- broad range of programmes to meet the needs and interests of students
- outstanding partnerships with local schools and the community which enrich opportunities for students
- good formal and informal one-to-one support
- high quality specialist resources that effectively support learning
- clear leadership across the college

- strong financial management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- low success rates, high grade passes and value added on some AS and A level courses
- the variable success rates on some level 2 courses
- the quality of delivery of group tutorials for advanced level students
- the effectiveness of arrangements for monitoring and evaluating aspects of the college's work.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: grade 1

Contributory grades:

Students aged 19 or over

Good: grade 2

11. Achievements for students aged 16-18 are outstanding. The vast majority of students who study level 3 programmes, the college's main provision, make significant progress in relation to their starting points. Exceptional progress is made by the high proportion of students who enter the college with lower than average GCSE scores. These students are set challenging targets and many markedly exceed their predicted grades.
12. Success rates for those aged 16-18 at all levels, improved in 2005/06, to be above the most recent national averages. Success rates on GCE A level programmes are very high and show a strong upward trend. The unusual dip in success rates on GCE AS and vocational programmes in 2004/05, recovered in 2005/6, and in-year module results indicate this improvement has been maintained. Pass rates at GCE A level and on all advanced vocational programmes, are consistently outstanding. For advanced vocational programmes there is excellent achievement of high grades, although at intermediate level this achievement is more uneven.
13. Success rates at level 2 have improved steadily over three years to be in line with those of similar colleges. Outcomes for students taking GCSE courses improved in 2005/06, although there was variability by subject and in the achievement of those gaining A*-C grades. In the same year, success rates for vocational intermediate courses fell to below the national average, predominantly due to low retention rates on two out of the five programmes offered. The college self-assessment report accurately recognised this and remedial actions taken this year have resulted in high in-year retention on all of these vocational courses.
14. Achievement and standards for those aged 19+ are good. Success rates are above national averages, though they fell at levels 1 and 2 in 2005/06. Success rates improved considerably at level 3 with particularly strong achievement at GCE A level, although they are low and declining on GCE AS courses.
15. The self-assessment process is used effectively to help focus and drive improvements in learner achievement. It clearly identifies subjects where

- success rates, high grades and value added are low and these are effectively tracked at subject level.
16. Performance by different groups of students is reviewed and broadly analysed by the college. In 2005/06, most minority ethnic groups achieved very well. Students with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress in developing skills to support independent living.
 17. Students enjoy their studies and there is good attendance at lessons. The standard of most students' work is good. Many develop excellent levels of self-awareness and are able to articulate their views and ideas well. This, along with generally high key skill achievement, contributes very effectively to support students' future social and economic well being. High and increasing numbers of students successfully progress into further education, higher education or employment.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

18. Teaching and learning are good. Some practice is outstanding. Students develop sound study skills and subject knowledge. The college is very good at helping students to build up their knowledge incrementally, giving a solid foundation for further study. A motivational praise culture has been established, and students respond well to feedback on their progress. Many have increased confidence and skills, although in some lessons the most able students are not always sufficiently challenged. Key skills provision has been successfully integrated to make it relevant and manageable.
19. Good practice is shared and celebrated through dissemination events and many teachers have incorporated new techniques or resources to successfully support learning. A virtual learning environment (VLE) is being developed well across the college.
20. Assessment is good overall. In the best examples, students have clear guidelines for improvement, particularly in relation to exam criteria. However, in a few cases there is insufficiently clear guidance for students to improve on specific areas of their work. A powerful tracking system has been developed by college staff to capture information on students' work, mapped against their estimated grades and some subjects used this particularly effectively.
21. In some cases the quality of analysis of teaching and learning is insufficiently robust to bring about improvements. Records of observations

- do not consistently focus on learning. The college's self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths in this area, but areas for development are less well defined.
22. All students entering college with low entry points have a formal initial assessment, and the rest are interviewed to calculate their expected grades. This is effective in identifying where students need additional support. Those entering the college with low grades are nurtured to maximise their potential and to retain them on their courses.
 23. The range of courses and flexibility of the curriculum is outstanding and well designed to meet the needs of students aged 16-18. There is a very wide choice of GCE A level and AS subjects, an increasing range of vocational courses and courses to promote participation in further education for students with low prior achievement.
 24. The college is highly regarded in the locality for its extensive partnerships and effectiveness in responding to the needs of the local community and employers. The college has recently received a Beacon Award to recognise its exceptional relationships with primary and secondary schools. This work has been highly effective in increasing enrolment of students from groups under-represented in further education. Strong links aimed at improving progression to higher education have been established with a range of universities. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding.
 25. The range of activities on the college enrichment programme and within the curriculum is very good. There are regular educational visits, including a recent trip by geography students to China. However, the timetable restricts students' choice of enrichment activities and attendance on the enrichment programme is low. There are good opportunities for students to contribute to their local community; for example, students from the hockey and rugby academies teach their skills to primary school pupils. Curriculum projects with local employers enhance students' learning, although the college recognises there are insufficient opportunities for those studying on vocational courses to undertake work experience.
 26. Students receive good support and guidance. Arrangements for transition from secondary schools are thorough and help students settle quickly. A team of specialist staff provides a wide range of well used services to support student achievement. One-to-one support is strong and support for individual needs is readily available. Learning mentors are effective in supporting the development of students' study skills. Students appreciate the commitment of teachers to support them both in and out of lessons.

Support assistants provide very good support in class, particularly for learners with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. There are effective systems for monitoring students' progress and attendance.

27. The tutorial programme successfully integrates aspects of personal and social development and deals well with healthy living, relationships, social and moral issues and handling finance. Tutorials for students on level 2 courses are effective in meeting their needs. However, the quality of group tutorials for students on advanced level courses is too variable. Activities are often insufficiently challenging to sustain students' interest.
28. The college is not sufficiently thorough in communicating learning support needs and evaluating the impact and quality of support to improve the services it provides for students. Students on the college foundation programme have detailed individual learning plans that are used well to record progress.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

29. Leadership and management are good. The principal and managers at all levels of the college, provide clear leadership. A highly inclusive culture has been successfully fostered to create an environment in which students achieve exceptionally well. Since the last inspection learner numbers have increased dramatically and this growth has been managed very effectively. Links with local schools, community agencies and other providers are strong and the college is held in high regard within its local community.
30. Quality assurance processes are good. Internal inspections undertaken by key college managers are comprehensive and in many cases, yield perceptive and constructive conclusions to help to direct improvement. There are good mechanisms by which teachers can share best practice. The use of data to monitor and measure performance has improved considerably and is used very effectively by heads of subject to inform self-assessment and review performance. However, in certain areas of the college's work, such as in the monitoring of teaching and learning and in the evaluation of learning support, the college does not sufficiently systematically scrutinise or review its performance. In these cases, managers are not always able to get an accurate picture to help effectively target where further development is needed. In a few cases, there is an over reliance on informal systems to capture progress. The

- self-assessment report is largely accurate and used well to promote improvement, although in some areas it overplays the strengths and underplays areas for further development.
31. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. The college has highlighted the embedding of equality and diversity as a priority. There has been a rich range of equality and diversity displays around the college. An innovative mentoring scheme supporting minority ethnic students is proving successful with better outcomes for these students in 2005/06. Performance by different groups of students is analysed, but this is not always done systematically or in sufficient detail. The college meets its requirements under the amended race and disability legislations. Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and students feel safe in and around the college building.
 32. Staff are well qualified and benefit from an appropriate range of training and development that links to a thorough process of appraisal. Stimulating training has enhanced the skills of managers at all levels. Communication within the college is good, and staff appreciate the consultative and accessible style of the new principal.
 33. Governors bring wide-ranging professional experience to their role and effectively support the college's work. Financial management is strong. Most accommodation is of a high quality and has seen considerable refurbishment and expansion since the last inspection. Social areas, despite being considerably extended, remain overcrowded at peak times. The very good specialist resources and classroom space are utilised particularly well. The college provides excellent value for money.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	03/04	207	85	67	18	796	74	57	17
	04/05	212	68	64	4	554	69	56	13
	05/06	64	70	**		142	63	**	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	16	88	70	18	1	100		
	04/05	28	4	74	-70	0	0		
	05/06	2	50			0	0		
Other	03/04	191	84	66	18	795	74	58	16
	04/05	184	77	63	14	554	69	56	13
	05/06	62	71			142	63		

* 2005/06 data supplied by the college

** The 2005/06 national rates were not released at the time of this inspection

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	03/04	832	67	74	-7	321	76	55	21
	04/05	624	73	73	0	159	77	55	22
	05/06	733	76*	**		157	64*	**	
GCSEs	03/04	634	65	77	-12	67	73	63	10
	04/05	515	74	78	-4	56	73	65	8
	05/06	578	75*			67	72*		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	88	47	73	-26	1	0		
	04/05	64	77	74	3	5	40		
	05/06	93	69*			4	75*		
Other	03/04	110	91	68	23	253	77	52	25
	04/05	45	64	62	2	98	81	51	30
	05/06	62	98*			86	58*		

* 2005/06 data supplied by the college

** The 2005/06 national rates were not released at the time of this inspection

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	03/04	8215	81	80	1	141	59	57	2
	04/05	7749	77	82	-5	191	59	59	0
	05/06	7254	85*	**		188	67*	**	
A/A2 Levels	03/04	2578	88	91	-3	27	85	75	10
	04/05	2480	91	92	-1	63	71	76	-5
	05/06	2514	94*			60	93*		
AS Levels	03/04	5393	76	75	1	91	47	52	-5
	04/05	4940	70	78	-8	101	46	54	-8
	05/06	4215	81*			80	44*		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	241	83	68	15	3	100		
	04/05	327	76	75	1	1	0		
	05/06	169	83*			4	75*		
Other	03/04	3	33	64	-31	20	70	52	18
	04/05	2	100	72	28	25	84	55	29
	05/06	356	71*			44	73*		

* 2005/06 data supplied by the college

** The 2005/06 national rates were not released at the time of this inspection

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