

# Leasowes Community College

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103861
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	323917
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Richard Masterton

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Withers
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Howells
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Kent Road Halesowen B62 8PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 816285
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 816286

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2008
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to Ofsted notification

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Leasowes Community College is a mixed 11–16 comprehensive school specialising in business and enterprise. The majority of students are White British. About 20% of students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Almost all students use English as their first language. The proportion of students identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A significant number of students have recently joined year groups throughout the college.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Leasowes Community College provides a satisfactory education for students. Its innovative curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on standards and achievement.

The principal and senior management team are committed to exploring new solutions to inspire learning and raise standards. Their work is innovatory and the good curriculum offers flexibility in terms of the range of courses offered and the timetable arrangements for them. Students are able to take external examinations early and some begin sixth form courses before leaving the college. To date, managers have not made the most of all the innovations introduced. Monitoring, evaluation and comparison with performance targets is not sufficiently rigorous. Managers do not determine what is working well and then roll out identified good practice across the college. Governors have supported the college with developments and offered challenge but without comparing its performance with national figures. As a result, they are not able to determine whether standards and progress in college are as high as they should be. Because of the lack of objective criteria, managers believe the college is somewhat better than it actually is. Overall, leadership and management are therefore satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students are keen to work and try hard. The majority of lessons are planned with a clear route for learning, with teachers aware of individual student needs. However, in a significant proportion of lessons, insufficient account is taken of their differing starting points or aptitudes. Marking is often unhelpful. Managers' evaluation of the quality of teaching is inconsistent and not sufficiently formal. This is inhibiting the spread of good practice in aspects such as finding out what individual students have learned and matching work to their exact level of understanding. Care and guidance for students is good. They are looked after well, work safely and are given good support if they need additional help with their learning. However, assessment of students' performance in each subject is not sufficiently precise and groups who might do better are not identified for intervention.

Students at Leasowes Community College grow to become responsible, sensibly behaved, socially aware adults. Their personal development and well-being are good. They work well together, are health conscious and react thoughtfully to new ideas, particularly when thinking about their future lives. Students greatly enjoy their education and are proud of their college. They are very willing to get involved in helping others and have a good awareness of their relationship with the wider community. Educational standards are average, and higher in the specialism subjects of business and enterprise. Students are well prepared for future study or training. The achievement of students is satisfactory. However, there is not yet the good progress to which the college leaders and governors aspire and which the innovatory curriculum has the potential to deliver.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that: o lesson planning and teaching match work to students' individual potential; o marking shows students how to assess and improve their work.
- Ensure closer tracking of students' progress in order to identify where there is potential for groups of students to do better.
- Undertake more rigorous and objective self-evaluation, especially of the quality of teaching.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

At the time of inspection, reliable results from the 2008 national tests for Year 9 students were not available. Test results for the previous year showed that students reached average standards overall. 2008 results for Year 11 were average in terms of the proportion of students gaining five GCSE results at grade C or better. A small but increasing number of students are gaining the highest grades at GCSE and some initial A level qualifications.

Throughout their time in the college, students' progress is satisfactory. They enter from a number of primary schools with average standards of attainment. Results at age 14 and 16 show that their skills, knowledge and understanding progress at rates that match national figures. In business studies and information and communication technology (ICT), the college's specialisms, progress is good and GCSE standards are high. Students with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress at the same rate as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students behave and collaborate well and form good relationships with adults working with them. Students enjoy college and working together. They are motivated to ask questions and to fulfil tasks independently. Attendance figures are broadly in line with national averages. Active steps are being taken to secure better attendance, particularly amongst those students admitted after Year 7. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to understand and respect cultural differences through a variety of classroom activities. They respond well to many opportunities to think about spiritual issues and the important decisions for their lives. Bullying is minimal and students are clear about the procedures that exist to deal with any instances, commending especially the peer mentoring system. Students feel safe, demonstrate a good awareness of appropriate safety measures, use equipment carefully and treat college facilities with care. They contribute significantly to their community through college events. The large representative student council welcomes all volunteers, who know that their views are valued. There is a healthy attitude to physical activity. Large numbers of students take part in sporting and other activities in their own time using the college extra-curricular programme. Many also undertake leadership responsibility in sports.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Relationships between staff and students in most lessons are good and there is little disruption to learning. In lessons where teaching is dynamic and confident, and students are given interesting and challenging work, progress is good. However, there are too many lessons where learning is only satisfactory. Progress slows in those lessons that have too much input from teachers. Other lessons have limited impact because planning does not take full account of individual student needs, their starting point for new understanding or their potential. Work is marked regularly by teachers but does not always provide advice

showing how it may be improved, thus helping students assess their own progress. In contrast, some teachers promote more rapid progress and independent learning in lessons using methods that closely keep a close check on understanding.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The college provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of most students well. There is an appropriate range of courses and provision, including extra support in literacy and numeracy for a small group of students. GCSE courses begin early in Year 9. Most students take two years to complete them, and then undertake additional subjects or begin A level work. The college offers only three vocational courses, two of which are provided at another local college. Relatively few students participate but the college is planning extensions of the options available. There is very innovative use of time. Most lessons last an hour, but each Friday the whole day is dedicated to a single subject and this improves the way students engage with their learning. Three times each year, all students spend much longer on just one area such as business studies. These extended sessions typically include practical work, lessons outside college and visiting speakers. Students like this arrangement, valuing the continuity of work and the opportunities the teachers have to provide variety and depth. Specialist subjects, business studies and ICT, have used this approach for four years, resulting in substantial improvement to GCSE results. There are good opportunities for students to build relationships within the locality and the wider world through work in the local community and links with schools in Jordan and Spain. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of clubs, sporting and musical activities, and a variety of local and overseas residential trips.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a caring, inclusive ethos evident throughout the college to which all staff are strongly committed. Students feel safe and secure, knowing any concerns will be dealt with promptly and efficiently. Staff know students well and relationships are good. Pastoral support staff and mentors play a key role in supporting individuals who need additional support or guidance. The quality of care for vulnerable students is outstanding. These students, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, benefit greatly from the support given in the Learning Development Centre and the Access Centre. Outside agencies provide good additional support where necessary. Students testify to the quality of help that they receive when joining the college and when moving on to the next stage of their education. Welfare and safeguarding procedures are extremely robust. All child protection, health and safety, and risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Students' progress is monitored through tests and by staff evaluation of how hard they are working. Good support is given if their work falls behind. However, the use of this information to identify those groups of students that have the potential to reach higher standards in their various subjects is not consistent across the college.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The principal has clear vision and is passionate about innovative approaches to learning. He has pioneered the flexible use of time in the curriculum to secure deeper understanding and improvement. Other senior staff work well as a team and share his vision. The impact of this

approach is coming to fruition in those subjects linked to the college specialism. Senior managers know their college well, making frequent and informal visits to lessons. In the most successful subject areas, middle managers carry out planned programmes of lesson observations to judge objectively the quality of teaching and learning. This is not done consistently in all subjects and some evaluations of the quality of teaching are made just using information from performance management and informal observations. There is a similar inconsistency in the quality of departmental reviews. Where they are good, middle managers objectively evaluate what works well and identify improvements needed. This leads to change that is effective and which is incorporated in departmental planning. However, in other areas there is a lack of rigour. The inclusion of all learners and equality of opportunity are good. This contributes well to community cohesion, which is also good. Capacity to improve is satisfactory. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed but greater rigour is now needed to improve teaching and learning.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Leasowes Community College, Halesowen, B62 8PJ

My colleagues and I greatly enjoyed our visit to your college. It was good to see you at work and meet you, especially the members of the college council. Your politeness and willingness to share your experience made it possible for us to collect some of the most important information that we needed and we are very grateful.

Leasowes Community College provides a satisfactory standard of education. College management is satisfactory. Your principal has pioneered innovations in the way time is used for helping you to learn. The curriculum offered is good, as is the flexibility for you to take external examinations when you are ready. The care and support you receive to help you succeed is good, particularly if you need extra help. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. You work well in class but we found that lessons could offer you more challenge by taking better account of what you already know and of your individual capacity to make progress. Your personal development is good and we admired the way that you grow to become responsible, socially aware adults, well adjusted to the wider communities in which you live and work. Your academic progress is satisfactory and standards are at the national average.

The governors and managers want you to do better. To assist, I have asked them to help improve your progress by making sure that:

- lessons stretch all of you and marking always shows you how to improve
- your progress is tracked closely so that your teachers can see where you have the potential to move on more quickly
- the college uses more rigorous self-evaluation to improve its work.

Please play your part. Work closely with your teachers; help them to help you by telling them when you do not understand and making every effort with the work they give you.

Yours sincerely,

R Douglas Masterton Lead inspector