

Joseph Leckie Community Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104243
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	336264
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Ray Jardine

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1105
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Sweeney
Headteacher	Mr Keith Whittlestone
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 42 lessons and held meetings with senior and middle leadership, the chair of governors and students across the school. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the school's improvement plan, minutes of the governors' meetings, safeguarding procedures and records of students' progress. Inspectors also reviewed 364 parental questionnaires and questionnaires returned from students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which teaching has improved since the last inspection and how it can be improved further
- how well different groups are learning and making progress, particularly lower attaining boys and those from some minority ethnic backgrounds
- the impact that technology college status is having on improving provision and outcomes for students
- the school's contribution to community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school is a little larger than average and serves an ethnically diverse area of Walsall. Two thirds of students are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi backgrounds. Almost one fifth of those on roll are at an early stage of learning English. Social deprivation measures for the area are relatively high; a well above average proportion of students are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Most of these students have moderate learning difficulties. The school gained specialist technology college status in 1999. It provides a full range of extended services to the community, including parental support, adult learning, and support to promote achievement among ethnic groups. The school has also gained National Sportsmark and Healthy School awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that has improved in key areas since its last inspection. A strength is the high standard of care provided by a dedicated staff. This particularly helps vulnerable students, such as those who have learning, emotional or physical difficulties or who are at an early stage of learning English, to be fully integrated into school life and to learn well. The school is led very well by an experienced and highly respected headteacher whose vision, for a school at the hub of the community it serves, is reflected in its work. The school is outward-looking and innovative. Teamwork is strong and focused on raising standards for all students. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the drive for improvement is embedded among senior and middle leadership. Systems for monitoring and improving the quality of education, particularly teaching, have proved effective. Teaching is now good and there is some outstanding practice on which the school can build. Consequently, the school has good potential to improve further.

Students from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds contribute much to their school and local community. Relationships are very good and the school provides a calm and harmonious learning environment. Behaviour is good. Students are confident that any incidents of harassment or racism, of which there are few, are dealt with effectively and they report that they feel safe. They enjoy their learning and are keen to do well in lessons, displaying some good skills in working collaboratively and in researching information for themselves.

Attainment on entry to Year 7 is typically considerably below average and in some years, such as in Year 11 in 2009, it was well below. Most students achieve well and attainment in Year 11 currently is on course to be a little below average by 2010. The school sets challenging targets to achieve within the top quarter of similar schools. It exceeded these targets in 2008 when 44% of students attained five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, but fell a little short of them in 2009 when attainment dipped. Students' progress to their targets is reviewed regularly and targeted students receive mentoring in Years 10 and 11 if they are at risk of underachieving. The school also rigorously analyses trends among different ethnic groups and by gender, and acts on the findings. In this and other ways, it is successfully closing gaps in the achievement of such groups. For example, lower attaining White boys are now progressing at least as well as others; those from Indian and Black backgrounds do relatively well. But the school is aware that there remain students, for example some boys, particularly from Pakistani backgrounds, that could do better. One factor contributing to the improving picture of achievement is the breadth of the curriculum, where the school has used its partnerships to provide a more diverse range of courses

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and training for 14 to 19 year olds. This has resulted in a considerable drop in those leaving Year 11 who are not in education, employment or training. Even so, these developments are work in progress and further work is underway to extend the range of vocational courses, including the introduction of new diplomas in humanities and modern foreign languages. In the sixth form, provision is good. However, the monitoring role of its leadership is not yet sufficiently focused; as a result, uneven performance in a few subjects is not always tackled promptly. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' attainment further so that the proportion in Year 11 gaining five or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics meets or exceeds the national average over the next two years, by continuing the drive to improve the achievement of underperforming groups.
- Build on the school's partnerships to extend the range of vocational courses for 14 to 19 year olds through diplomas and other pathways.
- Extend the monitoring role of sixth form leadership, particularly in evaluating teaching quality and using assessment information, so that uneven standards across subjects are tackled very promptly and improvement is accelerated.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In over four fifths of lessons seen during the inspection, students' learning and progress was at least good; in a few lessons it was outstanding. There are strengths in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and in several other subject areas students also progressed well. The gap in attainment between boys and girls at GCSE is closing, although girls did better in 2009. Those students who are at an early stage of learning English are provided with effective support from trained assistants, both in lessons and in a dedicated centre, so that they progress well in their learning. Those who have learning difficulties or who have statements of special educational needs also progress well and are very well supported. In one Year 10 science lesson, the many students identified as having learning or language difficulties were engrossed in their work about the effects of smoking on their lungs, as a result of the stimulating teaching methods, very good use of practical resources and excellent guidance that they received. The school has worked hard and successfully to encourage students to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is, for example, very good take-up of sports and other activities, enhanced by the extended services that the school provides to its local community. The school monitors such participation by ethnic group. A good range of healthy food options available are also taken by many students. The school has trained some students to mentor and guide others about issues such as smoking and drinking on health. This demonstrates how the school encourages students to take responsibility to support and help each other. Their pride and involvement in the school and the local community is consequently strong. Students are well informed of how to stay safe and they acquire well-developed moral

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and social codes which are seen in their very good relationships. Cultural understanding is a very strong feature. Good opportunities to reflect on ethical issues and students' willingness to learn about their world promotes their spiritual development well. Students acquire good workplace skills from the many opportunities provided, including ICT and enterprise skills, and are well prepared for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors worked with senior leaders to evaluate the consistency of teaching quality and the impact of work to improve it. Inspectors agree that teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Good relationships in lessons create a positive learning environment where time is used productively and the pace of learning is good. Most teaching employs a range of teaching methods that engage students in first-hand experiences and capture their interest and enthusiasm. Students enjoy researching information and work well independently when given the opportunity, although their skills in assessing their own work are less developed. Teaching methods are guided by clear learning objectives, often set for a range of different abilities, and most lessons are

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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challenging. Even so, in some the tasks are not adapted sufficiently to ensure that all students are challenged. In the best lessons, questioning is used very well to extend students' thinking and to encourage explanation. Other features that contributed to good learning were:

- good subject knowledge that helps students to acquire new knowledge and skills
- teachers' effective use of computer technology to illustrate and enrich class discussion
- effective use of targets and feedback to students to help them improve their work.

The curriculum promotes students' basic skills, including skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, well. The school's technology status has led to considerable improvements in standards in related areas, particularly mathematics and ICT, although staffing difficulties have adversely affected standards in some technology subjects. Nevertheless, the overall impact has been positive, particularly in providing good computer resources that are enhancing learning across the school. Partnerships with local business groups have enabled the school to provide alternative pathways, including work-based learning opportunities for those who would benefit most. The school is working to extend the current range of vocational qualifications to help raise attainment further. There is very good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, enhanced by the extended services offered to the community as a whole, that contributes much to the good outcomes for students. Standards of care, guidance and support are high. Inspectors came across some striking examples of excellent provision made for a number of vulnerable students who have diverse and challenging needs. The school has very well developed links with outside agencies and partners to ensure that the range of learners' needs are met and to promote good behaviour.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders work well as a team and morale among staff is good. Improving teaching quality has been a key focus of management throughout the school and has achieved some success. A well-developed programme of professional development and the sharing of good practice, for example through the staff's teaching and learning group, has contributed to the drive for improvement. The school accurately monitors teaching quality and has good systems for monitoring students' progress, setting challenging targets and analysing patterns and trends, including by ethnicity. Equality of opportunity

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is promoted well; the impact is seen in a closing gap in the achievement of different groups of students. Governors are much involved in shaping the school's direction and carry out their statutory responsibilities. They receive information from a number of sources, including their links with faculties. However, their monitoring of progress in school priorities and arrangements for seeking the views of parents and students are not yet systematic. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and staff are well trained in child protection. A very good range of extended services places the school at the heart of its community, promoting sports, dance and many community activities, including business mentoring schemes. Well- developed links with local business and the range of ethnic groups locally promote community cohesion well. The school is also piloting national initiatives in the government action plan, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'. Staff are currently working to extend the international dimension to students' learning by seeking International School status. The school works hard to communicate and consult with parents and carers, using their first language where necessary and drawing on the good range of language skills among the staff.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Attainment at GCE A-level has risen to be close to the national average, although the proportion attaining higher grades A and B is below average. In relation to students' below average attainment on entry, their achievements are good. There are strengths in several subjects, including chemistry and mathematics, but also a few in which students underperform. Students enjoy sixth form life and contribute much to it and to the school

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as a whole, acting as mentors to younger students and as sports leaders, for example. Teaching quality is mainly good. The curriculum offers a wide range of courses to A-level but fewer vocational routes or courses for lower attaining students. There are many enrichment activities that are popular with students. Tutors and other staff provide good support and guidance. There is a wealth of assessment data available to help set targets and to monitor and review subject effectiveness but at present it is not used sharply enough to ensure that student targets are always challenging. Sixth form leadership in most respects is effective. However, leaders are not involved centrally in monitoring teaching or using the extensive assessment information to ensure that underperformance across subjects is tackled promptly.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires report that their child enjoys school, they are happy with their child's experience and that their child is well prepared for the future. A similar proportion also feels that their child is making enough progress. Almost all feel that the teaching is good. A few parents would like more done to help their child have a healthy lifestyle but inspectors found that the school is working hard in this area and students are responding well. Inspectors also investigated how well the school responds to parents' views and to concerns which a few parents also raised. Inspectors found that the school attaches great importance to its communication with parents and employs several ways in which staff meet and consult parents and listen to their concerns. Inspectors do not view this area as a significant weakness.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Joseph Leckie Community Technology College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 364 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	106	29	237	65	15	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	117	32	229	63	10	3	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	107	29	209	57	29	8	7	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	112	31	235	65	11	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	135	37	211	59	11	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	84	23	230	63	36	10	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	19	236	65	46	12	5	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	115	32	220	60	16	4	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	84	23	243	67	26	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	103	28	213	59	32	9	8	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	20	224	62	40	11	7	2
The school is led and managed effectively	107	29	226	62	14	4	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	137	38	206	57	11	3	5	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Joseph Leckie Community Technology College, Walsall, WS5 4PG

I write to let you know of our findings when a team of inspectors visited your school recently. We are most grateful for the warm welcome that we received and special thanks go to all those of you who completed a questionnaire or who spoke with us. We think yours is a good school. We were very impressed by the harmonious relationships that you bring to the school community and the way that you respect each other. Many of you readily take responsibility and you help raise funds for several charities, contributing to the wider community as well as to your own; well done! Your good behaviour contributes much to the positive environment for learning that clearly exists. You told us that you feel safe and secure and that most of you are learning to adopt healthy lifestyles. You make good progress in your learning and standards in Year 11 are on course to be close to average next year. Even so, the school is working hard to close the gap in the achievement of different groups among you. Some boys are now doing better than in the past, for example, but there is still work to do to ensure that all of you achieve equally well. We have asked the school to continue its focus on closing this gap to help raise standards further.

We visited a lot of lessons and found that the great majority of teaching is good or better. There are strengths in several subjects, including English, mathematics, science and ICT. You work well in lessons and we were impressed by the way that so many of you support each other and work diligently. We would like to see more of you reviewing your own work to help improve it as this is an important lifeskill. The school has worked to extend the range of courses for older students to ensure that your needs and aspirations are met. We recommend that this developmental work with other local partners continues with more vocational routes for 14 to 19 year olds. The school provides a high standard of care, particularly for those of you who need extra help with your learning, and this contributes to a sense of community and inclusion. There are many aspects of leadership and management that are well developed, including arrangements for monitoring the school's work and driving forward improvements. However, in the sixth form it is not as systematic and so leaders will be more centrally involved to ensure that subjects do not underperform.

With all good wishes for your future at Joseph Leckie Community Technology College.

Yours sincerely

Ray Jardine

Lead Inspector

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