

# Lostock College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106365
<b>Local Authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	336663
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Toft HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jenny Kilvert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Dawn Farrent
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Selby Road Stretford Manchester M32 9PL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 20 teachers and visited 26 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to the curriculum, the monitoring of teaching, the management of the college and the performance of students. They analysed the results of 117 questionnaires from parents.

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

- the impact of recent initiatives to improve the college and the achievement of students
- the consistency throughout the college in teaching and assessment
- the consistency in the effectiveness of management of different sections of the college.

## Information about the school

Lostock College is a smaller than average secondary modern school. It serves an area of Trafford with high levels of social disadvantage. The proportions of students eligible for a free school meal and of those with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The number of students entering and leaving the college at times other than the start of the academic year is well above average. The college has had specialist performing arts status since 2002 and holds the Artsmark Gold award. A proposal to close the college and merge it with another high school to create a new academy is at an advanced stage.

**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

Lostock is a good college. It has a significant number of outstanding features and has improved steadily since the last inspection. This has been achieved through a systematic and well planned campaign of improvement, energetically led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have had full support from the strong and enthusiastic teams of senior and middle leaders, and from the well organised and informed governing body. Leaders have been astute in forming effective strategic partnerships with other organisations. These have helped further the interests of the students both in preparing for the proposed academy and in improving provision for their academic and personal development.

The college is particularly effective in monitoring its performance and the progress made by the students. This supports its exceptional work in developing a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum, organised to give highly individualised teaching and guidance to students. Some of this development has been at the cutting edge of innovation and the college has rightly had praise for this from outside organisations, locally and further afield. Though students enter the college with well below average attainment, they are now making good progress. Their work, as seen by inspectors and as evidenced in current assessment records, shows that standards have risen and are now close to average. This has yet to show in public examination results, however, and further improvement is needed, and is being worked towards, in some subjects. The college has been vigorous in its efforts to improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching, assessment and the use of homework to improve learning. As a result, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now largely good, though there is some scope for a few teachers to raise further their expectations of their students.

Behaviour is good and the vast majority of students are enthusiastic, polite and considerate. However, a small minority behaves childishly at times in some lessons. Whilst academic attainment has been improving, students have benefited from outstanding care, guidance and support. This has been instrumental in securing their excellent personal development; students and their parents and carers appreciate this and their satisfaction is rightly very high. Given the highly effective campaign to improve performance, the high calibre and ambition of senior leaders and the accuracy of evaluation, the college has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the attainment of students in those subjects where performance is below that in the best of subjects.

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- Raise further the expectations of the few teachers who set work which is too easy to ensure that all students, including the less-able, are given challenging tasks which capture their interest and deepen their learning.
- To improve behaviour from good to outstanding, strengthen the capacity to learn of the small minority of students who display immature behaviour in lessons by increasing their ability and willingness to listen, concentrate and engage in sensible discussion and cooperation. Where appropriate, secure specialist external support for this.

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

Students enter the college in Year 7 with levels of attainment which are well below the national average and with limited skills in literacy and numeracy. This reflects the fact that most students in the top half of the ability range in the area are selected to attend grammar schools. Attainment at the end of Year 11 has been below average in recent years. The high number of students who join the college having been excluded from other schools, especially in Years 10 and 11, has a clear and negative impact on attainment at the end of Year 11. However, there are strong signs of improvement. Examination results at the end of Year 11 were better in 2009 than before, though still below average.

Attainment in lessons seen in English have improved to average. Evidence from the students' recent work throughout the curriculum, including examination work already marked and moderated, and from the college's detailed assessment records, shows overall improvement in attainment to an average level. Students were achieving well and making good progress in over three-quarters of lessons seen. Lesson observations showed considerable strengths in some subjects, for example, the performing arts which are making a significant contribution to developing students' self-confidence and communication skills. Given their attainment on entry to the college, which is well below average, this indicates that they are now making good progress and achieving well, overall, though there is still variation between subjects. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers, helped by extensive support and a highly personalised curriculum.

Students and their parents and carers appreciate greatly the lengths the college goes to in promoting their safety and security. Students feel very safe both on site and off site. The building is secure, well-maintained, to promote health and safety and well supervised by staff. Behaviour is good overall, aided by the consistent application by staff of agreed procedures to secure good behaviour and concentration. However, a few students sometimes behave childishly in some lessons and this impedes learning. This apart, students treat each other and staff with respect and consideration and are polite and sensitive to the feelings of others. Many older students play an active role in promoting good behaviour and provide positive role models for others. Students understand the need for exercise and a sensible diet; most take the healthy food options at lunchtime and participate in the very good range of extra-curricular sporting and

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exercise activities. The college council is an effective means for students to take responsibility; it has been successful, for example, in promoting healthy menus for lunch. Students understand the dangers of substance misuse. There is an outstanding focus on emotional well-being leading to a very calm environment. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community within and beyond the school. Many assume leadership roles and also participate in activities which enrich life in the local community. They respond well when the college canvasses students' opinions. Most are very proud to be members of the college. They develop satisfactory workplace skills, not least through vocational learning and activities to develop confidence. Punctuality has been greatly improved and is very good, though attendance is average. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop reflectiveness, respect for the values of others, a strong sense of right and wrong and a broad understanding of different cultural heritages. They accept and value cultural diversity.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching and learning, and the use of assessment to support them, are good

<sup>1</sup> 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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throughout the college. In three-quarters of the lessons observed, the teaching was good or better, and it was satisfactory in all of the others. Detailed records are kept by the school of lesson evaluations carried out by school staff and external specialists. They show a clear trend of improvement since the last inspection. This reflects the college's well planned efforts to improve teaching and learning. Strengths include the very good relationships between teachers and students, and among the students themselves, and consistently thorough planning of lessons and courses. In the better lessons, students engaged in a variety of activities. This enabled teachers to keep the students interested and the pace of learning brisk and lively. Students are well aware of what they are expected to do when tasks are set. Teachers' enthusiasm and subject knowledge inspire them to think for themselves and to share their ideas willingly. Teachers assess students' achievement regularly, and enable them to engage in peer and self-assessment. Students know their targets very well in all subjects of the curriculum. Homework is set consistently and regularly, and it supports learning in lessons. The college uses a web-based system to make the setting and checking of homework very efficient for them, and also for students and parents and carers. In a few of the weaker lessons, expectations are too low, especially for some of the less-able students, and the tasks set are sometimes mundane, leading to low-level learning. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in lessons. Thorough and detailed pen portraits on each of these students are issued to all teachers. This, together with regular and accurate assessment and frequent liaison with pastoral staff, provides teachers with comprehensive information which supports their good lesson planning. This helps them to set tasks which meet the specific needs of individuals and quicken progress.

The curriculum is outstanding in both its content and its effect on motivation, learning and outcomes for students. It is broad and balanced, impressively so given the small size of the college. Students have an excellent combination of subjects of the National Curriculum, provision to promote personal and vocational development, and a range of extra-curricular activities. The school goes to extraordinary lengths to tailor its provision and deploy staff creatively to meet the needs and stimulate the interests of individual students. This fine focusing is based on rigorous assessment and tracking of progress, and extensive consultation with and guidance given to the students. The organisation and timetabling of the curriculum are excellent. This includes highly effective liaison with a range of external partners to widen provision and ensure that it is well coordinated throughout the locality. Provision to develop core skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is well developed across the curriculum. The college has been very innovative in its curriculum developments. This has had a very clear effect on enabling students to achieve their academic potential, their excellent personal development, and in the marked reduction in the number of those leaving without a place in further education, training or work.

The care, guidance and support for students are outstanding, and this is well recognised by parents and carers. The students are adamant that they feel very well supported and guided. They respond well to an excellent programme of support, much of which is

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tailored to the specific needs of individuals, especially those who are vulnerable in one way or another. There is ample evidence of the college's success in helping more vulnerable students to learn. The college takes in a large number of students who have been excluded from other schools, coping well with them and helping them to make better progress. This is helped by the personalised curriculum and guidance they receive. Efforts to help students make the transition from primary schools are excellent. The students speak warmly of the taster sessions and other experiences they had when in primary school in, for example, the college's performing arts specialism. Careers guidance is extensive and contributes very well to the growth in the confidence of students. The school goes to exceptional lengths to improve attendance; it has had a marked impact on this, though it has not yet risen above average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership to promote the continuing improvement of the school. They are well supported in this by strong teams of senior and middle leaders. Morale among staff is high. Leaders have worked strenuously with partner organisations to prepare staff and students and develop the curriculum for the proposed new academy. The college makes highly effective use of partnerships to provide a high quality of education and pastoral care. Staff follow consistent and agreed approaches to planning, motivating students, promoting good behaviour, assessing attainment and tracking progress. Improvement planning is very thorough and has been valuable in securing the college's very good improvement. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the college, the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of learning are excellent. Good information on college performance is made available to the well-led and organised governing body. This helps governors play a full part in supporting and challenging the school, overseeing its development and checking that statutory duties are met.

Procedures to promote the safeguarding of students are good. Relevant policies and procedures are well used and kept up to date. Staff are crystal clear about their responsibilities for child protection; this is reinforced by good quality training. The site is safe and secure, and the college is very thorough in identifying and dealing with risks, both on and off the site. The college is very effective in promoting equal opportunities and harmony among students, and helping students from different backgrounds to



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learn; the college succeeds with the vast majority, though for a small number immature behaviour sometimes impedes learning. Community cohesion is promoted very effectively and the school knows its students and the local community well. Staff and students have considerable engagement with the community, for example, in using performing arts to strengthen the provision made in local primary schools. The college has made very good use of its specialist status in performing arts, especially in improving learning and standards, enriching extra-curricular provision and developing impressive modern accommodation and resources. Financial management is meticulous and the college has been very creative in deploying its staff and resources to secure good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers of over a third of students responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. In virtually all cases, they were very supportive of the college and highly satisfied with the education, care and guidance given to their children. This comment reflects that of many others: 'I am absolutely delighted with my daughter's transition into Year 7 and feel that Lostock College provides an excellent, safe and nurturing environment in which children can flourish both emotionally and academically. I cannot fault the teaching and support that this school has to offer'. The broad curriculum, level of care, quality of teaching and focus on performing arts were cited as major strengths of the college. One parent was concerned about an incidence of bullying. The inspection revealed that the college is highly effective in dealing with such incidences, which are

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rare, and in promoting harmony among students. Some parents and carers were concerned that the benefits to students of the individualised care and support they receive in this small college would be difficult to replicate in the proposed academy.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lostock 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 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 318 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	67	37	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	68	37	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	82	70	35	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	63	42	36	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	63	41	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	63	39	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	50	53	45	2	2	0	0
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)	60	51	49	42	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	76	65	41	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	70	60	40	34	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	49	53	45	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	76	65	39	33	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	69	34	29	0	0	0	0

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



18 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Lostock College, Trafford, M32 9PL

After our inspection of your college I would like to tell you about our conclusions.

- Lostock College gives you a good education and some of what it does is outstanding.
- Your parents recognise this and are highly satisfied with the college.
- Staff have worked hard to raise the standard of your work. Much of what we saw was of an average standard, and this shows the college has improved in the last few years. It has improved teaching in those subjects where students did not do as well as they did in other subjects, though there is still more to do here.
- Most teaching is good and staff are highly dedicated to helping all students learn as well as they can.
- This is helped by very good assessment of your progress and an excellent range of subjects and activities to meet your individual needs and interests.
- Older students have good access to vocational courses and experiences to help in preparing them for life after school.
- The care, guidance and support you are given are excellent and this helps to explain how the school does such a good job in helping you to mature and develop confidence to prepare for your future.
- Your behaviour is generally good though a few students behave childishly in some lessons and need to 'act their age'.
- The college is very well managed and senior staff have been very good at helping all of the staff to work together as a team. All of them are very keen to continue to improve what they and you do.

To help with this, we have asked them to:

- improve the behaviour of the small number of students who behave childishly in lessons
- improve students' work in those subjects where it is still a little below the standard in the other subjects
- in the few instances where some staff set work which is too easy, help them to set more challenging work.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all well for your future learning at Lostock College.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Toft,

Her Majesty's Inspector

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