

Joseph Leckie Academy

Walstead Road West, Walsall, West Midlands, WS5 4PG

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Students do well at school. Their attainment when they join the school in Year 7 is below the national average for their age. From this low starting point they make good progress in their time at the school.
- Good teaching means that students enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Students' behaviour is good. They are respectful of each other and of staff. They want to achieve well. Their good attitudes and pride in being members of the school contribute to its calm, cooperative atmosphere.
- Appropriate actions are taken to keep students safe and students say they feel very safe at school.
- The sixth form is good. It provides students with suitable courses and with opportunities to achieve well from their below average starting points.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are utterly committed to providing students with a good education and making sure students do as well as they can. The continual improvement in achievement and in the quality of teaching over recent years is evidence of the success of leaders and managers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although most students do well in the school, some students could do even better.
- School actions have not yet had time to have enough impact on improving attendance and reducing exclusions.
- Not all teaching is good and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- The system of planning to improve further, and in particular how to decide on which actions are working well and which might need changing, is not as thorough as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 44 lessons. Three observations were made jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, and the Chair of the Governing Body and another member.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 12 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and results from the school’s own survey of parents and carers. The results of the 36 completed staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- Inspectors analysed information about examination results, about how well students are doing now, their attendance and those who have been excluded. They reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation, its improvement plan, curriculum plans and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gwendoline Coates, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Ingrid Amrahams	Additional Inspector
David Howe	Additional Inspector
Geraint Jones	Additional Inspector
Helen Prince	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Joseph Leckie Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2012. When its predecessor school, Joseph Leckie Community Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Just under 80% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest of these groups, in order of size, are Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian.
- Two thirds of students speak English as an additional language and significant numbers are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is greater than the national average and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below the national average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is double the national average and comprises over half of all students at the school. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching so that all teaching is at least good and a greater proportion is outstanding. Do this by making sure that:
 - all teachers use information about how well students are doing to set work at the right level of difficulty so that all students are made to think hard and are stretched
 - teachers ask questions that provide opportunities for all students to recall knowledge, apply understanding to unfamiliar problems, and develop good listening, thinking and speaking skills
 - in all subjects, teachers' written comments tell students about the quality of their work and how it could be improved; and that teachers provide opportunities for students to act promptly on these comments to improve their written work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by sharpening the plan for improving the school so that it becomes a better method for working out if actions taken have been successful and for holding those responsible to account. Do this by making sure that:
 - targets to judge success are measurable, for example in relation to improving attendance
 - activities to check whether the school is reaching its targets take place more often.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The standards students reach by the end of Year 11 are below the national average but the gap has been narrowing because standards in the school have been rising more rapidly than those nationally.
- Standards attained in GCSE examinations in English and mathematics by students eligible for the pupil premium are between a grade and half a grade below those of other students but the gap is narrowing quickly. The school is among the top performing schools for boosting the performance of students eligible for the pupil premium.
- Students join the school in Year 7 with standards in English and mathematics that are well below the national average. They make good progress while at the school – often their progress is better than what they are expected to make. All groups of students do well, including disabled students, those with special educational needs and students from all minority ethnic backgrounds, including Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian.
- The selective use of early entry to GCSE in some subjects is leading to improved achievement. Students' reading, writing, speaking and mathematics skills are improving. These improving skills contribute to students' rising standards in Year 11 and help prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- Students join the sixth form with attainment at GCSE that is below the national average. They do well while in the sixth form and overall the standards they reach are rising.
- From lesson observations and a review of work in students' books, inspectors could see that students were making the good progress indicated by information about how well students are doing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is at least good but a small proportion requires improvement.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers want students to do their very best. They use information about students' abilities to plan learning activities that encourage students to think hard and push themselves. This is the case regardless of whether students are more or less academically able. These lessons have a fast pace that keep students engrossed in learning.
- In such lessons, teachers help students to develop good literacy skills, for example by identifying important words and their meanings, and getting them to read aloud or write in sentences with correct spelling and punctuation. Teaching assistants in these lessons provide good support for those students who need more help so that all students in a class are able to be fully involved and to learn well.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers are not making good use of the information they have about students' abilities and how well they are doing. In these lessons, all students do the same work regardless of their ability. This means that some students find the work too easy and become bored and some find it too hard and lose interest. In addition, teachers often spend too much time talking and expect students to sit listening for too long rather than being actively involved in learning.
- Even in good lessons, teachers do not always ask questions that make students think hard about what they have learned, apply their understanding to unfamiliar problems or give detailed answers that develop their speaking skills.
- The quality of teachers' written and verbal feedback on students' work varies. In a Year 12 art lesson, students listened thoughtfully to the excellent advice the teacher gave, discussed the issues she raised and were able to improve their work. Written comments on students' work in history told students clearly how good their work was and how it could be improved further. However, where teaching requires improvement, marking in books does not give students enough information about whether their work is good enough or how they could improve it.

Even where written comments in students' books are good, opportunities for students to respond to these comments promptly and to improve their work are not often provided.

- Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Students respect teachers' subject expertise and talk positively about the support teachers give them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Even in lessons where the quality of teaching requires improvement, students usually remain attentive.
- Behaviour and safety are good rather than outstanding because actions to improve attendance and reduce exclusions have not yet had time to have enough impact. Most students attend well, have good manners and are punctual to lessons. Work with individual families of students in the school and of pupils in feeder primary schools, and the range of rewards and penalties for students are making a difference. As a result, the number of students away from school for long periods and the number not allowed to go to school for a short period because of poor behaviour have been falling steadily.
- Students describe the school as a safe and positive place to learn and are very happy at school. They are well informed about how to keep safe and how to respond sensibly to risk, for example when using the internet.
- Support for students moving up from primary schools is good and students in Year 7 talk positively of the support they get from older students in their multi-age tutor groups. Students have complete confidence in the online system that allows them to raise issues about bullying or other problems and of the support they get in the Success Centre.
- Safeguarding and serious incident records are carefully kept and are up to date.
- The school makes sure that disabled students and those with special educational needs reach their potential. Individual examples of students who have faced very difficult circumstances but, who, with the support of teachers and staff, have gone on to achieve well, show how successful school leaders and staff are in helping students.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders are absolutely committed to making sure every student in the school does as well as they can. Leaders show they have good capacity to continue to improve the school based on their past success. All staff who responded to the staff survey said they knew what the school was trying to achieve, that leaders do all they can to improve teaching and that the school is led and managed well.
- Good systems are in place to check and judge how good teaching is and how well students are doing, including how well individual groups of students, such as those eligible for the pupil premium, are doing. These systems have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and to more rapid progress for students.
- The majority of teachers who are in charge of subjects are effective in checking the quality of, and supporting improvements in, teaching and learning. They and the group of teachers and leaders who form the 'teaching and learning' group provide training, coach individual teachers and share good ideas and ways of working.
- Teachers' performance is well managed and organised. Any weaknesses in the work of individuals and groups of teachers are followed up with training and support. Leaders make the right decisions about teachers' movement up the salary scale on the basis of the quality of their teaching.
- Leaders are fully aware of the school's strengths and its weaknesses. The plan to bring about further improvement in the school identifies clearly the important areas that need further attention and relevant actions to take. However, the plan does not allow the school to work out exactly how successful individual actions to improve the school have been and to hold those

responsible to account. This is because the targets to judge success, for example in relation to improving attendance, are not always measurable so that it is difficult to check whether they have been achieved. Also, checking whether these targets are being met does not take place often enough to allow the school to identify, as early as possible, when things are not working well enough and need to be changed.

- The curriculum provides good opportunities for students to achieve well. Early entry to GCSE is used wisely to enable students to keep motivated, to remain in school and to achieve well. This works well in the school's three-year Key Stage 4 programme. In the sixth form, the wide range of courses encourages more students to stay on at school. A range of extra-curricular activities caters for students' sporting, academic and other interests. The school also provides a range of out-of-school activities, for example, the after-school madrasa and Arabic and Urdu lessons at weekends. The Polish Supplementary School, based at Joseph Leckie Academy, helps to improve the English language skills of those who attend, while also offering a range of other opportunities, including Polish lessons. These activities benefit students, their parents and carers and the local community.
- The whole-school programme to develop students' reading, writing and speaking is bringing about improvements in these skills. The focus on reading in tutor time is a strong element of this programme, with younger students supported by older students.
- Leaders take deliberate and effective action to tackle discrimination and foster good relations between individual groups of students. Good provision to encourage students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to this and to the creation of a racially integrated, calm and cohesive atmosphere in the school.
- Leaders and staff make sure that every student has the opportunity to succeed. This is reflected in the good progress students of all abilities and in all groups make. The good use of pupil premium funding, for example in the additional staffing in the Success Centre, in classrooms and in liaison work with families, is making a difference because those students it supports are attending more regularly, are more confident socially and are making more rapid progress.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all national requirements.
- The number of parents and carers who responded to Parent View was too small to be representative of all parents and carers but the views provided and the school's own surveys indicate that parents and carers feel their children are making good progress, are well taught and well looked after.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are very well informed about the school's strengths and the areas it still needs to improve. They are actively involved in the life of the school, know about students' achievement, the impact of the pupil premium and about how well teachers perform. In their role as link governors, they meet with teachers and observe lessons. Their knowledge and understanding of the school and of the needs of students enable them to question and hold school leaders to account. This helps them to make sure the school meets the needs of its students, their parents and carers, and the local community well.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137830
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	412763

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,127
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Beech
Headteacher	Mr Keith Whittlestone
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01922 721071
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