



Laisterdyke Business & Enterprise College

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 107443
Local Authority Bradford
Inspection number 287820
Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Judy Jones

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Thornbury Road
School category	Foundation		Bradford
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Yorkshire BD3 8HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01274 401140
Number on roll (school)	908	Fax number	01274 403477
Number on roll (6th form)	129	Chair	Mr Owen Hill
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs Joan Law
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	20–21 September 2006	287820

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized college enrolls students from its local area in North Bradford. Over three quarters of the students are from Asian British backgrounds, for most of whom English is not their first language. The remainder are mainly White British. A small number from varied backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English. A high percentage of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion eligible for free school meals is well above average. The college acquired specialist status two years ago. The sixth form is part of the North Bradford sixth form confederation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This effective college is outstandingly led by the headteacher who is ably supported by a strong leadership team and governors. Together they have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses and the college gives good value for money. Excellent partnerships with an unusually wide range of other providers contribute significantly to the college's effectiveness.

Most students enter with basic skills that are well below average for their age and, although their results in tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations are below average, students make good progress. Results are significantly better than predictions based on the students' standards on entry. This good progress is securely rooted in good teaching and in the college's calm and purposeful atmosphere in which students enjoy learning to respect each other, adults, and property. Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and assessment of progress is thorough and accurate. The college recognises the need to improve students' speaking and writing, and many teachers build ways to improve literacy into their lessons. However, this is not formally agreed and opportunities are missed in some lessons.

Good personal development is due to the good systems that support students. These closely match the widely differing needs of all; those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well catered for by the specialised help provided.

The satisfactory curriculum has considerable strengths in vocational and business education. The college makes excellent use of its status as a business and enterprise college to encourage all students to develop skills that will prepare them for future education and life in the workplace. A weakness of the curriculum is the poor provision for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, so that no student in the current Year 10 or Year 11 has chosen to study a European language. Some students study Urdu but not within the college's teaching day.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form was set up four years ago with 57 students and offering three subjects only. Since then it has become part of a confederation of six colleges, a further education college and other work-based providers. Numbers from Laisterdyke have increased to 129 and students have the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. The rapid change has been well managed. Standards are satisfactory and show an improving trend, due to the good teaching and well planned pastoral care. The college recognises the need to tighten up the systems for assessing and tracking students' progress and to strengthen links with other institutions in the confederation in order to make achievement as good as in the main college.

What the school should do to improve further

- Formalise advice and guidance about developing speaking, reading and writing so that there is a consistent approach by all teachers.
- Improve the provision of modern foreign languages.
- Improve guidance to sixth formers by sharpening arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of their progress within the confederation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter college with standards that are well below average overall. Many have very low levels of reading, writing, speaking and number work. Well planned grouping and finely targeted support enable students to make good progress and outstrip ambitious targets based on their attainment on entry. Results in tests at the end of Year 9 in English and mathematics over the last four years show a rising trend and, in relation to similar colleges, indicate good progress. Science results have not been as good, but a recent overhaul of the teaching schemes has led to an encouraging rise in 2006. GCSE and other examination results show a similar trend, with increasing numbers of students achieving five or more higher grades. Results in 2006 were the best the college has had, and were accurately predicted by the college's rigorous assessment system.

Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. Results at AS level in 2005 were disappointing but students studying for other qualifications generally did at least as well as expected. Provisional results for AS levels in 2006 indicate improvement, with a number of students achieving well above predicted grades in a range of subjects, including business, religious education and information and communication technology. Lower results in mathematics, chemistry and physics have led to the college wisely demanding higher entry requirements in future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students like college and say they feel safe and secure. In lessons, most students are enthusiastic and work hard. Around the college, they are confident, polite and keen to

help visitors and each other. They respect each other and the environment. There is no

graffiti and warnings about 'chewing gum free areas' are strictly heeded.

Fixed term exclusions are relatively high but permanent exclusions are very rare, and the

college has an effective system for reintroducing students after exclusion. Over the past three years, very positive promotion of good attendance and punctuality has resulted in improved figures, which are now in line with the national average. Extended holidays, discouraged by the college, lead to above average levels of unauthorised absence. The new colour-coded uniform is spoken of with pride by many students who claim significant ownership of the selection process through the school council. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In a very lively Year 9 lesson on the way of life of the Maasai, students' perceptive comments clearly demonstrated their understanding of different cultures. Older students particularly have high aspirations and are making well considered plans for higher education. They are mature young adults, delightful to talk to, who are well prepared for education beyond college and for life in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students make good progress because they are taught well. Most teachers are enthusiastic and capture and maintain students' interest. Teachers establish an atmosphere in the classroom in which learning is expected and respect for others is the norm. Consequently, behaviour is good and lessons proceed without interruption. Clear planning takes account of the needs and capabilities of individuals. Lessons have a variety of challenging tasks that make realistic demands of the students. Books are marked regularly and students are shown how their work can be improved. Computers are used well to enliven lessons and speed up routine activities. Good opportunities are given for individual research through the ready access to computers. Boys are much more willing to contribute to discussion than girls and tend to dominate in some lessons. Teachers in specialist classes are skilled in working with those who have difficulties so these students make good progress. Teaching of literacy has improved since the last inspection, but there is some inconsistency between curriculum areas in how literacy skills are taught.

Teaching in the sixth form is good and students speak positively of its quality. However, best practice is not shared consistently between teachers of the same subject in different colleges, particularly when assessing and tracking students' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory with some outstanding features. Students in Years 10 and 11 have a good range of options which includes excellent vocational provision. Business and enterprise college status has had an extremely positive impact on the college. Enterprise education is outstanding and the college has established itself as a national voice. Specialist classes provide a very well adapted curriculum for students with additional needs such as learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum is innovative and constantly evolving. For example, this term, a 'goal orientated' learning development programme has been introduced to teach students key skills such as communication. The satisfactory provision for students who are gifted or talented is developing well. Safety and healthy living are promoted effectively. There is a satisfactory variety of enrichment activities such as after-college clubs, but they are poorly attended. Students do not have sufficient opportunities to study a modern foreign language and, for this reason, inspectors did not agree with the school's judgement of the curriculum as good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students are well supported. Child protection systems and appropriate safety checks on new staff meet with the latest requirements. Regular fire drills are undertaken and accident/medical administration systems and procedures are in place, as are risk assessments for both the college site and for regular external visits. College staff and a wide range of multi-agency professionals provide significant pastoral and learning support to a number of vulnerable students, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or with English as an additional language. However, some of these students do not have clear individual targets for improvement which are frequently monitored and reviewed. The student support centre is particularly effective in ensuring that all students have access to a suitable learning environment and continued access to the curriculum. Academic monitoring and assessment systems are good and students are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher's leadership has been a key factor in improving standards. Her dynamism, commitment and support for students and staff are exemplary. She clearly expects all to achieve as much as they can and has built a team of teaching and non-teaching staff who share this purpose. Good links with parents and carers help to spread this vision to the community. As a result, the college is a place where learning is central and innovation is continuous. Governors too are passionate about the college. They are very well informed and perform a critical, yet very supportive, role in any initiative.

The college has been particularly effective in gaining resources that are well used to enrich and widen the opportunities for students. The college's Vocational Skills Centre is recognised nationally as an example of good provision.

Subject leaders share in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. In this, they are helped by the good use of assessment data that has been developed since the last inspection when this was an area to be improved. However, this has yet to be extended to the sixth form.

The college's self-evaluation is largely accurate and based on good evidence that is gathered through effective monitoring. This is especially so in the effective monitoring of teaching and learning that has contributed significantly to the improvement in standards.

Since the previous inspection, most of the issues raised have been successfully tackled, although the development of students' literary skills remains a challenge. Achievement and provision have improved and the college has outstanding capacity for improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the way you welcomed the inspectors. We very much enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and sharing your lessons. We think you are rightly proud of your college and all the good things that go on there. We liked the friendly atmosphere and the way your teachers make lessons interesting so that you learn well. Your opportunities to learn about the world of work and to gain skills that will be useful to you after you leave Laisterdyke are excellent and will be of great help to you in the future.

We thought the new uniform you helped to design is very smart, and you look after your college building and classrooms very well, so that you have a pleasant place to learn.

We have asked your teachers:

- to give you even more help to improve the way you speak and write English
- to provide you with better opportunities to learn a modern foreign language
- to give sixth formers clearer systems for assessing work and seeing that all make good progress wherever they are studying.

We wish you all the best for the future and we hope you all succeed in your ambitions.