

Wright Robinson College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105564
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	355800
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2011
Reporting inspector	John Paddock

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1758
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Brierley
Headteacher	Mr Neville Beischer
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. They visited 42 lessons involving 42 teachers. Inspectors scrutinised a wide variety of students' work, especially in English, mathematics and science. They held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject managers and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met with groups of students from Years 7 to 11. They observed the school in session and looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, the school development plan, records of students' progress and safeguarding documentation. Inspectors analysed 187 questionnaires from parents and carers, 282 from students in Years 7 to 11, and 47 from members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What standards students are currently attaining in English, mathematics and science in Years 9 and 11.
- Whether girls and students known to be eligible for free school meals are doing better than they did at GCSE in 2010.
- Whether there is any evidence to show that attainment in the weaker subjects at GCSE in 2010 is improving.
- Whether the college is sustaining recent improvements in students' attendance.
- How well the teachers are marking students' work.

Information about the school

Wright Robinson College moved to a new purpose-built campus in 2007. It is a much larger than average-size secondary school. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is above average and a few of these are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Around a fifth of students has special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. More students join the college or leave other than at the normal time. Since the previous inspection, the college has gained many awards, such as Sportsmark Gold with distinction, and the Artsmark Gold.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Wright Robinson College provides its students with a satisfactory and improving standard of education. It has many good features, such as the very positive atmosphere for learning and the way in which it cares for and supports all its students as individuals. Parents and carers fully recognise these and other strong features, such as students' good conduct and the way in which the college keeps their children safe. Capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. Valued assistance from the local authority, the Greater Manchester Challenge and a high-achieving local secondary school, is helping the college to raise standards. Since the previous inspection, standards and students' attendance have improved substantially but the marking of written work is still too variable in its quality. The college's self-assessment is accurate in most respects and plans to improve teaching and further raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, have a high profile.

The college has recently been setting more challenging targets for its students but so far it has been only partially successful in meeting them. For example, the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades in the range A* to C reached the national average in 2010, but underachievement in English and mathematics by some groups of students meant that other targets were missed. The main reason for the partial rather than full success in meeting targets is that there is a variation in the quality of teaching, which ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. This means that the pace of learning is very variable within some subjects. Good whole-school assessment systems provide managers at all levels with a very clear view of the progress that students are making and enable them to organise effective intervention activities and different approaches when necessary. The college's specialist subjects, physical education and art, lead the way in terms of the progress that students make and the GCSE results they achieve.

Leaders and managers are successful in raising students' attendance and attainment, improving the curriculum, ensuring that the college runs smoothly and providing good care, guidance and support for students. The senior team has the support of the majority of staff but they acknowledge that there is some discontent amongst a small minority, particularly but not exclusively support staff. This is because there is a perception that the efforts of these staff are not fully valued and that some members of the senior leadership team do not always treat them with sufficient consideration. Recently, the college has started to monitor teaching much more frequently but this is usually carried out by senior managers because many of the subject leaders do not have the skills or experience to undertake the role.

Up to 40% of schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the satisfactory teaching to good or better by:
 - planning lessons to cater for the different abilities within classes more effectively
 - reducing the time that teachers spend talking to their students
 - providing more opportunities for group and pair work
 - marking work so that it clearly tells students how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all members of the senior leadership team deal with all staff consistently well
 - providing subject leaders with the skills to monitor and evaluate teaching and fully involving them in this activity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enjoy their education and display positive attitudes to their work. Academic standards are rising in response to a major drive to improve them. The gap between the performance of the college and national averages at GCSE is closing quickly. In 2010, an average proportion of students gained five GCSE results in the range A* to C which was an improvement on 2008 and 2009. However, the proportion of students with five A* to C grades including English and mathematics was still below average. Given that attainment on entry to Year 7 is below average, these results represented satisfactory or better achievement for most students. The significant underachievement at GCSE in 2010 of some groups of girls and students known to be eligible for free school meals is no longer evident in any year group in the college. Robust data from tracking systems and early entry results for GCSE confirm that upward trends are continuing. Careful scrutiny of current work in English, mathematics and science confirms that, although there are still some differences in rates of learning, all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making at least adequate progress. Attainment of students in Year 11 in English, mathematics and science, is rising to broadly average and there is a similar picture in Year 9 where many students have already embarked upon GCSE courses.

Students develop good social skills and a sense of responsibility. Their good conduct and maturity are evident in lessons as well as in their movement around the site and at break and lunchtimes. Attendance has improved substantially to broadly average since the previous inspection, when it was well below average. Students have a good grasp of what constitutes healthy living and can give examples of how this affects their eating habits and the way that they take exercise. They are keen to take on responsibility when they are given the opportunity. For example, the Year 7 students speak enthusiastically about their roles in helping pupils from primary schools to settle in. Students say that they feel very safe in the college and parents and carers agree strongly with this view. Students have a good grasp of the importance of art and sport and have a good understanding of many of the different cultures to be found in Britain and beyond.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers promote good relationships with the students and manage their classes well. The better lessons are characterised by thorough planning based on a good knowledge of students' needs. In these lessons, explanations are clear, expectations high and learning brisk. Tasks are varied and interesting, fully engage students and offer many opportunities for independent learning, for example through well-designed activities for pair and group work. In less successful lessons, teachers' planning does not sufficiently take account of students' differing needs and teachers often spend too long on explanations and oral questioning. This causes the pace of learning to decline compared to the better lessons where a variety of well-sequenced activities is much more effective. Good assessment systems enable managers at all levels to track students' progress closely but the marking of students' work is still too variable. Some teachers mark students' work in an extremely diligent manner by correcting important errors, giving accurate feedback about quality and explaining carefully what needs to be done to make improvements. This contrasts strongly with other rather cursory practice which does not offer students sufficient support, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Students benefit from a good curriculum which is enabling them to close the gap on average national standards. It meets their needs and aspirations well and enables many of them to begin to tackle a wide range of courses leading to early accreditation from Year 8. Students value the very wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits that the college

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provides, particularly of a sporting nature, and participate in them well. Good systems of care, guidance and support firmly underpin the progress that students make and help to promote their good personal development. Students value effective arrangements for transfer from primary schools and to the next stage in their education. They feel that they receive plenty of pastoral assistance whenever they need it. The college does all it can to ensure that students benefit from their education. It has been extremely effective in improving attendance and sustaining it at a higher level than previously. Students found to be falling behind with their work get extra support to enable them to catch up. These are the reasons that almost every student is currently on track to gain GCSE or equivalent qualifications.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team are effectively communicating a shared vision of continuous improvement throughout the college. This is particularly evident in developments in the curriculum and rising standards. They have the full support of the large majority of staff who are happy to be working at the college. However, the college acknowledges that there is a small minority of staff who are discontented and that staff morale is not uniformly good. The governing body is conscientious and supportive of the college. It challenges when appropriate but members are not closely involved in college life and have limited input into development planning and evaluation procedures.

The college is assiduous in tackling any form of discrimination connected with students. However, the promotion of equality is satisfactory because there are still differences in the performance of different groups. Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements and have a high profile in the college's work but documentation is rather cumbersome and disorganised. Good promotion of community cohesion means that the college enables students to cover the intended strands of religion, ethnicity and socio-economic circumstances well. Consequently, students have a good understanding of belonging to a community and help to promote harmonious relationships between the different religious and ethnic groups within the college and outside it. The college's evaluation of the impact of this provision is at an early stage.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' views are almost uniformly positive. Inspectors found that their collective views very closely matched their own. A few parents had concerns about the college not helping them to support their children's learning and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Inspectors looked into these and found that the view of most parents more closely represented what they found.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wright Robinson 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 187 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1758 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	35	113	60	5	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	84	45	96	51	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	69	37	104	56	10	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	75	40	98	52	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	38	107	57	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	28	106	57	18	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	29	116	62	15	8	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)	67	36	104	56	8	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	30	118	63	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	89	48	86	46	7	4	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	25	115	61	12	6	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	75	40	101	54	6	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	46	93	50	6	3	1	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



11 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Wright Robinson College, Gorton M18 8RL

Thank you for making the team so welcome when we came to visit your college recently. A particular thank-you goes to those of you who filled in our questionnaires, met with us at lunchtime, discussed your work and showed us how to get to the lessons we were looking for. We really were impressed by your good behaviour and maturity, and the fact that most of you are enjoying your education.

We found that your college is providing you with a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Students' attainment and progress are rising and GCSE results are improving year on year. Your teachers know exactly how much progress you are making because they check it regularly. We were impressed by the level of extra support that is available for those of you who fall behind, often on a one-to-one basis.

Your college can still improve further and we have asked the governing body, headteacher and staff to make some changes to enable you to make still better progress. These are to:

- make improvements to some lessons so that you spend less time listening to the teacher talking and more time being involved in a range of interesting learning activities
- ensure that teachers always mark your work well and give you a clear idea about how to improve it
- enable some of the staff who lead subjects to play a more effective role in school improvement.

You can help by continuing to behave in a mature manner and by working hard.

Yours sincerely

John Paddick

Lead inspector

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