

The Winston Churchill School A Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125314
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	363990
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Patricia Metham HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1530
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Barter
Headteacher	David Smith
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 42 lessons, observing 42 different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and students. They evaluated students' attainment over three years, schemes of work, policies, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They considered 433 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers, 172 responses to the students' questionnaire and 91 responses from staff.

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

- How effective leaders and managers are in developing good practice across all departments and both key stages.
- How successfully the curriculum, including the enrichment programme, meets the needs of students across the ability range.
- What the impact is of the sports specialism on provision and outcomes for the school's students.
- How successfully the school has responded to recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Information about the school

The Winston Churchill School is a larger-than-average comprehensive. Most students are of White British heritage, with few in the early stages of English acquisition. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Also below the national average is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Predominantly those students have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social development needs.

The school became a specialist sports college in 2002, with redesignation in 2010. It also holds the Sportsmark and Sports Partnership Mark. In 2006, it gained the International School Award. In 2010, it was awarded Artsmark Gold. It participates in a collaborative group of seven schools, two colleges and a pupil referral unit.

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

With its sports specialism as an impressive pace-setter, this good and still improving school has a pervasive culture of individual and shared achievement. Well-delegated leadership and management are successfully driving improvement, with strongly directed professional development for teachers and targeted support for individual students. Accurate assessment of strengths and areas for improvement, careful monitoring of students' progress and a readiness to be innovative ensure that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Parents and carers value the balance struck between challenge and encouragement. These responses to the inspection questionnaire encapsulate the views of many; 'We are delighted at the transition from a strong primary to a strong secondary school. Our son is more than being catered for and pushed to achieve his potential' and 'The school is a safe, nurturing yet progressive environment for my child.'

Students' prior attainment on entry to Year 7 is a little higher than average and is significantly higher by the end of Year 11. This represents good progress. Most students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at a similar rate to their contemporaries. The school is prompt in identifying and responding to underachievement or loss of momentum; for example, interventions are in place to boost the achievement of girls in the middle-ability band. After Year 7, core and foundation subjects are taught in ability based sets within an exceptionally flexible, inclusive and engaging curriculum. Over two-thirds of the students pursue an academically challenging programme. For those served less well by a predominantly academic curriculum, there is an expanding range of vocational and diploma courses, in which students achieve good results. The variety and appeal of the extra-curricular activities offered are outstanding.

Most teaching is good or better, with examples of excellent practice. Students speak very positively about teaching that 'gets our brains working' and encourages initiative. There is some variation in quality across departments, for example in lesson planning and in the balance developed between teacher-led and student-initiated learning. This is being energetically and effectively tackled.

Despite a regular schedule of student progress reviews and expanding use of the school's parent portal and the virtual learning environment, the governing body and senior leaders recognise the need still to make communication with parents and carers more comprehensive and persuasive. There is an extensive and impressively well-used network of partnerships to extend the curriculum and to draw a range of professional expertise into care and guidance for individuals and their families. Links with schools in Africa and Russia, as well as in continental Europe, complement the curriculum and develop students' awareness of diverse cultures.

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Students feel safe and attendance rates are above average. They are extremely well informed about how to keep healthy and the great majority participate in team and individual sports or activities such as dance. They contribute with confident enthusiasm to their school community, for example as senior prefects, as members of the school council and as team leaders. They make an excellent contribution to the wider community also, including work as sports coaches, event organisers for local schools, fund-raisers and performers. Parents and carers appreciate the confidence and skills their children develop, as this comment illustrates; 'My son has developed into an amazing, positive young person and Winston Churchill School has enabled this growth.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote teaching that is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - the excellent practice established in some departments is widely disseminated and embedded
 - lesson planning and teaching present students of all abilities with appropriate challenge
 - students are given opportunities to take more responsibility for their learning and to be creative and independent learners.
- Improve communication with parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Overall, attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is significantly above average, underpinned by students' good progress. Following changes in subject leadership and in the courses offered, progress and attainment in science and mathematics have strengthened conspicuously. Those students taking three separate sciences achieved an exceptionally high percentage of GCSE A* and A grades in 2010. The number successfully gaining good modern language grades was far greater than the national average. There were also particular strengths in English, physical education, health and social care and leisure and tourism. Amongst the examples of outstanding attainment observed was in a Year 7 English lesson, when students showed great imagination, flair and skill in evaluating the impact of stage directions and then testing out their ideas in practice. Another was in a Year 9 GCSE science class; students were already working at A/B level, displaying higher-order thinking skills and extensive subject knowledge.

Most students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Achievement by the very small number identified as eligible for free school meals is not as strong, but remains broadly in line with national averages.

Students are justifiably proud of their school's achievements and feel that everyone has an opportunity to participate and succeed. Behaviour observed in lessons and around the school was good. Most students feel safe and are happy to come to school, confident that any difficulties will be dealt with promptly and effectively. They are extremely knowledgeable and serious about keeping healthy and the take-up of sports and activities is impressively strong. Students' contribution to the school and to the local community is outstanding, with many opportunities created through the sports specialism. Experience gained through leadership and teamwork and work-related learning and their strengths in

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literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology equip students well for further education, training and employment. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by the mainstream and extended curriculum and by the school's ethos.

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	1
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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
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?

Most of the teaching observed was good or better. Much was excellent and none was less than satisfactory, which represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Common strengths include teachers' secure and enthusiastic subject knowledge, their very positive rapport with students, good questioning skills, the confident use of varied resources, including up-to-date technology, and frequent encouragement of pupils to reflect on their own and others' work. Lesson plans, usually clear and well structured, do not always take sufficient account of students' diverse abilities and learning styles. The marking of written work is generally helpful, but encouragement is not always linked to specific advice on how to improve.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced, with flexible groupings that meet students' individual needs and exploit their potential. More-able students begin GCSE courses in Year 9. Those finding the core curriculum difficult benefit from additional support in English and mathematics. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers an extremely wide choice of academic and vocational options, tailored to individuals' needs and aspirations

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and providing each student with a clear pathway to further education, training or employment. Extra-curricular provision is exceptionally strong; it includes 130 sports clubs as well as the performing arts, the Duke of Edinburgh award, international links, and 'thinking skills' for able and interested students.

Students and their parents and carers describe the school as caring and supportive, with good reason. In discussion, Key Stage 4 students were emphatic that 'teachers genuinely care about you', are approachable and 'make you feel safe'. Guidance relating to subject choices, future options, study skills, personal concerns and relationships is accessible and constructive. Close liaison with external agencies complements the careful support given to potentially vulnerable students by pastoral staff.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly effective senior leadership team is setting ambitious targets for subject leaders and teachers, combining well-directed support and professional development with the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. This is acknowledged to be 'work in progress'. The recently restructured governing body presents a clear strategic vision for the school, emphasising academic achievement as students' passport to future success. More detailed and accessible data about attainment and progress are enabling the governing body to challenge as well as support the school. Procedures to ensure that students are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are thorough and well embedded and are supported by regularly updated training for all staff and the governing body. Financial management is curriculum-driven and disciplined. Enterprising leadership and management have made specialist status a positive agent for change that has raised students' self-esteem and enhanced the school's standing. The development of partnerships has been outstanding, strengthening provision and extending opportunities for students to make a valuable contribution to the local community. International strands in the curriculum and links with continental Europe, Africa and Russia promote students' awareness of global diversity; their first-hand experience of multicultural Britain is less well developed. A strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, respecting differences and tackling discrimination is at the heart of the school's planning and day-to-day management.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

Views of parents and carers

Nine out of every ten parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children were happy at school and well over three-quarters said that they were happy with their children's experience. These views were echoed in students' responses and the attitudes observed by inspectors during the inspection.

About a quarter of those responding expressed concern about the school's approach to behaviour, commenting that it lacked consistency. Inspectors found little evidence to support this during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Winston Churchill School 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 433 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1530 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	126	29	279	64	20	5	7	2
The school keeps my child safe	124	29	283	65	20	5	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	108	25	274	63	41	9	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	108	25	261	60	44	10	15	3
The teaching is good at this school	81	19	292	67	46	11	7	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	16	282	65	62	14	10	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	80	18	285	66	52	12	3	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)	63	15	271	63	47	11	6	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	83	19	294	68	43	10	7	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	18	232	54	79	18	24	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	13	263	61	68	16	11	3
The school is led and managed effectively	82	19	281	65	39	9	12	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	109	25	272	63	46	11	4	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.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Winston Churchill School, Woking GU21 8TL

Thank you for the friendliness with which you helped us during the inspection, answering our questions and showing us your work. We share your belief that the school provides you with a good education, that your teachers are supportive and that the sports specialism makes a major contribution to your overall achievement.

You told us that your teachers, genuinely, care about you, are always approachable and, as one of you commented, 'get your brains working'. Attainment in many subjects is higher than the national average, with marked improvement recently in science and mathematics. You continue to make good progress throughout your time at the school. You, rightly, take great pride in the opportunities and successes that come through the school's sports specialism. It is impressive not only that your teams, and some of you as individuals, compete so successfully nationally and internationally, but also that so many of you enjoy participating in the very wide range of activities available to you. We noted how readily and effectively you take on responsibility for others in the school and in the local community.

In order to ensure that your school goes from strength to strength, we have asked your headteacher to make sure that:

- everyone who teaches you engages your interest, responds to the different ways in which you learn and challenges and supports you as the best teachers do
- you are encouraged to be independent and creative in your learning
- your parents and carers are given all the information and guidance they need to help you make good progress.

All of you can help by making the most of opportunities to use your initiative and your imagination to explore ideas and work out solutions to problems.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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