

William Morris Sixth Form

St Dunstan's Road, Hammersmith, W6 8RB

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 achieve consistently well in this culturally diverse school in which all are valued equally.
- Students who join having not gained high levels of success in their previous secondary schools typically achieve as well at William Morris Sixth Form as those of high academic ability.
- Teaching is consistently at least good. Teachers make effective use of their high levels of subject knowledge and expertise to plan lessons which are mostly well matched to students' abilities, needs and interests.
- Students receive good quality support; this includes disabled students and those with special educational needs as well as those requiring support in learning English.
- Students behave well both in lessons and around the school site and have positive attitudes to learning. They report that the school is a safe and welcoming community.
- Leaders and the governing body ensure that staff have high expectations of their students.
- Robust tracking systems ensure that there is a wealth of useful information about how well students achieve available to staff; this is used to good effect in setting challenging but realistic targets for students.
- The wide range of subjects and different types of courses on offer are a key strength of the school enabling students of all abilities to be successful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The highest quality teaching evident in the best lessons is not seen consistently across the whole school. Consequently, the achievement of some students could be still higher. This is also the case for those who do not attend regularly enough.
- A minority of leaders in charge of subjects do not yet have the skills and experience to ensure that standards continue to rise as rapidly in their areas of responsibility as in others.
- The school improvement plan does not specify clearly enough how progress in moving the school forward will be measured. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to monitor and evaluate improvements with sufficient precision.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 42 lessons were observed. Meetings were held with: senior leaders, including the Principal; middle leaders; members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body; four groups of students and a senior local authority officer.
- Inspectors looked at improvement planning and self-evaluation documentation, assessment information and examples of students' work.
- There were not enough responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, to generate a summary of the views of parents and carers. In addition, Ofsted questionnaires completed by 67 school staff were considered.

Inspection team

Ken Bush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kewal Goel

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Lynne Kaufmann

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Brian Lester

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Full report

Information about this school

- William Morris Sixth Form is a 16 to 19 age range school. It offers a range of courses at: Level 1 (Foundation); Level 2 (GCSEs and vocational equivalents); and Level 3 (A/AS levels and vocational equivalents). About two-thirds of examination entries are for A/AS levels.
- Students join William Morris Sixth Form both from local secondary schools and from others in different parts of London and beyond.
- There are currently 43 students on roll with a statement of special educational needs.
- Students come from a very wide range of different minority ethnic groups.
- English is believed to be the first language for about four-in-ten of the students.
- About two-in-five students are known to be eligible for free school meals.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase achievement and the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - making more use of self-and peer-assessment to promote students' ability to take greater responsibility for their learning
 - ensuring that all teachers make more use of targeted questioning to develop high-level thinking skills
 - ensuring that those students who are most frequently absent and/or late achieve higher levels of regular attendance and punctuality to lessons
 - enabling all leaders who are responsible for subjects to be equally proficient in helping to raise standards
 - modifying the school improvement plan so that the governing body and other leaders are able to monitor and evaluate how the school is progressing in greater detail.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students at William Morris Sixth Form achieve consistently well over time in a wide range of courses.
- For those starting Level 3 courses, students join the school at age 16 having previously attained results in GCSE or equivalent courses which are lower than those typically found nationally. Attainment in A/AS courses tends to be below the national average, but in vocational courses is above average. Students undertaking the demanding Extended Project Qualification achieve especially well.
- Attainment in Level 1 and Level 2 vocational courses is consistently above average. Students generally attain much better results in those GCSE courses which they first took in their secondary schools, such as English and mathematics, although there is some variability in GCSE results taken as a whole year-on-year.
- From different starting points, students' rates of progress in A/AS levels declined slightly over the past three years, but remained broadly in line with national rates. In 2012, the strongest gains in progress in A-level courses were seen in biology and French and the weakest in photography and English literature. Inspection evidence indicates that current students in the full range of courses are progressing at least as well and, in most cases, better than in 2012.
- With only very minor variations, all groups of students, including those from different minority ethnic backgrounds, together with disabled students and those with special educational needs, achieve equally well. In 2012, girls made slower progress in AS levels than boys but there is no evidence that this is typical over time.
- A strength of the school is that almost all students who begin courses go on to complete them and gain a qualification. The proportion of students accomplishing this is much higher than that found nationally.
- Similarly, when students leave the school, the vast majority successfully progress to university, other colleges or into work-related learning. In 2012, about three quarters of Level 3 students went on to higher education. The destinations of all students, including those from Level 1 and Level 2 courses, are carefully monitored by leaders to ensure that the impact of the school's work can be measured.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is consistently good across the different types of courses that the school offers. As a result, students achieve well.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and are able to use their expertise effectively to ensure that students are well equipped for the demands of their examination courses.
- Staff are ambitious for their students and convey their high expectations through planning suitably challenging tasks which build well on what students already know, understand and can do. In most lessons, students are clear about they need to do to succeed, although a small minority require significant help with personal organisation.
- Teachers use a wide range of methods to address the various requirements of different courses. During the inspection, almost all classes were involved in preparing for imminent examinations and most teachers seen were able to demonstrate that they could deliver revision lessons well. In an A-level sociology lesson seen during the inspection in which teaching was judged to be outstanding, students made excellent use of their existing knowledge in applying it to possible examination questions. In groups, they had to ask searching questions of their peers, while the teacher continually probed their answers to reach higher levels of conceptual understanding.
- In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less consistently effective, teachers do not

make enough use of targeted questioning to reinforce and deepen students' understanding. Occasionally, too, teachers over-explain ideas rather than use questions to involve students more fully in their learning.

- Assessment is a growing strength of the school and teachers are becoming more adept in providing clear written feedback with the right balance of praise for work successfully completed and precise points for improvement. Some of the best marking seen during the inspection was that for the highest attainers. However, the use of self- and peer-assessment, which would encourage students to take even more responsibility for their own learning, is not developed consistently well across the school.
- Both the range and quality of support for students are impressive. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are given well-tailored individual support from well-qualified staff who use their expertise to good effect to enable these students to achieve as well as their peers. Support for students for whom English is an additional language is also of high quality and enables them to make significant gains both in their language acquisition and learning generally.
- The school has a strong commitment to enable students to be independent learners which is reflected in the highly effective Learning Resource Centre. This very well-run facility, whose staffing includes two qualified librarians, makes a strong contribution to students' good achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well both during lessons and around the school site. Disruption to lessons is rare and, in the view of those students spoken to during the inspection, is well managed by staff on those occasions it does occur. Attitudes to learning as seen in lessons are generally positive, although where teaching is less effective, students are occasionally passive rather than fully engaged.
- The school has clear systems for logging behaviour incidents which have contributed to improvements in behaviour over time.
- Staff, as reflected in the inspection questionnaire, were unanimous in their view that behaviour is good in the school. No information on parents' or carers' views on behaviour was available to the inspection team.
- Almost all students reported confidently that the school is a safe place and that bullying rarely occurs. There were no reported racism incidents in school logs as seen during the inspection. Students are also very knowledgeable about personal safety issues beyond the school and feel that staff, including personal tutors, are effective in highlighting how they can keep themselves safe in adult life.
- The school has rightly identified in its school improvement plan and self-evaluation documents that attendance and punctuality could be better. Consequently, this affects the capacity of a small minority of students from achieving as well as they might. Although school records state that attendance is gradually improving, some lessons seen during the inspection had notable levels of absence, albeit authorised in some cases. Levels of punctuality, too, especially to the first lesson of the day, are variable.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, under the auspices of a strong Principal, insist that students from across the whole, diverse school community aspire to reach the highest standards. Staff, too, are clear about what is expected of them and seek consistently to translate these ambitious principles into practice through their teaching, tutoring and support roles.
 - Staff morale is high as reflected in their very positive responses to the inspection questionnaire
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and as shown through their conversations with members of the inspection team. The vast majority report that they understand how leaders and governors are seeking to move the school forward and are clear about their roles within that process. The performance management system is securely and efficiently managed and is well regarded by staff who affirm that it is a key reason why improvement occurs. Effective programmes, involving both support and challenge, are in place for those few staff whose performance has not consistently met minimum expectations.

- Teaching is well led. Accurate and thorough self-evaluation has identified the main strengths in teaching and how it needs strengthening further. The programme of continual professional development for staff is comprehensive, makes good use of expertise both from within and beyond the school and is responsive to the needs of individuals. Staff do not feel that professional development is imposed upon them but through initiatives such as Learning Focus Groups, they report a strong sense of ownership.
 - Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and students' achievement are systematic and generate useful information which is well used to create challenging targets for teachers and students.
 - The school improvement plan which brings together the evidence derived from leaders' analyses of performance is not entirely fit for purpose. This is because it neither identifies clearly enough how successful completion of actions will be measured, nor what impact these objectives will have on specific improvements in students' performance or other outcomes. These limitations prevent both leaders and governors from being easily able to monitor and evaluate how the school is progressing in sufficient detail.
 - The majority of middle leaders make a strong and developing contribution to school improvement. However, not all leaders in charge of subjects yet have the skills and experience to ensure that standards continue to rise as rapidly in their areas of responsibility as they do in the most effective departments.
 - The curriculum is very strong. There is an extensive range of academic and vocational courses on offer to suit the varying needs of the diverse student population. Provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is particularly strong and the school is a local centre of expertise for Foundation-level learning. The courses to be offered are reviewed annually and adjusted to ensure that students can achieve well and that they have suitable progression routes within William Morris to other colleges/work-based learning providers or into higher education. There is also a wide selection of enrichment opportunities, notably in sport and the arts. Taken as a whole, the curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
 - The local authority offers light-touch but useful support to the school. This is largely at the discretion of school leaders and the governing body who 'buy back' a range of services. The local authority monitors trends in students' achievement at the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved both its capacity and effectiveness since the previous inspection. It has a full complement of members and has undertaken regular training updates to enable it to keep abreast of national educational developments. Governors are acutely aware of how well students have achieved in the past compared with all students nationally and, to a lesser extent, the progress of groups of students currently in the school. They are becoming increasingly familiar with the detailed work of different departments through increased planned visits and individual governor links and have a growing understanding of how teaching could be improved at whole-school level. Inspection evidence indicates that they appreciate how the performance of staff is managed and they ensure that teachers' financial rewards are closely aligned with the quality of their teaching and how well their students achieve. Statutory duties with regard to ensuring that students are safe in school and that there are equal opportunities for all are discharged well.
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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	133545
Local authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	413467

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

Type of school	Sixth form school
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	16–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	790
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean-Michel Boehm
Principal	Kevin Gilmartin
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 February 2010
Telephone number	020 8748 6969
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