

Winchcombe School

Greet Road, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, GL54 5LB

Inspection dates 16-17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because it varies too much between subjects and has not been good over time.
- There has not been enough consistently good teaching over time. New strategies being carried out by the school's leaders to improve teaching and progress have not yet resulted in consistently good achievement.
- In lessons that are not well planned, students do not get actively involved in their learning or are challenged enough to find things out for themselves.
- Oral feedback to students does not always help them to improve their work. They are not always given the opportunity to fully develop their own learning skills.
- Marking of students' work is inconsistent. Teachers' comments do not always tell students clearly enough what they need to do to improve. As a result, some students do not learn quickly enough.
- The best teaching in the school is not shared widely enough so that more staff can improve the quality of their teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are successfully improving teaching in the school and achievement in some subjects such as mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve better than their peers.
- Parents' views of the school are positive. High proportions believe that their children are happy in school and say that they would recommend the school to others.
- Behaviour is good. Students enjoy coming to school, they are safe and well looked after. Students behave well and attendance is rising. There is very little bullying and few exclusions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons taught by 25 teachers. Eight lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors looked closely at the school’s work, including analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, the school’s information on students’ progress and students’ work, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding and work of the governing body.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, staff and three members of the governing body and a telephone conversation with an external consultant.
- Inspectors took account of 98 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, letters from parents and 50 responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shahnaz Magsood

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Winchcombe School is a smaller-than average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 June 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and children of service families) is below average.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has a very small number of students that attend a local college in Evesham to follow courses that the school does not offer.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of good and outstanding teaching so that consistently good progress is made by all students over time, by making sure that all teachers:
 - share the good practice more widely already developed in the school
 - help students understand how they can improve their work both in lessons and through marking their work
 - increase the challenge for students in lessons by making sure that they have sufficient time to be involved in their own learning through discussion, group work and problem solving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, over time, students have not achieved well enough.
- Too many inconsistencies exist between subjects. Achievement in technology, French, mathematics and information and communication technology has been inconsistent, whilst achievement in subjects such as English, religion and philosophy has been good.
- Students do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English. The proportion of students making expected progress in mathematics has been below the national average, although this gap has narrowed.
- Students join the school with broadly average standards and by the end of Year 11 leave with five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, again broadly average.
- Recent measures taken by the school's leaders, including better systems for tracking student performance, indicate that achievement for those finishing Year 11 in 2013 is on course to improve significantly, demonstrating the positive impact of the school's leadership.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve better than their peers. This is because the school identifies their needs early and provides good support, particularly from teaching assistants, for each individual student.
- Off-site provision is matched well to the needs of the few learners that attend courses, such as animal care, that the school does not provide and these students achieve well.
- There are no significant differences in the achievements of different ethnic groups or for those speaking English as an additional language.
- Gaps in the progress and standards of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and other students have been closed. In 2012 the gap was less than a quarter of a grade behind in English and less than a quarter of a grade above in mathematics. However, latest assessment information indicates that there is significant improvement in this picture in 2013.
- The school has used pupil premium funding to provide a range of support for students, such as one-to-one tuition, the development of literacy and numeracy skills and personal support for students.
- Those students who benefit from the Year 7 catch-up premium make good progress from when they join the school. Small-group work and intervention to improve reading ages are effective in making sure students improve their literacy skills.
- The school has shown through its work to narrow gaps between the performances of different groups of students that it is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all students.
- The school does not make extensive use of early entry for GCSE examinations. Where it does, students are not disadvantaged.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been consistently good or better over time. This means that students' progress has varied between subjects and students have not consistently made good enough progress.
- The quality of teaching is improving but it remains too variable and does not consistently allow students opportunities to be more actively involved in their own learning. As a result, students are not challenged to develop their own learning skills as much as they could be.
- In too many cases, opportunities to discuss progress are not built into lessons. As a result, feedback does not help students to understand fully what they need to do to improve further. Written feedback in students' books is inconsistent and, in some cases, does not give students the information they need to improve. As a result, students are not as engaged as they might be in the development of their own learning.

- As a result of changes in staffing and the training offered to staff, teaching is now more effective with improvements in the achievement of students in Year 11. Students describe their best lessons as those where teachers plan well and describe clearly what the class is to learn. They value teachers that challenge them and plan opportunities for them to work in groups or pairs.
- Questioning is sometimes used skilfully by teachers to develop the understanding of students. They provide 'thinking time' for students and expect well thought-out and extended responses to their questions. However, too often questions are not used to involve all of the students and this leaves some with limited understanding of their work.
- In more effective teaching, lessons are well organised and offer a variety of relevant learning activities that engage and motivate students. Objectives are clear and the lessons are planned with students' starting points clearly in mind. For example, in a physical education lesson, students were not only developing the skills and fitness needed in tennis but also using and developing their coaching and creative skills when designing their own training activities. As a result, students had higher levels of challenge and made greater progress.
- Teachers display strong subject knowledge, and relationships between teachers and students and between students in lessons help support the progress made. On a few rare occasions, students who were not fully engaged in their learning lost focus and wasted time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are well behaved and polite around the school. They are keen to engage in class activities and respect each other and cooperate with all staff. They have a strong community belief as a result of the school's strong work in developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View, and staff who completed the staff questionnaire, agree that behaviour in and around the school is good.
- The school manages behaviour well and staff are consistent in their use of the school's behaviour policy. Students' behaviour in lessons is good and the students work effectively together, although on rare occasions students drift off the tasks set. This is linked to less effective teaching that does not challenge them sufficiently.
- The behaviour and safety of those students that attend off-site provision are good. Courses are chosen carefully and students are closely monitored.
- Students are proud of their school and speak positively about each other. Staff promote and model good behaviour. Students talk about how teachers respect them and how they respect their peers and the adults within the school community.
- Bullying is extremely rare and students are confident that staff will deal with any rare incidents quickly and effectively. They feel safe and know about different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Attendance is rising over time and incidents of exclusions are falling as a result of the school's interventions.

The leadership and management are good

- The school knows itself well. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses, leading to focused improvement plans. The school has a desire to change things that are not working well and to make continued improvements to its work.
- Senior leaders have brought about improvements in teaching so that is now more effective. As a result, the performance in key subjects like mathematics has improved. Parents and staff have confidence in the leadership of the school and recognise the changes that have been introduced are starting to improve outcomes for students.
- Since its conversion to academy status the school has made effective use of an external consultant to help support its self-evaluation and quality assurance.

- Good quality training has been provided to help teachers improve the range of teaching methods. They have many opportunities to work together within coaching pairs to share ideas. This has led to more effective teaching. However, senior leaders rightly recognise the need to share the best practice further to raise the quality of teaching.
- A reviewed curriculum plan is better positioned to see that students' achievement continues to be strengthened in Key Stage 4. The new curriculum enhances students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is already a strength of the school. Students have increased opportunities to develop knowledge and skills. New tracking systems give staff and governors an accurate picture of students' performance.
- Senior leaders work hard to ensure all students are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.
- All statutory elements of the safeguarding of students are met.
- As a result of actions taken by leaders and improvements in outcomes for students, the school demonstrates a capacity to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have undergone a review of the skills and knowledge they bring to the school since its conversion to academy status. They have an increasingly accurate picture of the school's performance, its strengths and weaknesses, students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors work with the headteacher and senior team to make sure good systems for managing teachers' performance now help support improved teaching in the school. They know how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. Governors take part in appropriate training and have an understanding of the spending of pupil premium and its impact.

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	136764
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	412786

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Grimshaw
Headteacher	Neil Hall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01242 602233
Fax number	01242 604211
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