

Inspection of Winstanley College

Inspection dates: 3–6 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
<hr/>	
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Winstanley College is a sixth-form college in the metropolitan borough of Wigan. It recruits around half of its students from Wigan, with the remainder from the wider area of Greater Manchester. Most students follow A-level programmes across 35 subjects. A minority of students study a mixed programme that combines up to two A levels with a level 3 vocational course. Vocational courses currently include applied science, criminology, health and care, music performance and music technology.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,699 students on A-level programmes and 89 on the mixed provision. Six students were taking resit GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. A very small number of students who had high needs were studying on A-level programmes.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students benefit from a caring and nurturing culture that encourages them to aim high and to aspire to progress to high-quality destinations. Students tell us that teachers have high expectations of them and that they develop positive relationships with their students. Students trust their teachers. They are quick to respond to advice and guidance from their teachers that enable them to improve their work further. Teachers provide good specialist support outside lessons to help students who are having difficulty with their work achieve well.

Teachers help students to develop resilience. Students like the fact that they are encouraged to be more independent and to take responsibility for their studies. Most students find the common assessment points (CAP) assessments helpful in identifying whether they are on target to achieve. However, a few students find this process stressful.

Students feel that the campus is welcoming and modern. They like the library and the designated areas across the college for group or silent study. They find the additional online study resources useful and many use these to extend their learning.

Students who have high needs benefit from high-quality specialist resources that help them to fully take part in their learning and achieve at least as well as their peers.

Students have good opportunities to participate in a wide range of additional activities. These range from musical productions, the debating society, competitive and non-competitive sports to programmes that support students' career pathways, for example the 'medics, dentists and vets' programme.

Learners feel safe. They tell us that they know what to do and who to speak to if they have a concern.

The vast majority of students would recommend the college to a friend.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have created a culture of high expectations. They introduced 'three non-negotiables' to improve students' attitudes towards learning. These include attendance, being on time to lessons and being ready to learn. As a result, attendance is high, and students are highly motivated to learn.

Teachers are very well qualified and experienced. Some, for example in art, are highly recognised practitioners in their field. Others are external examiners in their subjects. However, in a few vocational subjects, teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to work with employers to gain appropriate industrial updates. Recent staff development has helped most teachers to improve their craft of teaching. For

example, teachers now logically link different, but related, topics of learning together that they then revisit at intervals throughout the year. This helps students to know more and remember more over time.

Teachers use a highly effective range of formal and informal assessments. These further help students to retain and recall the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be successful. For example, in addition to the CAP assessments, teachers use quizzes and other 'fun' activities that help students to build on their learning sequentially. In law, teachers use case tests to prompt recall and help students to remember the key points of law that have been covered. Teachers use the results from assessments, including questioning, to ensure that students apply the knowledge and skills they learn fluently, for example to a range of examination questions on the same topic.

Most students benefit from a broad curriculum that is planned logically and helps them to progress to aspirational destinations. For example, the law of tort is delivered before criminal law. This helps students to build their knowledge by relating it to more familiar areas of negligence and breach of duty before progressing to the more complex law of crime. The extended project qualification teaches students wider skills, such as referencing and critical evaluation. The health and care extended certificate course links effectively with progression into medical-related degrees and employment, such as nursing and radiography. However, the rationale for offering one-year A-level courses – which are normally two years – to the few students who underperform in one of their initial A-level choices is unclear. These students do not achieve as well as those who choose an A-level equivalent vocational qualification as a substitute.

Leaders, managers and teachers ensure that the same ambitious curriculum is accessible to all students, including those who have special educational needs and high needs. For example, they have built a high-specification care suite for students with high needs that are very complex. All students with additional needs benefit from a curriculum that includes highly individualised support and care. Consequently, students participate fully in learning and achieve ambitious goals, for example to study at prestigious universities.

Students produce work of a high standard. They work effectively, both collaboratively and independently, and show a mature level of commitment to their work. Students benefit from a classroom culture that is clearly focused on the development of learning and skills. This enables them to feel comfortable about experimenting in their learning. For example, art students told us that they feel confident to take risks. Where they make mistakes, they feel comfortable to 'laugh it off' and use the experience to develop ways to improve.

Leaders and managers ensure that students receive a comprehensive programme of impartial careers information, advice and guidance for each year of study. Careers advisers are highly qualified. Most students benefit from guidance that meets their individual needs and ambitions. For example, guidance supports students' applications to university or builds their confidence in finding employment or a

higher-level apprenticeship. However, advice and guidance for students who move on to the mixed provision at the end of year one do not always consider students' original career aspirations.

Governors use their extensive experience to contribute effectively to the leadership of the college. They have a clear oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. They use the new detailed reports to provide effective challenge to senior leaders where there is underperformance. However, improvements to the very few A-level courses that have underperformed for a while have not been swift enough.

Not all students benefit from meaningful work experience. Those students who are on vocational courses, such as health and care, and those who are on professional pathways, such as the 'medics, dentists and vets' programme, have relevant work experience placements. However, work experience opportunities for the remainder of students are limited.

Students are very respectful and caring for each other. They show high levels of tolerance and understanding across the diverse student population. For example, students benefit from a very active LGBT+ society that is supported and encouraged by leaders and managers. During Black History Month, students celebrated Black British history by promoting prominent Black British individuals from across society. However, students do not have a sufficient understanding of life in modern Britain. While they show high levels of respect and tolerance, they do not see bodies such as the student union as examples of democracy in action.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding and the safety of students are a high priority. Leaders have recently expanded the safeguarding team to include senior tutors with direct responsibility for referrals linked to domestic abuse. All safeguarding staff have the appropriate training, skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively. They keep up to date with local risks. Leaders and managers recognise that a key safeguarding issue is mental health. They have put specific activities and resources in place to support students, for example mindfulness, yoga and a 'nurture' room.

Leaders and managers have implemented robust procedures for staff and students to report safeguarding concerns confidently. The safeguarding team liaises effectively with external agencies to provide additional support services to students. Leaders and managers carry out appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff before they start work at the college.

A minority of students do not have a sufficient understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They could not tell us what threats exist in their local area.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Review the quality and appropriateness of the advice and guidance for students who transfer to the mixed programme or to one-year A-level courses to ensure that students understand fully what is involved and the opportunities available to them when they leave the college.
- Ensure that teachers on vocational courses have sufficient opportunities to gain appropriate industrial updates that provide them with current and accurate information and industry examples that inform the content of what they teach.
- Ensure that actions to improve the very few underperforming A-level courses raise standards in these subjects rapidly to ensure that students on these courses receive a high quality of education.
- Increase the proportion of students who take part in work experience relevant to their career ambitions to ensure that they understand fully what they are working towards and whether it meets their expectations.
- Ensure that leaders and managers provide clear information to students so that they fully understand British values and the dangers posed by those with radical and extremist views where they live.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130522
Address	Winstanley Road Billinge Wigan Lancashire WN5 7XF
Contact number	01695 633 244
Website	www.winstanley.ac.uk
Principal	Louise Tipping
Provider type	Sixth-form college
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2007
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Suzanne Wainwright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Humphreys	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Crilly	Ofsted Inspector
Alex Lang	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alex Fau-Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020