



Winchmore School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102045
Local Authority Enfield
Inspection number 286262
Inspection date 5 March 2007
Reporting inspector Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Laburnum Grove
School category	Community		Winchmore Hill
Age range of pupils	11–19		London N21 3HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8360 7773
Number on roll (school)	1468	Fax number	020 8360 8409
Number on roll (6th form)	214		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Linda Sless
		Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Mansbridge
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–19	5 March 2007	286262

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Winchmore is very much larger than average secondary schools and serves a multi-racial ward with significant economic deprivation. Over 77% of its students are from a diverse range of ethnic groups. More than 60% have a first language other than English, with an increasing proportion at the initial stage of learning English. Approximately 10% are refugee or asylum seekers. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The percentage eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school was awarded beacon status in 2002 and gained specialist arts college status in 2004. It began offering extended school provision in September 2005. The large sixth form shares its provision with other providers in the local authority. A new build including a science block is planned for 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'We were inspired by the headteacher...there is a dynamic and proactive approach as well as commitment to helping our children. The school is also very inclusive'.

This is a good school. Most parents are positive about the quality of provision, particularly the distinctive unity among the different ethnic groups; the above quotation typifies comments made to inspectors and on the questionnaires.

The headteacher's clear vision that Winchmore's 'priority is learning' is realised in students' positive attitudes to do well and their good academic achievement. Students enter the school with levels of attainment below those seen nationally but make good progress and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Students' good achievement is underpinned by their outstandingly good progress in some subjects. This is particularly notable in German and art, the school's specialist designation. Results in both subjects are very high and a large minority of students choose both subjects, something that is unusual.

As a specialist arts school, Winchmore uses this status to exemplify outstanding practices in the drive to promote improvement and better standards of achievement. There is therefore excellent use of the specialist status in the school, the local community and beyond. For example, internally, excellent teaching in art and the use of assessment to improve standards are shared across the school. Externally, students' share their artistic flair with a wide range of partner schools, local businesses and organisations.

Students achieve well because they have positive attitudes and good behaviour. They attend lessons wanting to learn, and know that teachers have high expectations of their work and behaviour. They receive a good start in Year 7 and the good progress is sustained as they move through the school, because the quality of teaching and curriculum are good. Teachers' planning takes into account the wide range of abilities in their classes; they use a variety of teaching styles and regularly monitor students' progress to help them understand how well they are doing and how they can improve. In turn, students said that they value the 'range of learning styles, the friendly learning environment, the visual and practical tasks because they help us to learn a lot'.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school keeps detailed records of students' achievement. Teachers set tests regularly and diligently use data to monitor students' progress and provide appropriate support to prevent under-achievement. The robust approach to supporting students is enabling specific groups at risk of underachieving to make good progress; notably, those of Caribbean and Turkish heritage. Students know they are valued and can turn to an adult or a peer mentor for guidance and support.

The school knows well its strengths and areas for improvement, and its evaluation is accurate. The work of the governing body is outstanding. It is scrupulous in sustaining the school's reputation and challenging it to improve results each year. Staff and

governors therefore work together very well to improve provision. Governors hold the school to account through rigorous reviews and evaluation of results.

The school is effectively led and managed. The quality of leadership of the headteacher is exemplary and has been central to the school sustaining and improving its good achievement record since the last inspection. However, the senior team recognises that the sixth form needs improvement primarily as achievement is not consistently good. The headteacher has the support of senior and middle leaders who have a good understanding of the school's work. This cohesive and reflective senior team spreads good practice effectively. For example, rigorous faculty reviews identify strengths and point to where training and support are needed. Data is well managed and accountability is rigorous. Planning for improvement is extensive as the school recognises the need for all faculties to achieve as well as the best.

Winchmore is well placed to sustain its mission statement as a 'caring learning community where everyone is expected to realise their full potential'.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Students make good progress in their personal development as a result of effective care, support and guidance which includes good support from tutors, learning mentor and the school's community police officer. Students enjoy the opportunities for responsibility in the school and wider communities. The school is making good improvements to its sixth form provision as a result of thorough self-evaluation by the senior leadership team. The management of the sixth form is satisfactory because routine monitoring and evaluation are not sufficiently rigorous to identify inconsistencies between subjects at an early stage; consequently, achievement was uneven in 2006.

What the school should do to improve further

- implement its plan to improve provision in the sixth form
- spread its best practice of monitoring and evaluation in the sixth form in order to secure consistently good levels of students' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

By the end of Years 9 and 11, students make good progress overall and reach broadly average standards as they move through the years. The GCSE results have risen each year, showing an upward trend in students' attainment and achievement. The school's rigorous evaluation is enabling teachers to monitor and support potential groups at risk of under-achieving at an early stage. For example, there is targeted support for minority ethnic students. Standards in the sixth form were average in 2005; although

in 2006, results were lower than expected. All indicators show that progress in the sixth form is good overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are good. The majority behave well and are keen to learn with the school giving very good support to the small minority of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, enjoy school feel safe, and are happy to approach adults if they have any particular concerns. Attendance is only satisfactory because some parents take their children on holiday during term time. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being and benefit from work experience for all Year 10 students, enterprise education programmes in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and a good range of work related learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some excellent features. The school's investment in teachers' professional development and rigorous approach to monitoring teaching and learning ensure that they keep abreast of changes in their subject area and use their good subject knowledge to challenge students. This was clear in the lessons visited during the inspection and in the discussions with students about their learning. Where satisfactory teaching occurs, the school provides high quality support to ensure that practice is consistently good. Lessons are very well structured, pace is brisk, objectives are concise, assessment is ongoing and the interactive white board is used well to sustain students' interest. As a result, students develop the confidence and capacity to review their work, pose challenging questions and work independently or in groups on set tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good curriculum is continually evaluated and improved to ensure it meets students' learning needs and aspirations. The curriculum also reflects the learning needs and cultural backgrounds of the different minority ethnic groups well. There are clear pathways in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school is currently researching how

best to further improve the transition to Year 7 and develop additional accredited courses at Key Stage 4. There are good levels of enrichment activities for all students, including a whole-school enrichment week at the end of the summer term and beyond the school day, there are booster classes, and revision and study skills sessions which involve students using the school intranet. There is exceptionally good provision for gifted and talented students, rightly recognised in the recent NACE award this term.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students receive outstandingly good quality care, guidance and support which result in their good personal development and the removal of the barriers to learning experienced by some. The excellent use of assessment information to track students' progress ensures they achieve well. They receive high quality information about their choice of courses and careers as they move through the school. There are secure procedures for safeguarding students' health and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

This is a well led school and is evident in the high esteem that parents have of the provision. There is commitment and dedication to improving provision for students from a diverse range of backgrounds, and as a result, staffing reflects the extensive racial mix of the school at all levels. This contributes well to students' achievement because they are surrounded with role models who are well placed to provide additional guidance and support when they are mentored. Continual improvement is at the centre of driving this school forward and has resulted in the school nurturing potential leaders internally. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis because there are robust systems to monitor and evaluate outcomes. Additionally, all stake holders, including staff, students and parents are consulted and involved in decision making.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you all for taking part in the inspection of your school. My colleague, Michael Milton Additional Inspector (AI) and I, enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things that help you to learn so well. Those of you who spoke to us were excellent ambassadors for the school.

Winchmore is a good school where you feel valued, safe and happy and are included in decision making. These views are shared by the vast majority of parents who value the commitment of your teachers and other adults who help you to achieve well. You behave well and have good attitudes to learning. These characteristics contribute to you making good progress in your tests and exams by the end of Years 9 and 11. You make good progress because most lessons are stimulating and your teachers use a range of resources and activities to help you learn. You mentioned that your teachers put you 'through the gears' and you will always remember them for their support and guidance. You talked to us about the effective teaching styles teachers use to help you learn well, in particular, you singled out ICT as a powerful learning tool, for example, using the pod in maths. We agree with you. The large sixth form also helps you to aspire to higher education.

All adults who work with you give you excellent support and you are very clear about where to go if you need advice or guidance. You clearly enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities, the opportunities to take on responsibilities and represent your school in the wider community work. The school clearly uses the art specialist status very well to develop your learning and promote your artistic talent in the community.

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors know the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement. Together they always monitor and evaluate your progress. They are constantly seeking ways to improve all aspects of teaching and learning to make sure that you can achieve even better results. We agree with the senior leaders that the sixth form is not as strong as the main school and they are currently working on improving the monitoring and evaluation there.

You and your parents are rightly proud of your school and we wish you the very best as you continue you through the school.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney Lead inspector