

The Winston Churchill School a Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125314
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293265
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Maria Dawes 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 on roll	
School	1550
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Minett
Headteacher	Mr David Smith
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	Hermitage Road St John's Woking GU21 8TL
Telephone number	01483 476861
Fax number	01483 476479

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Inspection number	293265

© 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 four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Winston Churchill School is a larger than average comprehensive serving a socially diverse community in Woking, Surrey. The proportion of students taking free school meals is well-below average and there is a below average proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including statements, has increased over the last few years and is now in line with the national average.

The school has been a Specialist Sports College since 2002. It has Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Arts Mark, Sports Mark and International School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'The Winston Churchill School really encourages everyone to get involved - team work is crucial here!' This was the comment of one Year 10 student when describing the school. This is a good school which not only enables students to achieve high academic standards but also to develop into mature, well-rounded young people prepared for the next stage of their education and life. The good relationships amongst staff and students contribute to students' enjoyment of school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school which puts a high priority on meeting the needs of each individual student. The level of care, guidance and support is particularly strong. This was summed up by one parent who wrote: 'My children are well supported and I have been very impressed with the individual attention the school has given to us and our sons.'

Standards are above average in all years. Key Stage 3 students make very good progress and the results in end of Year 9 national tests are very high. At Key Stage 4 students make satisfactory progress and results at the end of Year 11 are significantly above the national average. However, this masks some variation between subjects and the school has been providing targeted support for some departments. Work observed during the inspection and the school's monitoring and tracking procedures show that current students are making better progress and examination results this year are expected to be improved in all subjects.

Students achieve high standards because teaching is good and lessons contain interesting and challenging activities to which students respond well. Students have positive attitudes to learning and are generally aware of what is expected of them. There is some variation in the quality of teaching both between and within different subjects and, in particular, the school is aware that it needs to develop students' independent learning skills in order to further improve progress at Key Stage 4. Good practice is not yet shared across the school as well as it might be.

The curriculum meets the needs of the great majority of pupils effectively. The number of options and vocational courses available to students is very good and enables all students to engage in learning and achieve well. The school's specialist status in sport has greatly enhanced the curriculum both in terms of a wide range of extracurricular sporting activities and enhanced facilities. One student commented that 'You don't have to be super sporty to enjoy sports here!' It has also contributed strongly to students' personal development through all Key Stage 4 students' involvement in becoming sports leaders. Students also make an outstanding contribution to the life of the local and wider community. Their commitment to supporting and working with a school in Kenya, for example, is highly commendable. The school has accurately identified that attendance has declined over the last few years and is now putting in place actions to reverse this.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and his senior team have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of what needs to be done to ensure all students reach their full potential. The school has made great strides in collecting data about students and this is influencing the work of the classroom teachers. However, the school is not yet using data in sufficient detail to analyse trends and evaluate the impact of provision to inform improvement planning. All staff demonstrate a personal commitment to improvement and team work is a key strength amongst all managers and teachers. The school has put in place

appropriate actions to systematically make improvements and is well placed to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse data more rigorously in order to evaluate the impact of provision and inform improvement planning.
- Extend the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning to further improve students' progress, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Reverse the decline in attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students start The Winston Churchill School with above average standards, although within the school there is a comprehensive range of abilities. They make very good progress through Key Stage 3 and results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are significantly above average.

Results at GCSE are also significantly above average, although there is some variability between subjects. In some subjects, for example home economics and business studies, results were exceptionally high. In 2006 68% of students attained five or more GCSE grades A* - C. This represented satisfactory progress for this year group but in some subjects students did not make as much progress as was expected. The school has put in place intervention procedures and inspection evidence shows that current students in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress.

Good support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities means that these students achieve as well as others in the school. At Key Stage 4 there are a minority of students following some alternative examination courses provided both by the school and partner colleges and progress for these students is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They contribute exceptionally well to the community both locally and through a strong link with a Kenyan school. A very large number develop leadership abilities through sport and modern foreign languages. Older students use these skills well in helping in local primary schools. Students enjoy their education, and most participate in extra-curricular activities.

The great majority behave well and are keen to learn, although a very few sometimes disrupt some classes. They build good relationships with staff and with each other; they work together co-operatively. Their attendance is satisfactory, but has declined gradually over the last four years. The school has measures in place to improve it. Students feel safe and say that any concerns they have are addressed quickly. They adopt particularly healthy lifestyles through sensible eating choices and frequent exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have raised considerable sums for charity and contribute well to the school community in a variety of ways. The year and school councils now have a clear influence on the work of the school. One member summed it up by saying: 'We are aiming to be a very intelligent pupil voice that makes a difference.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's monitoring is effective; inspection evidence supports the school's view that teaching and learning are both good and students are making good progress in most lessons.

Students are challenged and engaged in learning because most lessons are well planned and provide a range of interesting activities. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and use information technology, including interactive white boards, very well when it is available. They routinely provide extra support for students who are new to the school and to improve the quality of coursework. The most effective lessons have clear success criteria and promote independent learning. Teachers are increasingly using the available data about students to help plan their lessons, but tasks are not consistently well matched to the needs of students, for example those of higher ability, although those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well.

Teachers frequently use practical activities to enrich learning, and students say that they enjoy these. Occasionally teachers find difficulty in managing behaviour, particularly when students are working in groups. Assessment strategies including skilful questioning are used effectively and help students acquire a good understanding of what they need to do to achieve or improve on their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It meets the needs and aspirations of the great majority of students. In Key Stage 3 the full range of National Curriculum subjects is extended well with drama and, unusually, the opportunity to take three modern languages and Latin. In Key Stage 4 a wide range of subject options is offered, including several vocational GCSE subjects and work-related courses both at local colleges and in school. Care is taken to provide appropriate and motivating courses, in school where possible. For example, a group of Key Stage 4 students study heating and plumbing and motor vehicle maintenance. Although the curriculum is well planned, teaching time is lost because students may have some distance to move between lessons in this large school, leading to late arrival.

Extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities are outstanding and the provision has been greatly enhanced through the Specialist Sports College. Many visits and enrichment activities, such as Enterprise days involving local business partners, enrich the learning.

Good provision is made for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Effective support is offered with catch-up sessions and time after school with learning support assistants. The school is introducing a foundation group in Year 7 to enable a greater focus on basic skills for identified students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide good care for the students; they are encouraging and supportive. There is a well-organised pastoral system. Students' individual needs are identified well and shared appropriately with staff. Their academic progress is monitored and they are given detailed

guidance through their reports and meetings with their tutor on the standards they have achieved and strategies for improvement. Younger students are well guided by older ones. The provision for vulnerable students is good. They benefit from the range of vocational courses, the programme of individualised flexible learning and initiatives such as 'Living for Sport'.

Students are kept safe through full compliance with the legal requirements, and risks are fully assessed. Only healthy foods are available; students are taught well about healthy eating and the need for exercise. They are informed well about their future options for education and careers. The school liaises well with parents and other agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team is strongly focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development of all learners. Monitoring is used effectively and has provided a firm foundation for continuing improvements by developing the skills of teachers and implementing a curriculum that provides for all learners. Curriculum and pastoral managers are held clearly to account through rigorous annual reviews and self-evaluation procedures. The school's evaluation of its work is largely accurate, though analysis of assessment data to identify specific areas for improvement is not yet detailed enough. The school has identified curriculum areas in need of support and put in place improvement strategies to meet the high standards expected of them. There are some systems in place to share good practice, in particular to improve teaching and learning, although these are not as extensive as they might be.

The school runs very smoothly. Issues raised in the last report have been addressed and the school is well placed to make further improvements because all staff, in particular academic and pastoral middle managers, have a common sense of purpose. This is an inclusive school and a variety of well established systems exist to support all students. Links with the community are outstanding and specialist sports college is well led and having a positive impact on the school.

The governing body knows the school well and provides the headteacher with good support. It has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is in a position to challenge the school to further raise standards.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	1
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
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	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

27 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The Winston Churchill School a Specialist Sports College, Woking, GU21 8TL

I am writing on behalf of the other inspectors and myself to thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say about your school. We hope that you take the time to look at the full report but we thought you would like a summary of our findings.

You told us that you think your school is good and we agree with you. You get good results in your examinations and enjoy coming to school and participating in the wide range of opportunities on offer to you.

We were very impressed with the good relationships that most of you have with one another and members of staff. Your attitudes and behaviour both in lessons and around the school are good, although there are a few of you who are disrupting the learning of others. The school has worked hard to make the curriculum interesting and relevant to your needs. The effective levels of care, guidance and support are contributing well to your good personal development and well-being. The way so many of you are involved in the school and wider community is outstanding. In particular we thought your involvement with your partner school in Kenya and the very large number of you that are involved in supporting students through peer mentoring, the school council and as sports leaders, was very commendable.

We agree with your school that teaching and learning are good but we have asked it to help you make even more progress by sharing the good practice of some of your very good teachers. We have also asked the leadership team to develop the school's systems for analysing and evaluating the work that it does. We noticed that your attendance is less good than it has been and we have asked the school to improve this. You can help by making sure that you always attend school unless you have a legitimate reason not to do so.

The school is well led and managed and, as a result, those who have key leadership roles are well aware of those areas which would help to make your school even better. I am sure you will support them in the work they do to make improvements.

My colleagues and I wish you every success and happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

Maria Dawes

Her Majesty's Inspector