



# William Morris Academy

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 133545  
**Local Authority** Hammersmith and Fulham  
**Inspection number** 294095  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Cathie Munt HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Other secondary    | <b>School address</b>   | St Dunstan's Road |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community          |                         | London            |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 16–19              |                         | W6 8RB            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 02087486969       |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 772                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 02086000198       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Mr David Williams |
|   |                    | <b>Principal</b>        | Ms Liz Walton     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 14 October 2002    |                         |                   |

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|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Inspection dates</b> | <b>Inspection number</b> |
| 16–19            | 22–23 November 2006     | 294095                   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The William Morris Academy (the Academy) was formally established as the country's first 16–19 school in 2002, eight years after admitting its first students. It is oversubscribed. About a half of the students come from five partner schools in the local authority (LA), the remainder from over a hundred schools and colleges. Open access and a fresh-start philosophy attract some students who might otherwise shun further education. Students come from wide social and ethnic backgrounds. A third of the students are at the earlier stages of English language acquisition. The proportions of students who have language or learning difficulties (LLD), who qualify for free school meals or who have low attainment on entry are high. The site is small and accommodation is at a premium.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The William Morris Academy provides its students with an education that is outstanding in quality and is totally inclusive. Almost all aspects of the provision have outstanding features resulting in students making exceptional progress in their studies. Standards are in line at AS level and at 'A' level.

Students join the Academy from a wide range of backgrounds, many with attainment levels that are lower than average. A strong focus on student support ensures that the personal development, academic progress and the care and welfare of all students are outstanding. Some of the most effective strategies are;

- The insistence on students taking foundation courses in language development that helps to boost results in other subjects and re-engage those who have previously been uninterested in learning.
- The development of students as leaders and adults, taking responsibility for their own learning and contributing to the high expectations that are held across the institution.
- The fostering of an ethos of racial harmony where every individual is valued and where respect plays a large part in policy and practice.

Inspirational leadership from the Academy principal provides a clear vision that is understood by all. Very effective teams of leaders and managers across all areas of the Academy ensure a consistent approach to the implementation of policy. Their highly critical approach to self-evaluation benefits from the application of rigorous monitoring systems. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding - leading to the high levels of student achievement.

The Academy recognises that it has reached a critical stage in its development. It has managed, with great success and imagination, the barriers imposed by the Victorian buildings and limited space. The curriculum is good. It enables students to select from a good range of AS and A level courses that build most successfully on a wide range of foundation and vocational courses. Parents and students hold the establishment in high regard and recruitment to all courses, particularly science and performing arts, is increasing. Strategies for future development include a continued focus on finding ways to improve and increase buildings while reviewing curriculum design, making full use of new technologies and planning innovatively for the deployment of staff.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that strategic planning builds innovatively on the excellent work evident in the use of technology to promote individualised learning, in order to address the constraints imposed by the site on the development of the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Within a broad academic intake, a high proportion of students have lower than average attainment levels for sixth form entry. Excellent long-term strategies provide routes through foundation, GCSE and vocational examinations leading to very successful AS results and A level outcomes that are in line with national figures. Students' achievement over time is outstanding and over three-quarters go directly on to Higher Education courses. Achievement is good at GNVQ intermediate and foundation levels because of the successful focus on developing students' learning skills. The Academy insists that all students focus on language development as a precursor to continuing their studies on other courses. This reaps immense benefit as students' improving facility in written and spoken English allows them to progress successfully through to the higher level examinations. Those students who enter the Academy with higher than average attainment also make excellent progress in their studies and achieve the high levels expected of them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding and their spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good. Planning for spiritual development is not as strong as for other aspects. Students show very positive attitudes to learning, contributing well in lessons and valuing the teaching they receive. They greatly enjoy attending the Academy. Their high level of social responsibility, epitomised by exemplary behaviour and the respect that they show for one another and the staff, makes this a very orderly and pleasant place where all feel safe and where learning flourishes. A strong sense of community prevails, providing a model of harmonious cooperation within an ethnically diverse population.

Students have a significant role in the management of the institution, including participation in the governing body. This year they set up a student mentoring programme. They contribute most effectively to the local community and the wider world by, for example working in the nearby hospital and fund-raising on behalf of youngsters in Uganda. Visits to venues such as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art extend their cultural development well. Opportunities for participation in music include coaching for singing and playing the guitar. Generally, students adopt healthy lifestyles. Attendance is satisfactory. Assistant Principals, tutors and learning mentors follow up any students causing concern.

The highly effective development of students' capacity in spoken and written English contributes significantly to their future economic well-being. They are exceptionally well-prepared for continuing into higher education and the workplace.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teachers are skilful practitioners who understand well how to challenge students so that they make the best possible progress in their studies. Key factors in the exceptional progress that the majority makes are the adults' enthusiasm for learning, their commitment to the students' academic success and personal development and the high expectation that students will be successful in their efforts. In support of this, one parent wrote, 'For the first time in his life my son enjoys school. It seems they give him lots of feedback and this motivates him. His grades have gone from C/D to B/C'. Relationships between the staff and the students, reminiscent of those found in higher education establishments, create an ethos of warmth and respect in which scholarship prospers. Students speak cordially about the support and guidance that they receive recognising the immense difference that this makes to their grades and their general development. In lessons students are diligent and all, including the more able, make the most of every opportunity offered to extend their understanding.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

A broad spectrum of courses, complementing those on offer in the neighbouring College of Further Education, meets the wide-ranging requirements of students effectively. Additional English and mathematics courses ensure that students with limited, or no, qualifications develop secure basic skills and gain access to higher level courses. Specialist provision ensures that students with English as an additional language can access and succeed in the written part of award bearing courses. The curriculum enhances pupils' personal development well. A range of enrichment activities supports physical, intellectual and artistic endeavours. Students on some vocational courses undertake a work placement whilst others visit employers, museums and galleries appropriate to their studies.

The Academy is adept at evaluating and amending its provision to continually raise standards, despite curbs in the development of the curriculum imposed by the limitations of the site and buildings. These restrictions have been tackled imaginatively by the innovative use of school-based electronic learning materials to support effective, independent learning. This is well supported by the application of other solutions to maximise the use of resources, such as extending the teaching day. Despite the success of such strategies, managers rightly are looking to continue to improve curriculum provision in order to more fully meet the needs of 21st century students.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The provision for students' care is exemplary. Clear and effective structures assist students academically and pastorally from the time that they apply to enter the college.

High-quality, accessible and well-targeted information, advice and guidance support all students effectively and enable the most vulnerable to remain in full-time study and complete their education successfully. The parent of '... a child in very difficult circumstances' wrote, 'His treatment is exemplary and all concerned should be congratulated.'

Planned reviews encourage reflective thinking and help students to improve. Assignments are marked regularly and adeptly. Work missed when absent is provided electronically and time is built in to each term to allow students to complete all course work. Those on foundation and intermediate courses formally apply to remain at the college and are guided onto suitably challenging courses. Members of the careers staff provide an excellent service helping students to succeed in their aspirations, either by entering higher education establishments or by securing placements in a wide range of vocational settings.

All students speak with affection and gratitude about the unstinting support and guidance provided by the staff. They gave many instances of staff 'going the extra mile' to ensure, for example, that they received due housing benefits or to support them in their dealings with the immigration authorities.

There is very good provision for healthy meals and a strong encouragement to adopt a healthy lifestyle by taking part in sport, dancing and martial arts. Although discouraged from smoking, some students smoke in the small, designated area.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Almost all students make significant progress once they join the Academy. This is the result of high quality provision that is constantly monitored and reviewed by teams of outstanding leaders and managers. The Principal is inspirational. Her relentless drive towards a vision for a harmonious community that values all individuals and helps each to reach their full potential ensures the success of the institution. There has been rapid improvement since the last inspection. New appointments and a strong management structure, supported by rigorous systems of review, indicate an excellent capacity for further development. Governors work hard and uphold the school's philosophy enthusiastically. The governing body is emerging as a more effective support in shaping the strategic direction of the Academy.

The unusual characteristics of the Academy mean that it faces, and has faced in the past, challenges that have meant that leaders have had to be innovative in their approach to planning. They have developed a skill for finding imaginative solutions to those factors that threaten to restrict the personal or academic development of students. Students are given every opportunity to be involved in their own learning and in the development of the community as a whole. They respond most positively, showing a very mature approach. Relationships are outstanding, with the Academy providing an exemplary model of racial harmony across a very diverse group. Staff and students have a very good awareness of self-review, supported by robust systems that

provide information about the quality of teaching, the impact on student progress and curriculum requirements.



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## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| 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                     | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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**

Thank you for your help and cooperation when we inspected the Academy. We found you most courteous and mature and good ambassadors for the school. You said that some of the best things about the Academy are the way you get on so well with one another, the variety of courses, the attitude of the staff and the way you are treated and respected as young adults. We agree that these factors help to make William Morris such a very welcoming and successful establishment.

Our main finding is that William Morris is an outstanding school with many commendable features. It is exceptionally well led by the Principal and has made a considerable difference to the life chances of many students in recent years. All of you make excellent progress in your studies, despite many entering with low grades and some of you having other problems to deal with. Results are improving year on year. This is a credit to your own hard work and the outstanding teaching, guidance and support given to you by the staff.

Discussion with your student union representative emphasised that your views are valued highly by the staff. For example, you have representatives on the governing body and other policy making groups, and the union, run entirely by the students, has influenced many facets of curriculum provision. Indeed, some of you were leading sessions during the enrichment afternoon.

Most of you really enjoy studying at the Academy, and feel safe here. You are looked after exceptionally well and there are many people to whom you can turn for information or if you have a problem. You told us that you value the education that you are receiving most highly and many of you plan to study further when you leave William Morris.

Yours is a relatively small establishment on a fairly restricted campus. We have suggested that while the staff and governors continue seeking ways to increase teaching space they should also focus on developing innovative ways to overcome the restrictions placed on the development of the curriculum using new technologies, such as those successfully employed in the learning resources centre.

On behalf of the team, I wish you continued success in the future.

Catherine Munt HMI