

Winstanley College

Inspection report

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Contents

Background information	3
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement	7
Main findings	8

Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Winstanley College occupies a semi-rural location between Wigan and St Helens within the borough of Wigan. Wigan is the largest of the 10 boroughs within Greater Manchester and has a population of around 311,000. In 2005/06, 56.8% of school leavers achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, which was just below the England average of 58.5%. The achievement rate for five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including maths and English was 41.6% against an England average of 45.3% (*source: Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) performance tables 2006*).
2. In 2006/07, the college made provision in 10 sector subject areas. The total number of students enrolled was 1,812; of whom 1,805 were full-time students aged 16 to 18. Some 40% of students aged 16 to 18 travel to the college from outside Wigan Local Education Authority (LEA) boundaries, mainly from Lancashire and St Helens. The gender profile showed that just under 57% of students aged 16 to 18 were female; 5.2% of the college's students were from minority ethnic backgrounds, marginally higher than the ethnic profile of the local population. Some 95% of full-time students studied GCE advanced level courses. Around 98 students studied vocational courses at level 3 in health and social care in addition to their AS level and GCE A level programmes. The college is oversubscribed and selects its full-time students on the basis of their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) scores. The college no longer offers provision to adults. The college's mission statement is to become a true 'learning organisation' dedicated to the full personal and academic development of all students and staff; to involve students and staff in decision-making and policy-setting; to self-review to promote innovation, continuous improvement and the sharing of good practice; and to ensure that the key features of good teaching and learning also characterise the way people lead and manage within the organisation.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Outstanding: Contributory Grade 1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

3. Winstanley College is outstanding in all aspects of its provision. Retention and success rates are exceptionally high and have been so for a number of years. Students make excellent progress. Almost all students achieve more than is expected of them from their GCSE entry qualifications. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teamwork is excellent with teachers, support workers and students working together to provide a learning experience that encourages personal, professional and academic development. Students choose from a wide range of academic courses and an appropriate range of vocational courses. Most students take advantage of a varied and interesting range of enrichment activities that are managed well to complement academic studies and make a valuable contribution to personal and professional development. Guidance and support are excellent, particularly for those students with additional support needs. Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. Managers have created an atmosphere in which students and staff enjoy their work and expect to succeed. Quality assurance arrangements have been established for a number of years and have developed beyond assuring compliance with college systems, to empowering staff to develop and share good practice. The self-assessment process is thorough and accurate with a clear and concise report that provides a thorough analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement of the college. Self-assessment and strategic and operational planning make a valuable contribution to the college's drive for continuous improvement. The college is strong financially and provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

4. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. It sets itself challenging targets for improvement and consistently achieves them and improves its performance steadily year on year. The high success rates and the progress made by students noted at the last inspection have been maintained. The arrangements for quality improvement are particularly effective and are managed well by staff and managers. Self-assessment is inclusive and accurate and is a key element in the college's strategy for continuous improvement. Management information is accurate, useful and well used by managers and staff. Subject teams pay particular attention to learners' performance when judging the quality of their provision, particularly on success and retention rates and value added data. Staff development is managed well and appropriately targeted to match the agenda for improvement. Governors make an excellent contribution to continuous improvement, using their considerable knowledge of the college and the sector to scrutinise the performance of the college effectively.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

5. The college has made excellent progress since the last inspection. The very few areas for improvement identified at that time, particularly around social and educational inclusion, have been successfully dealt with. The performance of students from minority ethnic groups is now analysed in detail and the college has successfully attracted increased numbers of students from under-represented groups into provision. The college is now doing more than meeting its statutory requirements in relation to race relations and disability. Performance in all areas has improved steadily since the last inspection. Plans for a substantial new building are now in place.

Key strengths

- high success rates
- excellent progress for students
- outstanding teaching and learning
- outstanding personal development of students to become independent learners
- caring, safe, supportive yet challenging learning environment
- extensive, interesting and highly valued enrichment programme
- innovative range of additional qualifications and student experiences
- outstanding guidance and comprehensive personal and academic support
- highly effective additional learning support
- effective and positive links with local schools, universities, employers, parents and external agencies to meet the needs of individual students
- outstanding leadership and management
- clear vision and strategic direction with strong emphasis on students and their achievements
- excellent teamwork throughout the college
- continuous improvement through well established quality management arrangements
- highly valued student views
- outstanding governance.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- aspects of accommodation.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

6. Achievement and standards are outstanding. The college has maintained the very high success rates identified at the last inspection with success rates improving in 2006/07. Success rates at college aggregate level have been significantly above the high national averages for the last three years. Success rates on long courses at level 3 for students aged 16 to 18 are significantly above the national average and those for GCSE mathematics and English language in 2007 were 100%. GCE A level success rates have been maintained at or above a very high national average and success rates on AS level courses have been consistently and significantly above the national rate. The proportions of high grades achieved at A level and AS level are both very high. Only a very small minority of courses under perform.
7. Value added analysis show that students do extremely well overall at both A-level and AS level; most achieve higher grades than those predicted from their GCSE results. Success rates on key skills are good and students' personal development and the standard of work they produce are excellent. Students' attendance at lessons is carefully monitored and attendance rates are high. The college's self-assessment gives an accurate assessment of achievement and standards.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. Teaching and learning are outstanding. The very high standards reported at the last inspection have been improved upon. Teachers within and across departments share good practice and teaching resources to meet the needs of individual students. Lessons are meticulously planned, and delivered at a good pace with a strong focus on the reinforcement and checking of learning and examination technique. Substance is never overshadowed by presentation and teachers help students to acquire a deep and thorough understanding of subject matter through professional interaction with them. Teachers are very enthusiastic and students enjoy their lessons. Students produce practical and written work of a very high standard. Students are set challenging targets and generally achieve them. Subject staff and personal tutors carefully monitor students' progress. This is accurately assessed in the college's self-assessment report.
9. The college is outstanding in meeting the academic needs and interests of its students. It offers a broad range of A levels, and students are encouraged to be ambitious with their choice. Many very able students study up to five A level subjects. A wide range of appropriate additional qualifications is available to suit students' individual needs and career aspirations. All students complete general studies, and the college is working hard to improve the progress students make in this course. Around a third of students are successful in completing a level 3 key skills qualification. Other

qualifications include first aid, the certificate of personal effectiveness, young enterprise, British Sign Language and sports coaching awards.

10. The college meets the broader needs and interests of its students particularly well. Students' personal development is exceptional and they quickly acquire useful independent learning skills. An extensive, interesting and impressive range of enrichment activities includes team and recreational sport, a forum where students research and discuss topical issues, Winstanley TV, an active student council, charity work, and musical and drama performances. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive range of local, national and international visits and residential trips including European destinations, New York, China, Australia and India. Students organise a series of well attended cross-college theme days, including healthy body and mind, one world day and a local community day. The college's self-assessment report reflects this accurately.
11. Academic support and support for students with identified learning disabilities and difficulties is outstanding. Personal and pastoral support is exceptional. An excellent induction programme helps students from a large number of different schools settle into college quickly. The college provides a caring, safe and supportive learning environment that enables students to be challenged appropriately to achieve very well. Parents are kept very well informed. A well thought out group tutorial programme covers the themes of Every Child Matters. This is supplemented by a wide-ranging careers programme and excellent provision for students wishing to progress to Higher Education or employment. Student participation in voluntary work and work experience relevant to their chosen career is very high. This is well documented in the college's self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: Grade 1

12. Leadership and management are outstanding. Students benefit from the clear vision and sure strategic direction set by the principal and governors. The strategy is shared with staff and modified in line with changes in priority arising from the developing organisation. The main focus remains on maintaining and improving the high levels of students' performance across the organisation.
13. Teamwork throughout the college is excellent and communications are exemplary. Well managed and efficient formal meetings are supplemented by ample opportunities for staff to meet informally with colleagues and managers at all levels. A ten minute meeting between the principal and all staff provides an informative and good humoured start to the day, which is valuable to, and valued by, staff and managers. Coherent teams of subject and support staff work effectively to meet the needs of students. Staff and students are highly motivated to succeed. All of this is underpinned by careful monitoring of success rates and clear and appropriate accountability

- of all staff for their results. Performance management is good and conducted in a supportive atmosphere with a no-blame culture.
14. The arrangements for quality assurance have been developed beyond merely ensuring compliance with prescribed procedures. Staff are allowed to develop methods of working that are well suited to their own occupational areas and are then encouraged to share the good practice they develop. Management information is accurate and used appropriately by all staff in the college. Students' performance is rigorously monitored and students' feedback is assiduously collected and acted upon. The lesson observation system is continuously improving and is extremely effective in helping to improve teaching and learning. Subject self-assessment is thorough and accurate and is well coordinated with strategic and operational planning. Action plans are detailed and well managed, with thorough and regular reviews and updates.
 15. Governance is outstanding. Governors carefully scrutinise all aspects of the college's performance and make appropriate contributions to the college's strategic direction. They are carefully selected, and each brings a range of skills that complements the corporation as a whole. Training for governors is particularly good. A careful analysis of skills is conducted and individual training programmes form part of the induction process for new governors.
 16. Resources for learning are particularly good. Staff are well qualified and are highly valued and well supported by managers. Staff and managers have been successful in creating a pleasant learning environment in the existing buildings but seating in many classrooms is particularly uncomfortable and there are shortcomings in the accommodation. The college recognises this and plans for a substantial new building have now been drawn up.
 17. Equality of opportunity and social and educational inclusion are outstanding. The college carries out valuable work with students with additional learning and social needs and continues to work to widen participation and broaden its already diverse community of students. Students receiving additional support achieve well. The college works closely with social services to meet the needs of students in care, and all have been successful in achieving university places. Students who had benefited from additional support produced a DVD on the positive impact it had on their time at college and this has been used to good effect at a recent staff training event. The college's response to child protection is good and includes effective training, for staff and governors, and changes to the management structure to ensure well managed child protection arrangements. The college complies with legislation relating to race, disability and child protection.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04-05	1	100	64	36	127	56	56	0
	05-06	...	...	...	...	100	39	56	-17
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
GNVQs	04-05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05-06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04-05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05-06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other	04-05	1	100	63	37	127	56	56	0
	05-06	...	...	...	...	100	39	56	-17
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

... denotes no enrolments

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04-05	18	94	73	21	50	56	56	0
	05-06	21	100	78	22	31	84	64	20
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
GCSEs	04-05	18	94	78	16	...	...	...	...
	05-06	21	100	82	18	...	...	...	...
	06-07	20	100	...	...	...	...	...	...
GNVQs	04-05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05-06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
NVQs	04-05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05-06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other	04-05	...	...	...	...	50	56	52	4
	05-06	...	...	...	...	31	84	61	23
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

... denotes no enrolments

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04-05	7811	93	82	11	60	63	59	4
	05-06	8058	91	83	8	30	73	65	8
	06-07	8212	92			24	96		
A/A2 Levels	04-05	3242	95	92	3	10	60	76	-16
	05-06	3328	92	93	-1	2	50	78	-28
	06-07	3427	95			17	94		
AS Levels	04-05	4398	92	78	14	6	83	54	29
	05-06	4513	90	79	11	12	92	58	34
	06-07	4686	91			3	100		
GNVQs	04-05	128	73	74	-1	...	...	...	...
	05-06	139	94	74	20	...	...	...	...
	06-07	Included in AS and A2 figures as per LSC guidance							
NVQs	04-05	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	05-06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06-07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other	04-05	43	100	72	28	44	61	56	5
	05-06	78	97	75	22	16	63	62	1
	06-07	99	100			4	100		

... denotes no enrolments