

Windsor High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103874
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	323920
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Brooker HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1376

Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Colin White
Headteacher	Mr Keith Sorrell
Date of previous school inspection	31 January–1 February 2006

School address	Richmond Street Halesowen West Midlands B63 4BB
Telephone number	0121 5501452
Fax number	0121 5850610
Email address	info@windsor.dudley.gov.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one HMI and three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher and nominated staff, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the 74 staff questionnaires and 269 parent questionnaires returned to the school.

The inspection team evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and reviewed key aspects of its work, looking in detail at the following:

- pupil achievement in the most recent national tests and examinations in 2008
- rates of progress made by different groups of pupils
- the impact of the school's specialisms
- exemplary elements of the pupils' personal development
- the impact of the school's monitoring and evaluation in guiding improvement.

Information about the school

Windsor High School is a large specialist sports college and training school. It achieved high performing specialist status in 2007, gaining the sister specialism of science, with the additional specialism of applied learning. In 2007 the school also acquired Trust status. It has undergone substantial development since the last inspection in terms of facilities, development of school buildings and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. Plans are in place to open a sixth form in September 2010. The school serves a mixed urban catchment and pupils come from a wide range of different backgrounds. Its popularity means that it is oversubscribed.

Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	1376	Above average
Free school meals	11.4%	Average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	11.5%	Below average
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	7%	Average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	4%	Average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	1.5%	Below average

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Windsor High School is an outstanding school. Governors, staff, parents and pupils are unanimous that the school provides a high quality education and an excellent breadth of opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to succeed academically and thrive personally. Nevertheless, the school is forward thinking and does not 'rest on its laurels'; it aspires to achieve 'excellence for all' through continuous improvement. Its capacity to improve is outstanding, as shown by the positive developments in the school's accommodation, facilities, curriculum and specialisms, and improved outcomes in standards and pupils' personal development since the last inspection. The school's success is based both on high aspiration and hard work. This is exemplified through the excellent transition arrangements from primary to secondary school: great care is taken to assess the pupils' needs and ensure that no one falls behind and that all can succeed. The school's great strength is its unity of purpose and the strong collegiate approach of staff and pupils. The school is always looking to improve and recognises that better progress can be achieved by replicating the very best practice that already exists in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the pupils' progress by increasing the outstanding practice that already exists across the school. In particular, the school needs to:
 - sharpen the use and impact of short-term targets in lessons and in routine marking
 - ensure that teachers and pupils use assessment to guide and review the next steps in their learning.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

1

The school meets the academic and personal development needs of individual pupils outstandingly well. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good and often outstanding progress from their starting points in Year 7. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards of attainment are significantly higher than national figures across all key indicators. GCSE results have risen since the last inspection, with 68% of pupils gaining at least five A* to C grade GCSEs (including

English and mathematics) in 2008, and each specialist subject contributes positively to the school's high standards. Moreover, the pupils develop as confident and capable young adults who, by the age of 16, are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life. Their outstanding achievement and personal development are rooted in the excellent provision and high levels of participation and engagement. The strongly positive relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, underpin many of the impressive outcomes because pupils enjoy school, are motivated to attend, behave well and actively engage in lessons. The sports specialism makes a particularly strong contribution to the development of pupils' healthy lifestyles and their wider community contribution.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The school's highly innovative and open curriculum is designed and adapted to meet the individual needs, abilities and aspirations of all its pupils. At the heart of this provision are the specialisms, particularly sport, which makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' academic and personal development, and their enjoyment and participation. Partnerships, notably through the Halesowen Education Trust, broaden the curriculum to provide an impressive range of different pathways for pupils, and recent developments through the vocational specialism augment these well. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of pastoral guidance and care, which are firmly rooted in the well-established house system and ensure that pupils feel safe. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported, both in terms of academic guidance and development of skills that prepare them for later life. Teaching is good, and much of it is excellent. However, there is quite a wide disparity between the most effective and exciting lessons, which are based on detailed assessments of pupils' individual needs, and the more mundane teaching that is less sharply focused on precisely what pupils need to do to improve. Typically

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

though, lessons make good use of ICT and are carefully structured and very well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's impressive improvement since the last inspection has been expertly led by the headteacher, his strong senior leadership team and the excellent governing body. The governors themselves use their range of expertise to support and challenge the school and make a significant contribution to the school's development. There are rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, and training school status has strongly promoted effective self-evaluation and an innovative ethos that extends to all levels. Nonetheless, the school recognises that its evaluation of the impact of community cohesion strategies could be sharper. The school's leadership is highly effective in day-to-day management and judicious in strategic development planning, primarily because equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and the pursuit of excellence guides all important decisions. The school participates fully and actively in initiating and developing partnerships that strengthen and widen its provision and improve outcomes for pupils, including the most vulnerable. The vocational specialism has, for example, been very well developed to widen opportunities and improve outcomes for all pupils. Resource planning is highly effective and underpins the school's outstanding achievement. The school is extremely effective in fulfilling its statutory duties and has robust procedures for safeguarding pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	1
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school. In their questionnaire returns, many gave specific examples of the effective ways that the school has guided and supported their children to promote their progress and development. Many parents expressed appreciation of the wide range of opportunities provided by the school and paid tribute to the commitment of staff. A few of the 270 responses raised issues. There was no common pattern in any of the concerns raised, although several parents highlighted perceived weaknesses in communication between school and home, occasionally with regard to their children's progress.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006/7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006/7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006/7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006/7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement to be only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



17 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Windsor High School, Halesowen B63 4BB

Thank you for the positive contribution that you made to our recent inspection. We appreciated your friendly welcome and the sensible way that you spoke with us. Your views, and those of your parents, were very helpful in confirming what staff told us about the school. We agree that Windsor High School is an excellent school.

We were particularly impressed with:

- the high standard of your work and the good progress that you make in lessons and over time
- the excellent range of opportunities that the school provides both through the curriculum and with the many extra-curricular activities
- the high quality of teaching and how the school is always seeking to improve it
- your good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and high levels of participation
- the positive and wide-ranging contributions that you make to the school and the wider community.

Many of your lessons are excellent, and we have asked that the school continues to develop the most outstanding elements of teaching to ensure that you make even better progress. A key element of this is the way that assessment is used to guide your learning in lessons and through routine marking. You also have a key role in this, since your progress is influenced by the way that you reflect on your own learning and respond to the guidance given.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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