

# Winchmore School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102045
<b>Local Authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	335831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Metham 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1445
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Linda Sless
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Mansbridge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Laburnum Grove Winchmore Hill London N21 3HS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Over two-thirds of the time was spent looking at learning, with 51 lessons observed and 50 teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation that included key policies, the school's development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, departmental handbooks and data about students' attainment and progress, as well as 426 responses from parents and carers and 170 from students to the inspection questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Levels of attainment, particularly in English, up to GCSE.
- The progress and attainment of boys in Years 7 to 11.
- The school's success in improving sixth form achievement through monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning, as recommended in the previous report.
- The impact of the school's arts specialism both within the school and in the wider community.

## Information about the school

- The school has specialist status as an arts college. It also has the ArtsMark Gold, NACE Challenge Award, ICT Mark, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Award, a Leading Parent Partnership award and Investors in People accreditation.
- As part of a recently completed, large-scale building and refurbishment programme, facilities for science, English, technology, dance and drama have been extended and upgraded.
- Over 80% of students come from minority ethnic groups, with the largest representation being of European heritage.
- The proportion eligible for free school meals is greater than the national average.
- Nearly one third of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly behavioural, emotional and social issues.
- The school collaborates with local colleges to extend provision for students in Years 10 and 11, and with other schools in Enfield to increase the options available to sixth formers.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Among the most striking features of this good, culturally diverse school is its sense of community, underpinned by an impressively strong and pervasive ethos of mutual respect and care for the individual. The view expressed by many was summed up in one student's verdict: 'It's a pretty cool school.' Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire emphasised the outstanding quality of care and support from which their children benefited. The following observation is typical: 'We would like to say that staff at Winchmore work really hard and have the welfare and achievement of the students as their priority.'

As the school acknowledges, raising overall attainment is a priority. Precise analysis of students' progress as a basis for planning is having a positive impact. Ambitious targets are being set and priorities established for well-directed intervention and support. Early entry for core subjects and accredited alternatives to GCSE now enable students to build up a valuable bank of qualifications by the end of Year 11. Progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form is good. Most groups progress at a similar rate; however, those with behavioural, emotional and social issues do less well. Well-planned strategies are increasing these students' engagement, as the marked improvement in their attendance indicates.

Extremely well supported by the school's excellent provision of care, guidance and support, students feel safe and are keen to do well. They have an exceptionally clear and sturdy appreciation of the cultural diversity of their school and are confident that, whatever their heritage and personal circumstances, they enjoy equality of opportunity and are respected as individuals. The vertical tutoring system has increased opportunities for older students to act as mentors to younger ones, who value this relationship. Through links with local primary schools 'a key feature of the school's arts specialism' and work with the elderly and those with disabilities, students are actively involved in their local community and, through topics explored in lessons and links with schools overseas, they build up a vivid sense of the global community. Departments regularly report on their contribution to community cohesion and the senior leadership team ensures that this aspect of the school's life and of students' development is extremely well coordinated and continually updated to reflect local, national and world events.

Among the strengths observed in teaching were secure and enthusiastic subject knowledge, a productive rapport with students, confident use of technology and, in many but not all instances, effective questioning and assessment that enhanced students' learning. There was outstanding practice in the specialist subjects. Less effective lessons lacked the pace and challenge to engage students across the ability

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range, and activities did not always have the intended impact on students' understanding and skills. Marking of written work was most often thorough, combining encouragement with guidance on how to improve, but this was not consistent. Students willingly presented their work in class but often lacked the skills and knowledge needed to make peer-review a reliable prompt for further learning. They were co-operative and conscientious but not often independent learners.

After a period of relative instability in key departments, leadership and management at all levels are now strong. With increasingly focused and well-informed support from governors, senior leaders have clarified roles and responsibilities, and set in place comprehensive systems to monitor teaching and learning, establish priorities for professional development and improve attainment. Good management of the arts specialism has raised the school's profile locally, increased students' motivation and sense of achievement and prompted successful curriculum development. The impact of realistic self-evaluation, which has shaped the school's well-balanced development plan, tailored the curriculum more closely to students' abilities and aspirations and improved the overall quality of teaching, can be seen in rising attainment. The capacity for further improvement is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment further by:
  - ensuring that best practice in teaching and learning is thoroughly embedded across the curriculum and rigorously monitored, so that lessons consistently have the pace and the level of challenge needed to drive up standards for all groups of students
  - increasing the impact of assessment and promoting students' development as independent learners through more productive peer- and self-review and a consistent balance between encouragement and specific guidance in the marking of written work.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Attainment is broadly in line with national averages; however, the proportion gaining five good GCSE grades including functional English and functional mathematics in 2009 was significantly higher than the national average. Raising attainment in English has proved challenging, but there is evidence of a marked improvement since the appointment of the new subject leader and greater stability in the department's staffing. Over half of the Year 11 students earlier identified as on the C/D borderline now have GCSE English at grade C and are focusing on English literature or working to improve the grades achieved in November 2009. Given the high proportions of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of those from minority ethnic groups, with nearly half not having English as their first language, overall results at the end of Year 11 represent good progress. The decision to complement GCSE science with a BTEC science option has had a positive impact on attainment.

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Behaviour seen in lessons and around the school was good; however, the school acknowledges that a small group of students presents a particular challenge, to which there is prompt and well-targeted response. Attendance is good, with a notable drop recently in the rate of persistent absence. Students feel safe in this extremely cohesive and mutually supportive community. They have justifiable confidence in the 'BEST' team of pastoral staff as arbitrators and problem-solvers. They understand the importance of keeping healthy and many participate in sports clubs and activities such as dance. Students feel that their voice is heard and taken seriously by leadership and management; for example they contribute to annual faculty reviews. They respond willingly to opportunities to take on responsibility, both within and beyond the school, for example as mentors. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, strongly supported by topics and approaches within the curriculum and in assemblies, and by the school's insistence on mutual respect and celebration of diversity. Students build up a sound understanding of the attitudes and skills needed in the world of work, partly through curriculum provision such as BTEC qualifications in employability and citizenship and opportunities for work-related learning, and partly through experience gained within vertical tutor groups where they learn to deal effectively with students of other age groups. These skills are complemented by competences in numeracy and information and communication technology but literacy levels are still relatively low.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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**The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

**2**

## How effective is the provision?

Inspection evidence confirmed the school's judgement that over three-quarters of teaching was good or better. Regular monitoring by middle and senior management ensured that areas for improvement, such as lack of pace and challenge and less than effective assessment, were promptly tackled through mentoring by good practitioners among the staff and by relevant professional development. Lesson planning was generally clear and built effectively on students' prior learning, with a range of activities and interesting resources to engage disparate abilities and styles of learning. Most teachers displayed confident subject knowledge, up-to-date methods and effective use of assessment. In all lessons there was a very positive rapport between staff and students.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Following analysis of students' progress, which identified barriers to achievement, curriculum provision was extended to include more practical and vocational options alongside GCSE, AS and A-level courses. The school has a strong commitment to modern languages as developing cultural awareness as well as linguistic skills. There are good opportunities for extension work in community languages such as Turkish. In 2008 and 2009 the proportion gaining an A\* to C grade at GCSE in at least one modern foreign language was significantly higher than the national average. The emphasis on equipping students for the world of work is strong; all in Years 10 and 11 complete a BTEC in employability and undertake work-related learning. Partnership with local colleges and schools usefully extends opportunities for students to follow a pathway attuned to their individual needs. To assist the transition from primary school and to encourage creativity and critical thinking, a skills-based curriculum has been developed for Year 7 and is proving popular and productive. There is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, which students appreciate; many are linked to the school's arts specialism.

Inspectors were impressed by the outstanding network of pastoral care and academic guidance. Students' well-being and academic progress are regularly monitored and prompt action taken when concerns are identified. Students appreciate the system of sanctions and rewards. They wear achievement ties with pride. Well led by the recently appointed coordinator, support for vulnerable students is exemplary, with specialist teaching assistants providing very sensitive care and guidance. Constructive liaison with a range of medical and social service agencies and the work of the school's Education Welfare Officer make an extremely valuable contribution to students' welfare and to important links with students' parents and carers. SWIFT, the student welfare inclusion team, is exceptionally thorough in monitoring attendance and responding to lateness or unexplained absence. Heads of learning coordinate the academic mentoring provided by tutors and play an important role in liaising with parents and responding speedily to school-based issues.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

An ambitious vision for the school's development as a well-respected, inclusive, community hub for learning is persuasively presented by governors, the headteacher and senior leaders. Raising attainment is a key priority. Middle managers, notably those leading core subjects and the arts specialism, are responding positively to this challenge and standards are rising. Robust systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning and to spread good practice, although some unevenness still exists. External consultants review the school's assessment of students' levels and progress, which is sharpening teachers' awareness of national standards. Each department routinely undertakes self-evaluation set in the context of the whole school improvement plan, which then determines priorities for the organisation of teaching groups, development of schemes of work, strengthening of assessment and management of staff training.

The development of an efficient committee structure within the governing body and a programme of relevant training are equipping governors to be effective critical friends. Their positive influence on school improvement is gathering momentum. Budgeting and day-to-day financial management are, rightly, driven by curriculum and staffing priorities and are rigorous and cost-effective. Governors understand and fulfil their statutory obligations.

Concern for the safety and well-being of students underpins all planning. Effective procedures to ensure that students are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are in place and well understood at all levels.

For three years the school has held a Leading Parent Partnership award for work with focus groups that reflect parents' perceptions and concerns. To ensure that all parents are able to engage in their children's learning the school runs language classes for those with limited English and provides mentoring for parents who want guidance on how best to support their children.

The school's ethos, the range of facilities provided and the inclusiveness of the curriculum ensure that equality of opportunity for all in this strikingly diverse community is secure. Varied and active engagement with the surrounding community gives students an excellent understanding of local priorities and issues. Through the curriculum and through links with schools overseas, the school very successfully extends pupils' awareness of themselves as part of a global community. Steps taken to promote



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community cohesion are routinely and rigorously monitored and this sets well-judged priorities for future development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

The school has responded positively to recommendations in the previous report. Students make good progress through a curriculum that has become more diverse and inclusive over three years. Levels of attainment are at least average and, on occasion, above average, especially in the school's specialist subjects such as art and textile design. The school has extended its vocational provision and set more demanding requirements for entry to AS and A-level courses. This ensures that few students embark upon inappropriate options. Leadership and management are now strong, with more rigorous monitoring of teaching and assessment leading to greater consistency and higher expectations. Students value the timely and extremely well-pitched support and guidance they receive within school and from appropriate external agencies.

Sixth formers are courteous, confident and well motivated. They play an important part in the life of the school, especially within the recently introduced vertical tutoring system which has strengthened their role as mentors. Through activities linked to the school's arts specialism and volunteer programmes such as YAVE, sixth formers make a valuable contribution to the local community and develop their own interpersonal skills and capacity as leaders.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Nearly a third of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. A few expressed concerns about the impact of a disruptive minority on teaching and learning or felt that they were not kept well informed about their children's progress, commenting that parents' evenings were not efficiently organised. Most felt that the school was well led and was giving their children a good educational experience. Tribute was paid to the scope and quality of support given to students who had particular difficulties, for example: 'The pastoral care is absolutely amazing, more than anyone could expect.'

Inspection evidence indicated that views about the overall effectiveness of the school, especially the quality of care, guidance and support, were well grounded.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Winchmore School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 426 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1445 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	131	31	254	60	33	8	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	128	30	274	64	19	5	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	139	33	228	54	47	11	5	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	101	24	265	62	40	9	7	2
The teaching is good at this school	88	21	275	65	41	10	4	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	89	21	263	62	53	12	9	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	14	255	60	79	19	8	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	108	25	249	58	36	9	5	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	18	270	63	48	11	9	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	113	27	220	52	61	14	16	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	15	256	60	67	16	15	4
The school is led and managed effectively	101	24	262	62	32	8	6	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	141	33	245	58	27	6	6	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



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8 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Winchmore School, Winchmore Hill, N21 3HS

My colleagues and I greatly appreciated the friendliness and openness with which you responded to our questions and helped us build up an accurate and balanced picture of your school during our recent visit to inspect your school. We agree with your headteacher and teachers that yours is a good school.

Your school's strong sense of community is especially impressive given the variety of culture and background represented. We could see that you and your teachers share an ethos of mutual respect and care for the individual. It was good to know that you feel safe in school and to see that you understand and take seriously the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school's improving attendance record shows that you are happy to be there. We found that most of you are keen to fulfil your potential and have a positive attitude to learning. We noted that, while overall results have been broadly in line with national averages, there is evidence that your levels of attainment are rising.

To ensure that your school continues to improve we have asked your headteacher and her staff to focus on raising standards by:

- taking steps to ensure that all teaching matches the examples we saw of lively pace and challenge that engaged your interest and improved your learning
- making sure that the ways in which your progress is assessed, both in lessons and in the marking of your written work, make a real difference to your progress and that you are helped to become more independent learners, capable of reviewing your own and each other's work effectively.

I look forward to seeing your school go from strength to strength. You can help it do that by taking full advantage of the growing number of opportunities you have to develop your personal abilities and interests.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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