

# Windsor Girls' School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110057
<b>Local Authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	337429
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Limm 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>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	711
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G C Labrum
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Imperial Road Windsor Berkshire SL4 3RT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Almost half the time was used observing the lessons taught by 21 teachers and in addition inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at its policies and development plans, its analyses of students' attainment and progress, a sample of students' work, and other key aspects of performance. Inspectors considered the views expressed in 119 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They also considered the views expressed in 109 questionnaires completed by students of the school and 54 completed by staff.

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

- Trends in students' attainment and achievement since 2007.
- The impact of leadership and management, focusing particularly on how well the school has addressed the points for improvement identified in the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Windsor Girls' School is smaller than many other schools nationally, having no Years 7 and 8. It is situated in Windsor with some students coming from the nearby town of Slough. About one quarter of the girls come from minority ethnic groups but in the sixth form the proportion is higher. Generally the background of the girls is relatively advantaged in socio-economic terms, but this is not true of all students. The school gained specialist business and enterprise status in 2004.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

This school has improved rapidly over the last three years and now provides a good education for students. It has some outstanding features and has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

The school's ability to improve is seen in the way students' attainment, learning and progress have been raised rapidly since the last inspection, and especially over the last two years. There have also been improvements in the quality of provision in the sixth form, where outcomes for students are now good. Major changes in leadership and management structures have helped to bring about these improvements. Staff, students and governors talk about how the school has been revitalised by changes to staffing and new processes. Major changes to the curriculum for Year 9 and Key Stage 4 also indicate successful planning and good implementation. The process is not yet complete, but already Years 10 and 11 students are finding their needs more effectively met and their attitudes to the curriculum are positive, with a growing number seeing a clearer route from Key Stage 4 to the sixth form.

These improvements stem principally from the school's very effective and relatively new senior leadership team. The headteacher gives this team, and the school as a whole, untiring leadership, clear vision and a growing sense of pride. Governors also make a good contribution.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been above average for the last two years and students' achievement is good and improving quickly. Although there are clear indications that attainment is verging on very high, progress seen in lessons is typically good and not yet outstanding. Excellent leadership and management of teaching and learning have helped to bring about the improved results in recent years. The school's rigorous and accurate self-evaluation acknowledges that although teaching and assessment are good, a lack of consistency prevents them from being excellent. In particular, assessment information does not always inform lesson planning in a way that tailors activities to suit the needs of students, and especially the more able. Similarly, there remains inconsistency in how well teachers mark work to ensure that students know how to make faster progress.

Curricular provision is enhanced by good extra-curricular activities and also the growing enterprise activities devised by the leader of the school's specialism. Through excellent care, guidance and support systems, students show confidence, feel very safe in school, enjoy learning and make a good contribution to the community. They are prepared well for the future.

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

- Increase the proportion of excellent lessons, by building on existing outstanding practice to ensure that students are consistently well motivated and challenged to improve their learning further.
- Ensure that marking in all subjects points out precisely what has been achieved and the specific steps that students should take to improve their work in the future.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

In the lessons observed during the inspection, students typically made good progress in their learning in all year groups. The standards seen in lessons and students' books were well above average in some respects, reflecting the proportion attaining at least five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics in the most recent tests. All groups of students make broadly similar progress in their learning. Sometimes, but not consistently so, the more able cover alternative, challenging work. Many students show a perceptive grasp of ideas and concepts and a willingness to investigate in depth. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well because they have carefully planned support. Targets are sufficiently challenging to promote above average attainment.

In lessons, behaviour is good and only dips when teaching does not capture the students' interest. Students show commitment to their work in lessons and have good attitudes to learning. Students attend well and the school's initiatives to enable a small core of persistent absentees to attend more regularly are beginning to have some success.

Discussions with students and their responses to the questionnaire showed that they feel extremely safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They participate in sporting activities enthusiastically and appreciate the healthy diet offered in the school canteen. The school prepares them well for their future economic well-being. The majority of students continue into the sixth form and the vast majority of those who leave at the end of Year 11 remain in education, employment or training.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are reflective and very much capable of empathy with others. Their moral and social awareness is evident in their responsible attitudes and desire to contribute.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching was good in the majority of lessons observed. Occasionally it was outstanding, and in about a fifth of lessons it was satisfactory. What sets the very best lessons apart is the high degree of practical participation by students, where they are constantly asked to demonstrate their understanding, make presentations to the class, debate in groups, evaluate the work of others or act out a concept. Some of these lessons proceed at a remarkably fast pace, so that fresh directions and activities keep opening up well before the students' interest can wane. In the very best practice, questioning is skillfully used to probe students' understanding of how to solve problems rather than simply asking for correct answers to factual questions. The best teachers use their assessments of students well to plan work for the full ability range, with expectations for different groups set out at the beginning of the lesson. Together, these features enable students to make outstanding progress, but they are not yet present in all lessons to the same extent. Despite the reduction in passive listening since the previous inspection, there are still lessons where the pace is merely steady and active involvement is limited. Assessment information is still not used consistently well in some areas to plan lessons that are challenging for all groups, especially the more able. In some subjects, marking provides detailed and clear information on precisely what the students had achieved and what they should do next to improve their work. On other occasions, marking is brief and expresses a short view of overall standards without helpful detail.

The school has been reworking its curriculum during the last two years, opening up a much wider range of routes through Year 9 and Key Stage 4, to create better pathways for more students who wish to follow a broader range of courses in the sixth form.

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While the full impact of this cannot yet be judged, the match to students' needs is good and improving. Motivation and enjoyment are improving in the new courses and interim results in those with ongoing assessment are high. The logic behind the planning and its implementation, thus far, are both excellent. Specialist status in business and enterprise is making a better contribution to the curriculum than at the time of the previous inspection as a consequence of much better leadership. Many students take three sciences at GCSE and the school has introduced courses in science tailored specifically for the needs of the less able.

One of the school's most successful areas is its care, guidance and support arrangements. These provide good safeguarding and child protection systems, positive and clear direction about expectations on behaviour and a very effective steer on how to contribute to school life. Careers guidance leaves most students feeling well prepared for sixth form, work or college. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families receive excellent support. The majority of parents and students speak highly of the outstanding support and guidance provided by the school when students join in Year 9, make subject choices and prepare for their future as they leave.

*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?**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership, setting a clear agenda for improving achievement and using rigorous strategic planning to respond swiftly to detailed monitoring of the quality of provision. She is ably supported by a leadership team which has been restructured radically since the last inspection. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are rigorous and detailed. Leaders at all levels have made a positive impact on results in 2008 and 2009 and account for the continuing improvement of the present quality of teaching and progress. Accurate monitoring has ensured that leaders are well aware of the areas where the quality of teaching and learning is less well established than in the school's best practice. Strong links between senior and middle leaders and clear communication to staff and students have embedded ambition, consolidated excellent practice and driven improvement in teaching and achievement. Rigorous and challenging targets for achievement, the specialist areas and attendance are met and have been instrumental in driving improvement.

The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge. It has worked

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well with the school to ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and regularly reviewed. It has regular links with the school, though some staff and parents think these could be improved. The school has a thorough and detailed knowledge of its students and their backgrounds and it uses this excellently to plan opportunities and experiences at local, national and global levels. The impact of much of this provision has yet to be evaluated. Linked to the inclusive nature of the school and the rigorous way in which monitoring and planning take account of the needs and achievements of different groups within the school, community cohesion contributes to the excellent way in which the school promotes equality between students and tackles discrimination. The school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form provides a good education. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average when compared to other sixth forms. By the time students leave at the end of Year 13, attainment is broadly average. Recent changes in the leadership of the sixth form have resulted in more rigorous self-evaluation. Effective action has addressed weaknesses and inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning, and current progress, are improving and are now good. The most recent examination results and the school's tracking of students' progress show that attainment is rising. Care and support are extremely good, leading to rising retention rates for the sixth form and a majority of students progressing on to further and higher education. Students are given clear guidance so that they take appropriate courses linked to their capabilities and are given good advice on how to improve the quality of



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their work. Students develop into confident and mature young adults.

*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

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. Their questionnaire returns indicate strong approval for all aspects of its work. They are especially pleased with the progress their children make, the fact that they are safe at school and their enjoyment of school life. Parents approve of the way children with specific needs are supported and they believe the school is effectively managed. A very small minority feel more could be done to deal with unacceptable behaviour and promote healthy lifestyles, but their concerns were not borne out by inspection evidence.

Inspectors judge that parents are right to have faith in the school. They think the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour, and promotes healthy living extremely well.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Windsor Girls' 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 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 711 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	23	77	65	11	9	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	29	24	85	71	4	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	24	86	72	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	24	77	65	9	8	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	16	13	88	74	7	6	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	18	77	65	11	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	12	81	68	18	15	3	3
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)	28	24	70	59	13	11	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	16	80	67	13	11	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	10	80	67	15	13	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	13	81	68	11	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	19	77	65	9	8	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	22	81	68	7	6	2	2

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.**



15 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Windsor Girls' School, Windsor, SL4 3RT

The school provides you with a good education. The school is very well led and managed. Students from all backgrounds make good progress and your attainment is higher than average when compared with other schools in England. Your behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. There are some excellent aspects of the school. For instance, you are exceptionally well cared for and adopt really good approaches to living healthily. Specialist status in business and enterprise is beginning to provide you with good opportunities to develop skills across the curriculum and to prepare you well for the future. Links with your local community and to other countries are also good. Teaching, assessment and the curriculum are good.

Even in a school like yours, where everything is judged good or better, there are things that can be improved. Because the leaders and managers of the school want to make things absolutely excellent, they agreed with us that some aspects of teaching and assessment should be more consistent. We want the school to make sure that teaching is always planned to address your individual needs, and always involves you in your learning. We also want the school to look carefully at how your work is assessed in lessons and marked, and establish a more consistent approach so you always know clearly what you need to do to improve your work. You make a good contribution to running the school through your student voice opportunities and membership of various groups. I am sure that you will continue to play your part in making Windsor Girls' School an even better school.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm

Her Majesty's Inspector

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