

Waingels College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110070
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	337435
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Janet Mercer HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1386
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Reeves
Principal	Mr Richard Green
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school's self-evaluation, development plans and policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, 90 staff, 117 parental and 145 student questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- the progress made by all groups of students
- the progress made by the college in improving teaching and learning and in raising students' achievement since the last inspection
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of students of all abilities.

Information about the school

Waingels College is a larger than average secondary school, with specialist status in mathematics and computing since 2004. The college has training school status and a One School Pathfinder for the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Most students are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. The number of students eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. While the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.

The school has National Healthy School Status and holds several other awards, including the International School Award and Artsmark, and is a Football Association Academy school.

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

Waingels College provides a good standard of education and care for its students. The principal and senior leadership team have set a very clear agenda to raise standards in the college and to ensure every student achieves well. This has led to considerable improvements since the last inspection, for example, in the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievement, both of which are now good. Staff throughout the school are committed to ensuring that every child fulfils his or her potential and managers continue to set challenging targets to raise standards still further. Highly effective partnership working makes a strong contribution to improving learning, broadening students' experiences and supporting them well through their time at school. The majority of students make good progress and attainment is high. Students' prior attainment is above average when they join the school and GCSE results are well above national averages. Results are also well above average in the specialist subjects of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). However, in a small minority of subjects the proportion of A* to C grades at GCSE remains below national averages.

Most teaching is now good, and inspectors observed some outstanding practice. The majority of students enjoy their lessons and participate enthusiastically, particularly when they have opportunities to be involved in varied activities. In the best lessons teachers plan very carefully to meet students' different needs, interests and abilities. In such lessons, students are absorbed in their work and make very good progress. Occasionally, activities are not sufficiently tailored to meet individuals' needs, and more able students are not always challenged enough through more demanding work. The college is aware that more students should achieve A* to A grades in GCSE examinations and has made this a particular focus for improvement this year.

Inspectors observed predominantly good, and sometimes exemplary, behaviour in lessons and around the school. In a small minority of lessons observed, particularly in middle- or lower-ability Year 9 groups, students did not always manage to sustain their concentration, and low-level chat or shouting out disrupted the flow of the learning. A small minority of parents and students who returned questionnaires raised concerns about low-level disruption in lessons.

The majority of students know their examination targets and how well they are doing. Work is assessed regularly, although written comments and targets for improvement are sometimes too general to help students know how to improve their work. It is not always clear whether, or how, students respond to feedback or improvement points. Managers have taken a very innovative approach to developing an increasingly

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personalised curriculum, which is meeting most students' needs well. Younger students are very positive about the 'Opening Minds' and 'Extending Minds' curriculum in Years 7 and 8. Students in Year 10 and 11 have a good range of options, including vocational courses at local colleges of further education. The sixth form curriculum remains more traditional, with a good range of GCE AS and A-level courses, but few vocational options and no non-advanced-level courses.

Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the future of the college and demonstrate good capacity for further improvement. They critically review and evaluate the quality of the college's work and have a very realistic understanding of the college's strengths and areas that could be improved further. There is a clear understanding of this vision for the school among teachers and other staff, the vast majority of whom say they are proud to be members of staff in the college.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers tailor the content and level of work and tasks in lessons to meet the needs of individuals so that students of all abilities can fully concentrate on learning and make the best progress possible.
- Reduce the variations in students' levels of attainment in different subjects by:
 - sharing best practice more explicitly
 - making assessment feedback and targets for improvement more precise and subject-specific
 - ensuring that teachers monitor how students respond to feedback.
- Extend the breadth of the sixth form curriculum to improve progression routes and enable more students to move from Year 11 to the sixth form.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has risen sharply over the last two years and is well above the national average. While in the majority of subjects the number of students achieving A* to C grades is well above average, there remains considerable variation between subjects, with several courses having lower grade profiles. Tracking for current Year 11 students gives early indications that standards overall are set to rise further next year. Students join the college with above-average prior attainment and make good progress overall.

While the number of students from minority ethnic groups, or who are eligible for free school meals, is small, these students achieve at least as well, or better, than their peers. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or with statements of special educational needs, make good progress as a result of the high-quality individual support they receive. Students who join the college with lower than expected levels of literacy receive targeted support which is helping to improve their reading, writing and spelling. The vast majority of students say they feel safe in college and they have very positive

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relationships with teachers and other staff. This means they are confident that they know where to seek help or support if they need it. Students have been closely involved with revising the college's anti-bullying strategy and in preparing presentations to the whole school in assemblies on this topic. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly.

Students' attendance is good and most enjoy their work and the wide range of experiences the college offers. They participate regularly in extra-curricular activities, such as arts and sports. Most say they have a good understanding of how to live healthily, and a high proportion walk or cycle to school. Students are able to contribute to many aspects of college life, for example through their house groups, the student council and school improvement groups, which focus on teaching and learning, anti-bullying and the college environment. Many are involved in well-structured charitable fundraising, for example, for a link school in Botswana and for international, national and local charities. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The college has trained almost one third of teachers to teach philosophy to children and students' evaluations of this work show that they value the opportunities it gives to reflect and think about important topics. Lessons in a range of subjects, including personal, social, health and economic education and religious education, help students to understand and respect societies, cultures and religions other than their own.

Year 10 students speak very positively about the benefits of work experience. The college helps students to develop good teamworking and social skills, as well as gaining the qualifications they need; almost all Year 11 students progress to further education, employment or training.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ 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 to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in the best lessons, communicate this very well to students, inspiring a love of learning. The best lessons have a fast pace and challenging work is set for all levels of ability. Students respond positively to a varied range of activities, which enables them to be actively involved in their learning and to learn in different ways. They enjoy sharing ideas and explanations with each other, which helps to reinforce their learning and understanding.

Teachers often use skilful questioning to draw out what students know and to check their understanding. Extended questioning encourages students to justify their answers, think for themselves and to extend their understanding of key points. However, in a minority of lessons, the work set does not always match the range of abilities in the class, and some higher-ability students do not have sufficiently demanding or complex work to do.

The college tracks students' progress very closely, and quickly identifies any areas of possible underachievement. This includes those students predicted to achieve the highest grades, as well as those with lower levels of attainment or at risk of not achieving their qualifications.

Teachers ensure that students are familiar with the relevant assessment criteria and that they know how well they are progressing towards achieving set targets. Peer and self-assessment is often used well to develop students' reflective and critical skills. Written feedback and targets for improvement are not always sufficiently specific to the subject or topic to help students understand how to improve or reach higher levels and grades.

Students value the imaginative use of themed cross-curricular days. Good use has been made of the college's current building project in the curriculum, for example, by developing enterprise and aspects of financial literacy. Students have a choice of pathways in Years 10 and 11, including GCSE and vocational courses. The college has recently introduced the creative and media diploma in partnership with three other schools. Its specialist status has had a noticeable impact across the college. In particular, ICT is used well across the curriculum to enhance learning and develop students' skills in using relevant technology and software. The college works closely with other local schools to support mathematics provision and is extending this support through the parents' forum.

Students value the very good support they receive. Many parents commented very positively on the effective transition arrangements which helped their children settle in

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quickly to Year 7. Pastoral and behaviour support teams have dedicated staff who work with an extensive range of external agencies and groups. For example, the 'image group' works with Year 9 girls to raise their self-esteem and the Skidz programme in car mechanics helps some students to re-engage with learning. A local church group works closely with underachieving students and their families. Vulnerable students and those returning to school after an extended absence are helped to reintegrate by well-trained teaching assistants and behaviour support staff. Guidance about future careers is well planned and students are given individual support which often involves taster sessions with local businesses. Students receive good guidance to help them choose options for Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team, led by a thoughtful, reflective executive principal, sets very clear and ambitious strategic goals for the college which are set out in the college's 'vision for learning'. This is a very forward-looking school, with a strong emphasis on staff training and succession planning. Middle leaders receive good training to support them in taking on more challenging responsibilities.

Performance management is rigorous and focused on students' outcomes and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is rigorous, critical and accurate. Reviews of examination performance, lesson observations and new initiatives are used well to set challenging action points leading to improved practice.

The governing body take their statutory responsibilities very seriously and ensure that all students and staff are safe and well cared for. They use their skills and knowledge effectively to support and challenge the senior team and are well informed about all aspects of college performance. Governors have links with specific curriculum areas, attend meetings and staff training days and actively participate in the parents' forum.

Equality of opportunity underpins everything that the college does. The analysis of the performance of minority ethnic groups and those eligible for free school meals shows no considerable differences in the attainment or progress made by different groups of students. Community cohesion is well promoted through the curriculum and numerous extra-curricular activities, such as charity events, foreign exchange visits and World Challenge activities. The college participates very actively in the local community through its partnerships with other schools and colleges and with community groups.

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Safeguarding procedures are robust and staff recruitment well managed. The college meets all current legislative requirements and all staff are trained in child protection procedures. Risk assessments for specialist rooms and equipment and school trips are thorough.

Finances are well managed and the college provides good value for money. Resources are used well and parents and students have commented on how well the college has managed a significant building project with minimal impact on teaching and learning and the life of the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

Almost half of Year 11 students stay on for the sixth form and the vast majority make good progress. Pass rates were 100% on all GCE A-level courses in 2009. Students enjoy their sixth form experiences, both in terms of the academic challenges and wider opportunities they have to develop good social and personal skills. Many take on positions of responsibility within the college or wider community, which helps develop their self-confidence.

Teaching is consistently good. Students often work in small groups and enjoy a variety of activities and a personalised approach. Their work is well marked, providing useful guidance on improvements. Teachers have high expectations and monitor students' progress closely.

The college offers advanced-level courses, with a good range of GCE A-level options, two applied courses and, for a small number of students, the International

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Baccalaureate. A small minority of Year 12 students did not progress to Year 13, having chosen to follow alternative courses elsewhere or to seek employment. Managers are aware that the current curriculum on offer may not fully meet the needs of all students and are planning to extend the provision to include some one-year courses and to create improved progression routes from Year 11.

Students value the support they receive during their course and the vast majority of Year 13 students progress to higher education. Leadership has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement since the last inspection.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
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

Approximately 10% of parents returned questionnaires. While most were positive about the quality of their children's experiences at the college, a small minority indicated they felt communications between the college and parents could be improved and that they would like more help to support their children's learning. The vast majority said their children enjoyed school and felt safe.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Waingels College 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 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1386 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	22	80	68	5	4	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	24	21	78	67	10	9	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	13	74	63	16	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	17	63	54	23	20	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	15	13	67	57	7	6	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	6	71	61	20	17	5	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	8	77	66	13	11	5	4
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)	15	13	73	62	3	3	5	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	10	68	58	21	18	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	9	69	59	13	11	10	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	10	65	55	22	19	7	6
The school is led and managed effectively	15	13	70	60	16	14	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	19	66	56	13	11	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



13 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Waingels College, Woodley, RG5 4RF

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you in your lessons and around the school. Many of you, and your parents or carers, spoke very positively about the school. We have taken these views into account in arriving at our judgement that your college is good and also has a good sixth form.

Most students are making good progress towards achieving challenging targets, and GCSE results are well above average. Staff monitor progress closely and pick up any students who might not achieve as much as they should. While GCSE results are high in many subjects, for example English, mathematics and ICT, there are still a few subjects where results are below national averages and we have asked the school to work on reducing these differences. We hope that all of you will work hard to respond to this and to ensure you really achieve your potential.

Inspectors saw much good teaching, with some outstanding practice. The majority of lessons are well planned but, occasionally, the work is not closely enough matched to the range of interests and abilities of all students in the lesson. While the majority of you behave well in lessons and around the school, some of you and your parents raised concerns about a minority of students who occasionally disrupt lessons. We have asked the school to make sure that all teachers tailor work more closely to individuals' needs so that all of you can fully concentrate in lessons and make the best possible progress.

Most of you told us that you enjoy school and lots of you participate regularly in out-of-school activities. Many of you take up the opportunities to get involved in school and local community events and contribute strongly to helping others, for example through fundraising activities and mentoring other students in school.

You told us how much you value the help and support you get from staff in the school. They are very committed to ensuring you all achieve as well as you can and aspire to making Waingels an outstanding college.

With best wishes

Janet Mercer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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