

Windsor Girls' School

Imperial Road, Windsor, West Berkshire, SL4 3RT

Inspection dates 9–10 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a school that has built on the strengths identified in its last inspection.
- All groups of students make rapid progress to achieve standards significantly above the national average in a wide range of subjects including English and mathematics.
- The headteacher's determination for the school to be highly successful is shared by all members of the school community. She is very well supported by the outstanding governing body and senior leadership team.
- Leaders have an exceptionally clear understanding of how well students are progressing and there is a continuous drive to improve teaching, learning and achievement.
- Highly effective professional development means that teachers often use inspirational strategies to involve students in their learning and to make lessons enjoyable. This enables teachers to move them forward rapidly, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- All teachers have high expectations of students. High standards are underpinned by aspirational targets towards which all students are skilfully guided and supported.
- The support provided for students who have fallen behind their targets, or who are experiencing personal difficulties affecting their performance, is exceptional.
- Students' behaviour and their attitudes towards learning are exemplary; they are polite and courteous and welcoming to visitors. Students are proud of their school and feel very safe there because of the dedication of their teachers and the inclusive nature of the school.
- Very strong partnerships with local and national businesses provide opportunities for high-quality routes into employment. As a consequence, the proportion of students not in education, employment or training when they leave is very low.
- The sixth form is good and improving rapidly. As a consequence of the recently restructured curriculum, students make very good progress and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, four of which were joint observations with senior staff. Inspectors also attended an assembly and observed behaviour around the school during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, school staff including middle leaders, groups of students, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's own information on students' current progress, attendance and behaviour. They also observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including school policies, safeguarding arrangements, improvement plans, anonymised performance management records and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took into account the 74 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, six emails from parents and carers, and the 57 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rob Isaac	Additional Inspector
John Collins	Additional Inspector
Stephen Williams	Additional Inspector
Pat O'Shea	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Windsor Girls' School is a smaller-than-average secondary school with increasing numbers of students on roll.
- The school has specialist status in business and enterprise.
- Approximately one quarter of students are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well below average, as is the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Students join the school at the start of Year 9.
- The deprivation indicator for the school is approximately half the national average and the movement of students in and out of the school at times other than normal is much lower than that seen nationally.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend alternative provision in the Personalised Learning Centre which is a school-funded and school-staffed resource for those students who need additional support for their learning.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching even further and give students more encouragement to learn independently by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use challenging questioning to deepen students' understanding
 - check that all students respond to the comments written about their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students' achievement is outstanding because the progress of all groups, including students from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language, is rapid and sustained.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has been above the national average since 2011. Student assessment information provided by the school, which is based on results from GCSE examinations taken early, indicates that this proportion will also be significantly above the national average in 2013.
- Those students joining the school with high prior attainment are supported very well to achieve the highest grades. These students also make significantly more progress than similar students nationally.
- The learning and progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs are similarly outstanding because their needs are well known and because of the high-quality individual and personalised support available to them.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium reach similar levels of attainment to all students nationally. In 2012 they achieved half a GCSE grade above all students in both English and mathematics. The proportion of eligible students in Year 11 in 2012 who made or exceeded the expected progress was significantly higher than that found nationally.
- Students attending the Personalised Learning Centre also make excellent progress. The skilful organisation of individual learning programmes ensures that each student attends some lessons in the main school, receives additional support from specialist staff and achieves at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C by the end of Year 11.
- Early entry for GCSE mathematics is used very thoughtfully to develop students' confidence in their ability to achieve the highest grades possible. Students believe that this increase in confidence also helps them to achieve well in other subjects.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is improving rapidly. The curriculum has recently been restructured to ensure that students are enrolled on the right courses for their ability and future education, employment or training. Teachers have successfully focused on helping students to study independently and master examination techniques. Predicted A-level results for 2013 are higher than those gained in 2012 and Year 12 students are achieving very well. Retention rates in the sixth form have improved and are now similar to those found nationally.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The school's leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching and take action to improve any that falls below their expectations. As a consequence, teaching in all key stages is at least good and often outstanding.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all students so that they feel encouraged to achieve. As Year 11 students commented, 'Teachers really care about you getting the grades. Academic targets are challenging but achievable; our targets are realistic but you still have to work hard to achieve them.'
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and insight into examination preparation. For example, in a Year 11 biology lesson students were exceptionally well guided and supported to recall their prior learning, to address misconceptions and to deepen their understanding of homeostasis. As a consequence, all students were able to understand the requirements of the different styles of examination questions.
- Lessons have a strong sense of purpose in which teaching and learning take place without distraction. For example, in a Year 9 physical education lesson, students thoroughly enjoyed their learning and rapidly improved their skills because extremely thorough planning enabled the teacher to move students rapidly from one activity to the next providing clear explanation and

excellent opportunities for peer- and self-assessment.

- The challenge and pace of lessons promote exceptionally high levels of student engagement. For example, in a Year 9 information and communication technology lesson the teacher's clear and accurate instructions enabled all students to engage confidently with the 'design a logo' task, to appraise each other's work on screen and to offer constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to help students to explain, analyse and evaluate their work. For example, in a Year 11 physics lesson the teacher used a demonstration to reinforce students' understanding and application of transformer theory exceptionally well. As a consequence, all students were confidently able to answer examination-style questions at grades A and A*.
- In some lessons, teachers do not allow students to develop as independent learners by planning for them to work together in pairs or small groups.
- In all subjects, teachers use the information they have about students to plan lessons which meet their needs. They also provide additional opportunities for students through breakfast clubs and lunchtime and after-school revision groups.
- Teachers assess students regularly and thoroughly, giving them constructive oral feedback during lessons. Where slow progress or underachievement are identified, support for those falling behind is implemented rapidly and is highly effective in improving students' progress. However, opportunities for students to respond to written comments about their work are sometimes missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have highly positive attitudes to learning and are very proud of their school. In the overwhelming majority of lessons observed, behaviour was good or outstanding. Relationships between students and their peers and with their teachers are exceptionally positive.
- Attendance has risen so that it is now above the national average and persistent absenteeism has been reduced.
- The strong sense of community and belonging across the school enables students from a wide range of backgrounds to work and socialise together. All students feel extremely safe and bullying is very rare. When it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and resolutely. These views are shared by staff and by the parents and carers who responded to Parent View.
- Students have high aspirations and a strong sense of belief in the ability of staff to help them achieve the highest standards. As a consequence, the vast majority want to move on to study for degrees with many intending to apply for top universities. As the headteacher commented, 'The philosophy of the school is not "Why?" but "Why not?"'
- The excellent promotion of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development has a highly positive impact on the way in which students interact with one another. Students are very appreciative of the opportunities provided by the school for them to understand and appreciate different cultures. For example, the annual World Languages Day provides a chance for students to participate in and experience aspects of other faiths and cultural traditions. Incidents of racism are very rare and it is clear that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership. She has very high expectations and is uncompromising in her determination to build on the improvements made by the school since the last inspection. She has recruited many high-quality teachers and has developed a highly effective senior leadership team which shares her ambition for students' achievement.
- The clarity and extent of information provided to the governing body are exceptional. Senior staff are open to questions and ideas and this is a feature of the way in which staff are managed. For example, as one teacher commented, 'Open and frank discussions take place within an atmosphere of trust. Teachers are encouraged to try new things. The headteacher

listens and is open to ideas to experiment to raise achievement.'

- An impressive system for tracking students' progress towards challenging targets enables any potential underachievement to be quickly addressed through interventions which are sharply focused on the needs of individuals. This includes support funded by the pupil premium for eligible students.
- Teachers' professional development is personalised and highly effective in increasing the amount of outstanding practice. The imaginative recruitment of expert staff, joint working with the local boys' school and the use of coaching partners for all teachers have helped to develop teaching expertise by sharing innovative practice across the curriculum.
- Rigorous procedures for managing teachers' performance are fully established. Teachers are held closely to account for the progress of students in their classes. The targets set for teachers are skilfully matched to the development needs of the school and are used effectively to reward good performance.
- The school's relationship with the local authority is strong and the headteacher is often asked to provide support for other schools in the borough. The local authority provides light-touch support for the school because it believes the school to be outstanding and because of the confidence it has in the headteacher.
- The range of subjects available to students is regularly reviewed to provide appropriate learning pathways for all students. The strong curriculum has a highly positive impact on standards of behaviour and on students' achievement and, as a consequence, the proportion of students not in education, employment or training when they leave is very low.
- The sixth form curriculum has recently been restructured to meet the needs of all post-16 learners and to improve retention rates while very strong partnerships between the school and local and national businesses provide opportunities for high-quality routes into employment.
- The Personalised Learning Centre is highly successful in meeting the needs of those falling behind or who are experiencing personal difficulties affecting their performance and in engaging students who are at risk of exclusion.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet the current statutory requirements and equality of opportunity is promoted through initiatives to promote diversity and by support for individual students.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and, because it is very well informed, is very well equipped to hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance and to carry out its statutory duties. Governors share the headteacher's strategic vision for the school's further improvement. Governors are fully aware of the quality of teaching and learning. They check the impact of reviews of teaching and ensure that teachers' progress through the pay scales is related to their effectiveness in raising standards. Governors set targets for the headteacher, and check carefully how well these are being met. The governing body and senior leaders manage the school's budget very efficiently. Governors also have full knowledge of the way in which the pupil premium funding is spent and how it impacts on the achievement of eligible students. The governing body is well supported by the local authority which provides them with training, including on self-evaluation and project management. Senior leaders provide governors with regular training on understanding assessment information. This information enables governors to judge accurately the school's performance in comparison to that of other schools, and promptly identify key areas for improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110057
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	413388

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	705
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Wright
Headteacher	Gill Labrum
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 January 2010
Telephone number	01753 795155
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