

The Windsor Boys' School

1 Maidenhead Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5EH

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement. Students are not making good progress in a number of subjects including German, art and design and technology. This has resulted in a lack of improvement in GCSE results over the last three years.
- The sixth form requires improvement because overall attainment is below average in some subjects. Courses and qualifications available to students should be more closely matched to their abilities.
- Not enough teaching is good or better. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of all students. Achievement of more able students is not always good.
- The pace of learning in some lessons is too slow.
- Marking is not always helpful to students in explaining what they must do to improve or how they can make their work better.
- Leaders and managers have only recently put robust systems and approaches in place to improve teaching and raise achievement and as a result this work has not yet resulted in good achievement for all students.
- Checks on how well school policies and new initiatives are put into practice in classrooms are not yet rigorous enough to lead consistently to good or better teaching.
- Over recent years, not enough attention has been given to improving teaching and students' achievement because the main focus for the headteacher and governing body has been on reducing the budget deficit.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a happy place where behaviour is good and students feel safe.
- Students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at GCSE are outstanding.
- The school works effectively to support disabled students and those with special educational needs to achieve well.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, music and the arts. These help deepen students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and improves their sense of personal well-being.
- Governors are clear about future priorities for the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons, of which 14 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition they made a number of shorter visits to year assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair and members of the Governing Body and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with three groups of students representing all age ranges in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 136 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 67 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents and carers both in writing and by email.

Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Cooper	Additional Inspector
John Collins	Additional Inspector
Gordon Jackson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Windsor Boys' School is an average-sized secondary school.
- This is a school of 'Creative Change' which specialises in the performing arts. It provides a rich extra-curricular programme in the arts and sport. The range of musical activities is a significant strength of the school with boys being invited to play at international events in Beijing, at the Mayor's Ball and for Her Majesty the Queen. It has also gained national recognition for its strong tradition in rowing and rugby.
- Almost 80% of the students are from White British, Irish or other White or mixed White heritages. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is above average when compared with the national figures with many coming from Indian and Pakistani communities. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil and the Year 7 catch-up premium is well below the national average. The government provides additional funding to support these students because they are at particular risk of underachieving.
- The proportions of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- Provision for the small number of students in alternative courses is arranged by the school. Students attend off-site programmes at the East Berkshire College at Langley and the Berkshire College of Agriculture.
- The school works with partner organisations, including Partners in Excellence, its four middle schools and the Windsor Girls' School. It is the centre for the local Arts Forum.
- It has strong international partnerships with schools in New Zealand, France and Germany.
- The school exceeds current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and ensure that all students, especially those in the sixth form, make good progress by accelerating the improvements to the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
 - raising expectations of what students can do
 - more closely matching available courses and qualifications to the abilities of students
 - making better use of information on students' progress to plan and provide each individual student with work that is at the right level of difficulty and with enough challenge so that learning moves on at a brisk pace in all lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers provide high quality marking and feedback to help students to understand what they must do to improve and make more rapid progress.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that policies are consistently implemented and the impact of work is robustly analysed and evaluated in terms of students' expected levels of progress.
- Governors should ensure that successful pay progression is clearly linked to students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although the proportion of students attaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics is higher than the national average, achievement requires improvement because not enough students make the progress they are capable of. For example, in design and technology, higher-ability students typically make less progress than higher-ability students nationally.
- Students' achievement is not yet good because their progress is inconsistent as they move through the school, especially in art, geography and history. This contrasts with the outstanding progress they make in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The majority of disabled students and those with special educational needs make very good progress because of the well-planned specialised teaching they receive. The good tracking systems and effective programmes in place support both individuals and small groups of learners well. These groups perform significantly better than their peers nationally.
- The school is using its pupil premium funding well to provide one-to-one support, smaller teaching groups and revision sessions, and funding for visits relating to the curriculum. These activities help the majority of targeted students to achieve better than they have done in the past. The gap between those students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium narrowed in 2012 in English and in mathematics. Students who are supported by the pupil premium typically leave the school with GCSEs which are two thirds of a grade below those of their peers.
- Standards in the sixth form have declined over the last three years and students' progress has been less than expected, especially in A-level courses due to poor results in mathematics and geography. Students achieve well in BTEC as a result of better teaching. However, the proportion of students following these courses is small. Recent evidence suggests that better teaching in the sixth form is now impacting and bringing about significantly better results this year.
- The school does not typically make use of early entry for students for GCSE, and therefore this is not a factor in limiting students' achievement. The school's early entry policy for GCSE English language examinations has supported improvements in standards. The students who attend work placements or alternative provision make reasonable progress because they are more focused when they are back in school, and this ensures that they are more successful in attaining their GCSEs than they might otherwise be, and are better prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- During recent months the school has focused more on improving the quality of teaching and learning and as a result it has improved. Inspectors saw a wide range of good and some outstanding teaching in almost half of lessons observed, particularly in English. However, because there are still a number of teachers whose teaching does not always cater for the needs of more-able students, teaching requires improvement to raise standards further.
- Relationships between students and staff are very good. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and convey an enthusiasm for their subject to their students which helps motivate them to learn.
- In the good and outstanding lessons, teachers plan work carefully based upon their knowledge of the students' needs and prepare activities that are suitable for all students whatever their abilities. Information on how well they are doing provides learners with the next steps they need to help them improve their work and make better progress. However, not enough teaching is of this standard.
- In lessons that require improvement, students are less engaged, and demotivated by teachers sometimes talking too much, especially at the start of lessons, and not taking account of the

different abilities of their students. Sometimes opportunities to encourage students to contribute or involve them more in their learning were missed. In these lessons, students do not have enough opportunities to extend their thinking, or work through activities that encourage them to interact with each other or apply some of their new learning to new or real scenarios.

- The quality of marking is not consistent and is too variable across the school. In the best examples, written feedback gives students a clear measure of how well they are doing and provides detailed and helpful guidance on what and how to improve their work. However, too much marking consists of little more than ticks, with very little guidance. In such cases, students often fail to correct their errors and this slows their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are courteous, kind, polite and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors to the school. Their behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. Students enjoy coming to school and disruption to learning in lessons is uncommon. Behaviours are well managed by staff, and parents and carers consider that behaviour is good.
- Attendance is slightly above the national average and improving. Fixed-term exclusions are higher than expected; however, permanent exclusions are lower than the national average. This reflects the school's high expectations and unwillingness to allow poor behaviours to go unchecked.
- Students are well informed about keeping themselves safe and have a sensible attitude to risk-taking. Through work in lessons, assemblies and talks from outside experts they have a good understanding of the dangers of, for example, drug and alcohol misuse. Students feel safe in school and have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Parents and carers support this view strongly and consider the school a safe place to be.
- Students are knowledgeable about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Students benefit from working in mixed form groups and are confident that staff deal with the rare incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.
- The school works closely with outside agencies to make sure that all students, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, get the specialist help they need. Students and their families value the personal support the school gives them.
- Students enjoy taking on responsibilities and making a contribution to their own, and the wider, community. Students say they are proud to be a member of the school and feel well supported by the school socially and academically. A significant majority of families would recommend the school, with one parent writing 'I really can't praise the school enough. My son is happy to go to school and wants to complete his work – something I never imagined I would see.'

The leadership and management require improvement

- The governing body and school leaders have very clear expectations about the ethos of the school resulting in high levels of inclusivity of pastoral care. As a consequence of leaders managing the budget deficit, there has been insufficient emphasis on accelerating students' progress and teachers' expectations about what students can achieve have not been challenging enough. This has recently become more of a focus for the school but it is still too early to judge the full the impact of its work.
- The school now has clear plans for improvement in place and raising students' achievement is rightly at the heart of this year's thrust to raise standards. Action plans are better focused on students' achievement and have clear enough criteria for measuring success or timescales by which time the impact of actions taken should be evident.
- Evaluation of how well the school is doing has been overgenerous, particularly in terms of the judgements about the quality of the teaching. Systems are in place for monitoring the work of the school but they are not applied robustly enough by all leaders. For example, the focus of observations has been more on teachers' performance rather than on the progress of students

when teaching is being evaluated and as a result, judgements have been overgenerous.

- Senior leaders and those in charge of subject areas carry out checks on the quality of teaching and students' work. Not all middle leaders receive sufficient challenge about the progress of students in their subjects, and in turn, they do not hold teachers in their departments to account robustly enough for students' achievement. Monitoring is not frequent and rigorous enough to ensure that practices are more consistently applied to bring about the rapid improvements needed to raise standards.
- Systems are in place for managing the performance of teachers. Plans are in place to make performance management more rigorous and link successful pay progression to challenging targets which focus on the achievement and good progress of students. Leaders know the strengths and areas for development of individual staff well and while teachers feel well supported further targeted training activities are needed to accelerate the rate of improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The range of courses is a strength of the school as it is broad, balanced and meets all requirements that enable students to gain good, relevant qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4. Sixth form provision is also well organised and provides a good range from which students can select courses. However, support for students in the sixth form requires improvement so that they are guided to make a more informed choice of subjects that are better matched to their current abilities and make the progress they should at A Level.
- The school provides for a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Boys have been invited to play at musical events internationally in Beijing, nationally for Her Majesty the Queen and locally at the Mayor's Ball. The school has also gained national recognition for its strong tradition in rowing and rugby teams are able to compete with the best from the independent sector.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies provide opportunities for students to reflect on many issues and some lessons, particularly in the arts, focus effectively on cultural diversity.
- The school operates an effective equal opportunities policy.
- The local authority has provided support and challenge appropriate to the needs of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The current governing body has led the school through a challenging period in its history and has successfully developed a clear vision for the future. It has the very best interests of the school at heart and is working hard to establish a long-term partnership for the school. Governors regularly visit the school, meeting staff and team leaders. They are clear about how the school is performing in comparison with other schools nationally and know the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in the school. Governors are fully involved in putting new performance measures in place for teachers which will better link to decisions about which teachers advance up the salary scale according to their effectiveness in the classroom as measured by the amount of progress students make. Governors are asking many of the right questions, including about students' progress, attainment and the impact of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. Governors would benefit from additional training to further strengthen their capacity to hold school leaders to account. Safeguarding arrangements are managed effectively and meet current regulatory requirements.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	110056
Local authority	Berkshire
Inspection number	412415

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	979
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Simpson
Headteacher	Tony Willis
Date of previous school inspection	May 2008
Telephone number	01753 716060
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