



School report

Wright Robinson College

Falmer Close, Gorton, Manchester, M18 8RL

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The proportion of students making more than the progress expected of them from their individual starting points in English and mathematics has fluctuated in recent years and has not always been high enough.
- In 2013, after a rising trend in attainment over time, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, dropped. This was because of a downturn in English results caused by staffing and leadership issues related to this subject.
- Achievement is less than good when teachers do not make good use of information about students' progress and abilities to plan suitable activities or ask probing and challenging questions. This is especially the case for some students of average ability.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have tackled weaknesses in teaching and the leadership of English decisively and quickly. As a result, students are now making good progress in this subject.
- In mathematics, achievement is rising rapidly and securely because the quality of teaching is improving.
- Students achieve consistently well in a wide range of subjects such as science, the humanities, modern languages, art and physical education.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary and they feel very safe. Attendance levels are high. They receive exceptional care, guidance and support.
- Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a sharp and effective focus on improving the quality of teaching. As a result, achievement is rising rapidly and securely.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 48 lessons taught by 48 teachers. Five of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited two assemblies and tutorial sessions. An inspector also observed provision in the Compass Centre.
- Inspectors spoke to five groups of students as well as talking informally to students around the school. They met with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and an inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also had discussions with senior leaders, middle managers, teachers and a group of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors took account of 93 parental responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, as well as summaries of questionnaires sent to parents by the school.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a wide range of documentation including: the school's summary of its own effectiveness; the school improvement plan; information about students' past and current attainment and achievement; records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance; and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also looked closely at students' written work, especially in English and mathematics, to gauge students' progress and the quality of marking.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Pruchniewicz	Additional Inspector
Marcia Harding	Additional Inspector
Edwin de Middelaer	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wright Robinson College is much larger than most secondary schools nationally.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is high in comparison to the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority.
- About 75% of students are White British, with the remainder coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- About 30 students are taught in the Compass Centre at any one time, usually for around six weeks but sometimes longer depending on their needs. This is a provision for students at risk of not doing as well as their peers and those whose behaviour is a cause for concern. It is housed just off the main school campus. The Compass Centre is led and managed by the school.
- The school uses no training provision away from school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the percentage of students attaining five or more good GCSE grades including in English and mathematics, and the proportion of students that make consistently good progress by ensuring that:
 - students are set work that is challenging enough, especially for those of average ability
 - teachers' questions more regularly make students think hard and encourages them to give reasoned answers
 - planning and activities in all lessons makes better use of information about students' progress and abilities so a greater proportion of students can make good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough students consistently make more than the progress expected of them in English and mathematics from their generally well-below average starting points.
- After a rising trend in recent years in the percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, the overall figure dropped in 2013.
- While attainment in mathematics continued to rise, the upward trend in English came to an abrupt halt because of significant and sudden disruption to staffing and the leadership of the subject. Although senior leaders acted swiftly and decisively to address these issues, they were not able to prevent the drop in attainment.
- The attainment of the relatively low proportion of the most able students in reaching the higher GCSE grades is generally in line with the national average because most teaching is challenging enough to enable them to make the most of their abilities.
- While the majority of students have made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics in recent years, the proportion making good progress has fluctuated significantly, especially for some students of average ability.
- Decisive action taken by senior leaders has improved the quality of teaching in both English and mathematics. The subject leadership of English has also been strengthened significantly.
- The previous upward trend in attainment has been restored and is set to be close to the 2013 national average. The proportion of students making good progress is rising significantly in both English and mathematics demonstrating the school's increasingly effective promotion of students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- In a wide range of other subjects such as science, physical education, geography, history, modern languages and art students achieve well because teaching is good with some that is outstanding.
- The attainment of students eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals is above that of similar students nationally. In 2013, their attainment was approximately three-quarters of a GCSE grade lower in English and mathematics than other students in the school. School data confirmed by inspection evidence, show that currently the gap between eligible students and their peers in school has closed significantly because of the increasingly sharp focus given to tackling any underachievement quickly and effectively.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the highly effective support that they receive in class and in withdrawal groups.
- Students taught in the Compass Centre benefit from good teaching and the support of a wide range of outside agencies. This enables most to make good progress and provides them with outstanding provision for their personal development and safety. The good progress of different groups of students and the rapidly narrowing gaps with their peers demonstrate the school's commitment to and success in providing equality of opportunity.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE in English and mathematics. The results are used to focus on students who need extra support to boost their final grades. In recent years, despite some fluctuation in English, it has had a positive effect on final outcomes when students retake the examination in Year 11 with substantial numbers improving their original grades.
- The school uses its Year 7 catch-up funding effectively. School data shows that the reading ages of nearly all students rise significantly, as does their ability to apply basic number skills to practical problem solving.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in a wide range of subjects is good with some that is outstanding.
- In English and mathematics, the urgent drive to improve teaching has been successful. The vast majority of teaching in both subjects is now securely good. As a result, students are making good and improving progress.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school in encouraging most students to learn well. Students respond with positive attitudes to learning and, in most lessons are keen to give of their best. Students' understanding of the work they are doing is checked in lessons. In a Year 8 Spanish class, for example, careful questioning checked students' understanding and enabled them to use Spanish vocabulary in increasingly complex sentences. The pride students exhibited in their progress and their sense of achievement was both impressive and outstanding.
- Teaching assistants play a pivotal role in supporting classroom teaching to provide highly effective support for disabled students, those with special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of speaking English. Their work in the Compass Centre, providing both academic and pastoral support, is outstanding.
- Since the previous inspection, the quality of marking has improved significantly with effective implementation of the school's marking policy. It provides students with helpful feedback on how to improve their work and opportunities to respond to and act upon the advice given.
- In both English and mathematics, occasionally teachers do not always make full use of information about students' progress and abilities to set work that is challenging enough. This acts as a brake on learning, especially for some students of average ability. The questions that teachers pose are not always probing enough to check on students' understanding and to encourage them to think deeply so they can provide thoughtful and reasoned responses.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- The leadership and management of pastoral care are highly effective and there is real attention to detail.
- Students are confident, respectful and exceptionally well mannered. 'Please', 'thank you' and 'you're welcome' are part and parcel of the daily routine. Students are exceptionally at ease with adults. They are keen to show off their school to visitors. Every student takes pride in their personal appearance by wearing their uniform correctly without having to be reminded. They treat the school building and the outside area with exceptional levels of care and respect.
- In lessons, students are punctual and settle quickly. They bring the necessary equipment with them as a matter of routine. They are exceptionally keen to learn. They say that it is very exceptional for any lesson to be disrupted by poor behaviour; a fact confirmed during inspectors' lesson observations.
- Students say that bullying of any kind is very rare and that it is dealt with quickly and efficiently on the rare occasions that it occurs. Students mix and interact well in lessons and at break times in an exceptionally harmonious atmosphere of respect for others.
- Underpinning such outstanding behaviour are systems that are applied fairly and consistently by all staff. Students know what is expected of them and the consequences that follow should they fall out of line. 'It encourages us to behave well and none of us wants to let the school down', was the opinion of one student that summed up the success of the school in a nutshell.
- Attendance is well-above average.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. This is evident, for example in the Compass Centre, where every effort is made to keep students safe through rigorous daily monitoring of their progress and personal welfare, including regular input from a raft of outside agencies offering specialist support.
- Students are acutely aware of potentially dangerous or risky situations and talk knowledgably about how important it is to take care when using social networking sites on the internet.

- The school's work to foster exceptional levels of behaviour and a harmonious and respectful atmosphere demonstrates the school's outstanding success in developing students' personal well-being and in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher commands the deep respect of staff and students alike. He is ably supported by a strong team of senior leaders who have a sharp focus on improving the school. Leadership has been especially successful in creating an exceptionally harmonious school culture underpinned by students' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Senior leaders know what the school does well and where it could do better. The issues surrounding leadership and achievement in English were tackled very swiftly to improve the quality of teaching, establish secure leadership and to restore the upward trend in achievement.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and accurately. They use the information gathered effectively to provide further training when necessary to tackle any identified weaknesses. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving securely.
- Middle leaders understand their prime responsibility to bring about consistently improving rates of achievement. They hold their subject staff to account rigorously and act as good role models.
- Senior leaders manage the performance of staff effectively. Targets are more challenging with a strong link to the progress that students make in their classes and salary progression.
- The school offers a wide range of subjects. It provides a good range of options and work-related courses in addition to GCSE. The leadership of the Compass Centre is highly effective. Leaders and staff 'refuse to give up on students' and 'go the extra mile' to ensure that students who need extra help receive it.
- Students appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities provided in, for example, sports and the arts. They wear their 'Team Wright Robinson' badges as well as those received as rewards with intense pride. They enjoy the many opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, in becoming members of the flourishing school council and school prefects. These opportunities are key in developing students' exceptionally positive attitudes and outstanding personal development.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school and the vast majority share their children's pride in it. Almost all who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.
- In recognition that this is a rapidly improving and well-run school, the local authority provides light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides the school with good levels of support and challenge. It knows what the school does well and where it could improve further. It is fully aware that the most recent GCSE results in English were not good enough and has challenged and supported senior leaders in equal measure to improve the leadership of English and to improve the quality of teaching. Governors know about the quality of teaching and are well-versed in understanding data about the school's performance so they know how well the school is performing in comparison to other schools. The governing body has a firm grasp on the use of performance management and links to salary rises, including that of the headteacher. The governing body has a firm grasp on the school's finances, including evaluating the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding to close the gap between eligible students and others in the school.

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	105564
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	431655

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,560
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Brierley
Headteacher	Neville Beischer
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2012
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