

Inspection of a good school: Winchmore School

Laburnum Grove, Winchmore Hill, London N21 3HS

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

Outcome

Winchmore School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community within this school. Leaders offer their pupils a wide range of enrichment clubs and educational visits. They make sure that all pupils make the most of these opportunities. Sixth-form students are role models to younger pupils. They take on leadership roles around the school. The school council leads initiatives to improve the school. For example, pupils evaluated the initiatives to help pupils' academic studies following the pandemic.

Leaders believe all pupils can succeed. The broad range of academic and vocational subjects for pupils to choose at GCSE and in the sixth form offers something for every pupil. Teachers know their subjects and their pupils well. They make sure that pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need to achieve. Pupils with more complex needs learn in a nurturing environment.

Pupils are happy and safe. Leaders have high expectations for the behaviour of pupils. Pupils work hard in their lessons. They listen to their teachers and are courteous around the school. Pupils are taught to be kind to others. They said that bullying is rare. When it does occur, staff are quick to address it.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. All pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects from Years 7 to 9. Leaders ensure that pupils choose appropriate courses from the extensive range of options in Years 10 and 11. The large sixth form is a thriving community. Sixth-form students regularly receive information from employers and higher education providers to help them make decisions about their futures.

Leaders have made significant changes to the curriculum in recent time. They have identified the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Leaders have organised the sequence of learning to make sure that pupils build up this knowledge in a logical order. For many subjects, the curriculum is well embedded and having a positive impact.

Teachers suggest further improvements to the curriculum after they have taught it. This helps leaders to continue to improve the curriculum. In subjects where curriculum development is more recent, this refinement has not taken place and pupils' learning is not as strong.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They plan opportunities to help pupils to remember what they have learned in the long term. Teachers use assessment to tell pupils what they need to do to improve. At times, teachers do not check that pupils understand key ideas before they move on. Lessons in the sixth form include opportunities for students to debate current affairs.

Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts the learning of other pupils. At break and lunchtimes, sixth-form students develop their leadership skills by taking on various roles around the school. For example, they help to organise games and clubs for younger pupils.

Leaders encourage pupils to read widely and often. All pupils in Year 7 and 8 receive a 'star reader' book at the start of each year, for example. Teachers read to pupils often. Staff and pupils enjoy dressing up as authors and characters from literature to celebrate World Book Day. Leaders identify pupils who are weak readers and put support in place. These pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers.

Pupils with SEND access the curriculum alongside their peers. The needs of these pupils are well understood by staff. Teachers use a range of appropriate strategies to support these pupils in lessons. Staff follow a bespoke curriculum, 'Studio 30 and 40' for some pupils with SEND. These pupils benefit from reduced class sizes and additional adult support. They are taught key skills to help prepare them for future life.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of educational outings and visits that are available to them. Leaders help pupils to understand how they can play an active role in society. In their personal, social, health, citizenship and enterprise education lessons, pupils are taught about important issues such as equality. Leaders encourage pupils to develop their skills of debate and public speaking. At times, pupils are not encouraged to discuss their learning and make wider connections between pieces of knowledge.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel well supported by leaders to manage their workloads. Leaders make sure that staff develop their skills and expertise. Teachers in the early stages of their careers receive the training they need to be successful.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns are robust. Staff know how to recognise the signs that pupils may be at risk. Leaders work with a range of outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help they need. The procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are secure.

Leaders are alert to the mental health difficulties faced by some pupils following the pandemic. They have increased their capacity to support these pupils, such as through their own counselling service. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They are taught the importance of healthy relationships and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is newly introduced and not firmly embedded. Pupils' knowledge and skills in these subjects is not as secure as in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is securely embedded.
- In some subjects, the use of assessment does not help pupils to embed knowledge and use it fluently. Teachers do not routinely ensure that the understanding of pupils is systematically checked before moving on to new learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used consistently to support pupils in making sustained progress over time.
- At times, pupils are not encouraged to reflect on their learning through appropriate discussion. This limits their ability to make secure links across the curriculum and connect pieces of knowledge. Leaders should ensure that pupils are supported to engage in discussion about their learning to advance their understanding.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	102045
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10204471
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1654
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jim Orros
Headteacher	Jim Owen
Website	www.winchmore.enfield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2016 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a specially resourced provision for 20 pupils with autism spectrum disorder which is part of Durrants School located on the school site. Pupils who attend this provision are dual rolled with the school and attend some mainstream lessons.
- Leaders use two registered alternative providers.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical-education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the wider leadership team and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. They also met with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, religious education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including school policies and school improvement plans. They also looked at records related to safeguarding, behaviour and pupil movement.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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