

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

WINCHESTER COLLEGE

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

November 10th – 14th, 2003

SUMMARY REPORT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Winchester College

Full Name of the School	Winchester College		
DfES Number	8506037		
Address	College Street, Winchester SO23 9NA		
Telephone Number	01962 621100		
Fax Number	01962 621106		
E-mail Address	information@wincoll.ac.uk		
Name of Headmaster	T R Cookson MA		
Warden	Sir Andrew Large		
Age Range	13-18	Gender	Male
Number of Pupils	704	Number of Boarders	683
Inspection Dates	10th – 14th November 2003		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

The school must not quote the report selectively in the school prospectus or other promotional literature.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). Their report on the National Minimum Standards is summarised in this report.

MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

Almost invariably, the pupils at Winchester College achieve very high academic and personal standards, whatever their abilities, aptitudes or special needs may be. Many develop knowledge, understanding and self-reliance well ahead of normal expectations for their age and ability. The distinctive and long established ethos of the school derives from its commitment to the cultivation of the pupil's mind and spirit, unfettered by the demands of public examinations. Pastoral care, centred on the boarding houses, is mostly, but not consistently, of high quality. Winchester College celebrates independence of mind, individuality, and liberal principles, the beneficial effects of which are seen in the unusually mature attitudes and conduct of the pupils and in the generally good relations among them, and with their teachers. The centrifugal effects of these principles, and other circumstances, have made it very difficult to manage the College effectively in recent times, in particular to establish clear lines of authority and consistency of practice. With the support of the Warden and Fellows, the present headmaster is making changes to the organisation and operation of the school. These are intended to bring about a dynamic fusion of individual liberty and shared responsibility, to guarantee corporate endeavour.

What the School Does Well

The school has many strengths, the most important of which are as follows:

- Pupils and staff, the community as a whole, have a common purpose that sustains the historic and distinctive character of the school.
- The pupils are exceptionally mature, self-reliant and effective learners. They thrive as individuals because they are given the responsibility of choice and the freedom to think for themselves.
- The teachers demonstrate scholarship and foster a love of learning; they expect much of their pupils and provide opportunities and challenges that encourage them always to strive for academic excellence.
- The curriculum, both within and beyond the classroom, has unique features that foster learning for its own sake and provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils of all abilities and aptitudes.

What the School Should Do Better

The school's many strengths greatly outweigh its weaknesses but the following matters need to be dealt with:

- The school has not yet brought about sufficiently consistent practices, proper monitoring of the College's performance and coherent forward planning, to achieve effective corporate endeavour.
- The extensive book resources in the school, housed principally in the Moberly Library, are underused and do not support the pupils' learning as effectively as they should.
- Despite considerable investment over the past three years, information communication technology (ICT) remains unreliable, and does not support teaching and learning adequately.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subjects

Pupils throughout the school achieve very good, and often excellent, standards whatever their abilities, aptitudes or special needs may be. With few exceptions, progress throughout the school at

all stages is rapid and secure. The commitment to hard thinking and serious scholarship by both pupils and their teachers generates academic ambition and pupils almost always strive for excellence. Most pupils at all stages have excellent numerical ability and they display high verbal ability both in class and on paper. They read with penetrating insight and they are unusually skilled in discussion. Most have an exceptionally rich cultural appreciation. Pupils use computers routinely to research topics and to word process essays.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

The quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is exceptional. Pupils focus on academic work and they respond to intellectual challenges, showing a maturity in advance of that expected of pupils of their age. Oral work is particularly strong. Pupils are always keen to extend their knowledge and the ways in which they approach academic challenges. The boarding houses foster the importance of the individual within a community. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is excellent.

The Quality of Teaching

The overall quality of teaching is almost invariably very good at all stages. Excellent pupil-teacher relationships lead to intellectual discussion and foster the spirit of enquiry. Pupils with SEN or English as an additional language (EAL) are well catered for. Teachers are highly qualified and balanced in experience. Expectations are high and pupils are constantly challenged to achieve the highest possible standards. Teachers' management of pupils is very effective. Appropriate use is made of resources by most departments. Homework is carefully set and work is positively and constructively marked.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

The level of attendance is very high and this enables pupils to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. Attendance registers for day pupils and the school's admissions register are kept in accordance with statutory requirements.

Assessment and Recording

The methods used for assessment and recording pupils' attainment, progress and needs are accurate, effective and generally consistent. They are thorough, provide well for the particular needs of the pupils and contribute to areas of curriculum planning. The assessment procedures help the pupils to make progress in their learning.

Curriculum

The curriculum has developed from the belief that *a Winchester education prepares a boy for life, not just for examination success*. This is a rich curriculum with a subtle fusion of curricular and co-curricular time. Its distinctive features provide appropriate intellectual, cultural and sporting opportunities for the majority of its pupils and fulfil this aim. 'Div' is a unique feature of the curriculum and it lies at the heart of the academic purpose of the school. There are weaknesses in the overall structure of the curriculum which demand attention, but these are outweighed by the strengths which need to be preserved.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

The teaching and support staff are highly qualified for the roles they are required to undertake and most have considerable experience. With few exceptions, they are effectively deployed. The

provision of teaching staff is well above that for comparable schools and this allows for small average class sizes, strong pastoral and educational support outside class and strong staff commitment to co-curricular activities. All full-time teachers have additional responsibilities, and timetable allocations are generally adjusted appropriately. The budget for staff development has been increased to reflect a commitment to raise the profile of training. New arrangements provide for teaching staff to be appraised every four years, and senior staff biennially. The provision of high quality technical and secretarial staff is generous. They give excellent service.

Resources for Learning

The provision of resources is excellent in most areas of the curriculum but the situation in information communication technology (ICT) is not satisfactory. Where facilities are available and reliable, excellent work is done but despite significant investment, ICT provision does not yet adequately support teaching and learning.

Libraries

Library facilities offer support for the curriculum but are not effectively used. The Eccles Library offers most unusual opportunities to educate pupils in the handling of rare books and to inculcate a passion to collect them. The book stock of the main, Moberly, library is large, but few books are appropriate for younger pupils. Very few books are borrowed. The resources do not enhance pupils' learning as they should and a professional librarian should be appointed to prioritise and implement the appropriate steps.

Premises and accommodation

The beautiful buildings and grounds are suitable for their purposes and are appropriate for the numbers and ages of the pupils. Some departments have quite grand teaching areas; others are much less fortunate. Some subjects are dispersed and some rooms lack the vitality that results from being the home of a particular teacher or group of pupils. Specialist subject areas for art and design and drama are substantial and well maintained. A fine extension to the Music School will shortly be completed with greatly enhanced provision for instrumental lessons and for concerts. The treasures in the Fellows' Library are well cared for.

Links with Parents and the Community

Links with parents and the community are good and improving. The response of parents to the inspection questionnaire was very positive, especially about academic attainment, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and values and the range and quality of co-curricular activities; a few parents expressed concern about the quality of some boarding accommodation and the lack of appropriate support by some teachers for individual pupils' specific learning needs. The reporting system makes an important contribution to the quality of learning. Parents have sufficient opportunities for contact with the school. Through community service and activities such as music the school maintains strong links with the community. Much is being done to improve communication with parents and to refine the already sound procedure for giving proper consideration to complaints.

Pupils' Personal Development

The school provides an extensive range of opportunities through which pupils can develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code, and develop well personally, socially and culturally. The ethos of the school, and in particular the common life of the boarding houses, leads pupils to value highly their relationships with each other. Adults treat the pupils as individuals, and give them the freedom to make their own choices. In this way, pupils are encouraged to become responsible adults.

Pastoral care and welfare

The quality of pastoral care is very good. The school promotes each pupil's personal, vocational and academic development very effectively. Many parents and pupils comment that this is a strength of the school. The main focus for pastoral care is within each pupil's house. Housemasters' personal styles vary considerably but their influence is wide ranging and crucial to the academic and social development of pupils. Each pupil's 'div don' provides another point of personal contact, especially in Year 9, and this contributes significantly, if informally, to their academic support. Formal sanctions are in the first instance in the hands of housemasters and their imposition of these varies considerably. Steps have been taken to improve the implementation of sanctions for serious breaches of discipline and these are beginning to ensure greater consistency. Measures to safeguard and promote the health and well being of all pupils are satisfactory. The school's medical arrangements provide a full care service for all pupils. Risk assessments and health and safety requirements in all departments are appropriate.

Careers

The careers department is strongly established and well resourced. It provides pupils, especially in Years 12 and 13, with extensive access to information on careers and higher education including universities outside the UK. Less emphasis is placed on formal careers education through the careers department. This is provided informally and frequently in the houses. Work experience is largely organised by the pupils and their families with support from the careers department where necessary.

Boarding standards

The boarding houses are at the heart of the social organisation of the school. Pupils identify themselves very strongly with their house and look to it as their prime source of social and welfare support. Housemasters enjoy a great deal of autonomy and the way that individual houses work reflects the personality of the housemaster. This healthy diversity leads also to some inconsistencies in practice. Relationships among boarders and between staff and boarders, are generally very good. The quality of some meals in the houses, though adequate, is not high. The standard of the accommodation in the houses varies greatly; the best is very good but some is shabby and in need of improvement.

Governance and Management

The governance and management of Winchester College are being revised and revitalised. In the past, the ethos of the school was well supported by a consensual management style that encouraged diversity and individuality. It was less successful in ensuring sufficiently consistent practices, proper monitoring of performance and coherent forward planning. The new leadership is determined to achieve necessary change, while cherishing the strengths of what is a unique institution. Almost all the heads of department provide good leadership by example. The support services provide a very good and extensive service. Day to day administration is effective and communication with parents is being improved. Financial procedures are sound and delegation of authority is generally appropriate. With few exceptions, provision for academic departments is generous, but provision for planned maintenance should be increased and a number of the boarding houses need refurbishment. After a

period of uncertainty, it is necessary to set down a clear plan for the future and to establish priorities for action. A determined start has been made.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

The range and quality of co-curricular activities are major strengths of the school, and they complement the timetabled curriculum effectively. Opportunities and levels of participation are very high in music, drama, sport, art and design technology (DT), and nearly all pupils exercise with maturity their freedom to choose activities. Most academic teaching staff make a significant contribution to these activities and many specialist instructors are employed, to enhance the quality of performance. A service component is sustained through involvement in community service, school service, and the combined cadet force (CCF).

Progress Made by the School since its Last Inspection

Some measures have been taken, especially recently, to tackle issues identified by the last inspection report but much still needs to be done. Health and safety practices have been improved. Some rearrangements have been made to the allocation of rooms but some arts subjects still lack clear departmental areas, inhibiting interaction and shared practices. Despite significant investment in ICT, the service does not yet adequately support teaching and learning, nor is there a clear strategy to improve many teachers' ability to use technology to benefit pupils across the curriculum. A system of professional development and review for all teaching staff has just been introduced. An appropriate balance between central authority and individual autonomy has not yet been achieved but clear-sighted measures taken in the past six months have clarified lines of responsibility and linked the management structure closely to the main body of the school. This should encourage an informed consensus, leading to more consistent practices, proper monitoring of the school's performance and coherent forward planning.

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

The Independent School Standards Regulations apply from the beginning of September 2003, but schools have had relatively little time to implement them. This applies especially to the detailed Regulations for providing parents with information and for establishing a parental complaints procedure.

DfES Standard		Does the school meet the regulatory requirements?
1. Quality of education:	1.(2) Curriculum	Yes
	1.(3)-(5) Teaching	Yes
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		Yes
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils		Yes
4. Suitability of proprietors and staff		It meets almost all of the requirements
5. Premises and accommodation		Yes
6. Provision of information		Yes
7. Manner in which complaints are to be handled		Yes

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

In order to meet all the requirements, the school must:

- ensure that the academic qualifications of teaching and, where appropriate, support staff are checked before confirming their appointment.

In addition to the actions set out above, the school is asked to address any issues highlighted in What the School Should Do Better. These are set out as recommendations for the school in Section 2 of the report.