

Wright Robinson College

Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton, Manchester M18 8RL

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is passionate about improving the life chances of the pupils in his care. He is resolute and determined to ensure that all pupils have the best education whatever their circumstances. He has created a school which offers an oasis of calm and has an unswerving commitment to ensuring every pupil achieves.
- Leaders, and teachers at all levels, have exceptionally high aspirations for all pupils. There is a very strong sense of collective responsibility. They encourage pupils to 'dream big' and pursue challenging goals beyond school. The successes the school achieves are the result of a team effort.
- Unified leaders have a relentless but supportive focus on improving teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. Procedures to monitor pupils' progress are first class. Leaders accurately identify pupils who are not performing at their best and swiftly intervene to secure improvements.
- The governing body is very well informed about the work of the school; it has an accurate view of the progress pupils make. Governors give strong challenge and support. There are small gaps in their knowledge regarding looked after children.
- The curriculum is tailored to match the aspirations and interests of all pupils. It is enriched with extensive extra-curricular opportunities and frequent charitable activities, which prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers know their subjects and adapt their approaches well to the needs of their pupils. They carefully craft lessons to ensure that no pupil is left behind. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to deepen pupils' understanding by developing their reasoning skills.
- Outcomes for pupils are excellent. Pupils make extremely good progress in a wide range of subjects, irrespective of their starting points. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly. The school's work to develop pupils' literacy skills is very effective, although a few pupils lack a thirst for reading.
- All staff build exemplary relationships with pupils and model respect and strong values; consequently, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Pupils are courteous and respectful to all staff and show a mutual respect for one another. The pupils' exemplary conduct around the site is matched by outstanding attitudes to learning in the classroom.
- Pupils believe that the school is a safe haven in which to learn and flourish. They wear their 'Team Wright Robinson' badges with pride and are appreciative of the high-quality support and teaching they receive. They contribute strongly across the school community. Parents are full of praise for the school. Pride in the school is shared by staff, governors, pupils and their parents.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen the range of information provided to governors about the achievement of looked after children to ensure that governors can challenge leaders even more extensively.
- Improve teaching even further by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills, so they can discuss their thinking and ideas, in order to deepen their knowledge
 - further advancing the ambitious literacy and reading strategy, to fine-tune pupils' skills and strengthen pupils' passion for reading.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's passionate and steadfast focus on improving outcomes for all pupils is a beacon which staff, pupils and parents follow. The headteacher has a clear vision focused on improving the lives and life chances of young people and this is well articulated, understood, and shared by all. Badges worn by pupils and staff, 'Team Wright Robinson', are valued and reflect a sense of pride; there is a united approach to making this school exceptionally effective.
- The senior leadership team works cohesively to ensure that all pupils receive exceptional personal development that raises pupils' aspirations and allows their academic achievement to flourish. The 'outstanding' judgement is the result of rigorous and effective school systems, implemented by loyal leaders, to improve teaching and learning across the school. Leaders are reflective and accurately monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions in improving outcomes for all pupils. Leaders have a robust and accurate picture of the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well. All lessons that senior leaders jointly observed with inspectors were judged accurately.
- Outstanding leadership underpins this school's success. The headteacher is supported by an extremely strong team of senior leaders. Highly effective academic and pastoral middle leadership contributes significantly to the excellent progress that pupils make. All staff are empowered to lead their own areas of responsibility effectively. Pupils' leadership is highly valued and they are given real leadership responsibilities. For example, in Year 8, the physical activity leaders support Year 7 social time and visit form time to support pupils' mathematics and English development.
- The quality of teaching and learning is rigorously monitored by leaders across the school. Appropriate pathways are provided to support teachers' development. Teachers who are regarded by the school as outstanding are utilised and make a positive contribution to the school through the delivery of whole-school training. Other teachers follow the outstanding teachers' programme to refine their craft and develop further strategies to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced for all pupils. Careful consideration is given by leaders to ensuring that the curriculum offers pathways that are appropriate for all learners. Fundamental British values and personal, social and health education are blended into the curriculum. The school effectively maintains a high regard for British values by ensuring reinforcement of these values through lessons and also through school displays and plasma screens around the fabric of the building. As a consequence, equal opportunities are fully promoted and upheld. Pupils reported that prejudice and intolerance are not issues. They are adamant that everyone is treated equally.
- All teachers consistently apply the school's clear behaviour policy. Respect and the use of manners resonate throughout the school, reinforcing pupils' high standards. Teachers build strong relationships with pupils. A comment by a member of staff on the online survey conducted by inspectors typified the views of many: 'I feel very proud of the pupils in this school and the excellent way they represent us as a school.'
- Pupils are well cared for and the school's work to keep them safe and secure is outstanding. Leaders use appropriate external support when required and vulnerable pupils are extremely well supported. Pupils who are educated off-site at alternative centres or at the school's own 'Compass Centre' are protected by clear checks and protocols.
- The headteacher and his senior leaders work cohesively to promote strong personal development and develop high academic achievement. Parents recognise the strong impact the school has on their children's education and think highly of the school. One parent reported on Parent View: 'this is a fantastic, well-led school'. Another parent who spoke to the inspector by telephone reported that 'staff are amazing. My child is now getting grade A's because of the high-quality support and guidance.'
- The school offers an assortment of activities and additional experiences that very effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education, particularly through science, art, music and physical education. For example, Year 7 pupils can be inspired through a well-organised science club and Year 10 and 11 pupils can take part in completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- The school ethos and belief in pupils' achievement are branded across the fabric of the building. Pupils' work is celebrated and photographs of successful teams and artwork promote pupils' self-belief, courage and determination. Pupils take notice of the quotations on the school's walls: 'revision cannot be taken lightly, excellence is a choice', along with, 'In the TEAM we trust – in sport we believe – TEAM Wright Robinson – made in Manchester'.
- The local authority has provided helpful support through visits to the school to evaluate leaders' impact and to meet with the headteacher. However, support for looked after children is not always effectively provided by the local authority.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors fully submerge themselves in the life of the school; they attend school trips and residential visits to gauge the ambition and attitudes of pupils beyond the classroom. They are sharply focused on ensuring pupils can lead successful lives once they leave 'Team Wright Robinson'.
 - Governors are reflective and well trained to challenge the school and its leaders. They ensure the school strives for continual improvement. They use their knowledge and skills to interpret examination results and current information on pupils' progress insightfully. As a result, the governing body has been successful in challenging the school to do better. Pupil premium funding is monitored clearly by governors; they have a good understanding of the impact of this spending on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, senior leaders do not share extensive information regarding the overall progress of looked after children. As a result there are small gaps in governors' knowledge on looked after children.
 - The governing body ensures that policies are up to date, comprehensive, well informed and accessible to pupils, parents and carers.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and areas for development. They pay regular visits to the school and ensure they keep a close eye on school developments. Governors have a good understanding and knowledge of safeguarding within the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leadership of this area is very strong. There is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe. Procedures are fully in place and leaders and governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Staff engage very effectively and appropriately with parents, carers and other stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. The school ensures that parents are also provided with the information they need to help keep their sons and daughters safe when online beyond school hours. Procedures to ensure that all staff receive relevant training are strong, as are the protocols and practices for record-keeping. Staff have received a range of training on potential areas of risk for young people. They have attended 'Prevent' training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk of being radicalised and also received recent training on female genital mutilation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers' high expectations of pupils and their strong relationships form solid foundations on which outstanding teaching is built. The drive for relentlessly good and outstanding teaching over time enables nearly all groups of pupils to make outstanding progress.
- There are very strong relationships between staff and pupils based on mutual respect. This creates a positive environment where pupils feel valued and confident, and in which outstanding learning takes place. Pupils value the support that they get from their teachers and other adults.
- Pupils are not afraid to seek help or support in their learning because the school encourages a strong positive ethos for attending additional support sessions. Pupils regularly access well-organised additional support to further their learning or to clarify any misconceptions that they might have in their understanding. These additional teaching sessions are highly valued and well attended by pupils. For example, inspectors observed a popular Year 11 additional session, held before school, in modern foreign languages to support listening and reading.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan well-structured lessons that cater for all pupils, building pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers ensure that the levels of challenge are appropriate for all individuals and groups to enable the highest possible rates of progress. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and anticipate their needs so that barriers to learning are removed. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding through reasoning and discussion.
- Teachers ensure that pupils who are academically more able are stretched to reach the highest possible standards in their examinations. In the summer of 2015, one in seven grades awarded at GCSE was a grade A or A*. This represented excellent progress from pupils' starting points.
- The school has adopted a marking and assessment policy which has been embedded by most staff to further support and challenge pupils to do their very best. Teachers' feedback provides pupils with effective support and guidance on how to improve their work. Inspectors saw evidence of excellent progress being made in English, where thoughtful feedback enabled pupils to develop a deep understanding of Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. Pupils are adept at assessing their own work and also provide constructive feedback to others. Pupils take great care of their books, which are immaculately presented and reveal a strong sense of pride in their achievements and learning.

- During the best lessons, pupils hunger for information from teachers to satisfy their desire for learning and teachers address difficult concepts skilfully. Inspectors observed a mathematics lesson in which pupils were supported through precise questioning to develop their understanding of the surface area of a cuboid. Another lesson in physical education showed how sharp questioning encouraged pupils to use specific terminology and a depth of understanding in how to complete a lay-up shot in basketball.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school provides an oasis of calm, and promotes mutual respect for all. Value is placed on being kind and respectful, and contributing to the community. Many pupils have leadership roles which enable them to make a strong contribution to this aim. For example, older pupils play a key role in supporting younger pupils through coaching and mentoring. Year 11 prefects are highly regarded and set strong examples for younger pupils by participating in the supervision of social time activities.
- A purposeful start to every school day reinforces high expectations. Pupils gain information through daily bulletins about school events, reminders about healthy eating and top tips for literacy and numeracy. Teachers lead pupils in opportunities to discuss current world issues. For example, inspectors observed confident pupils engaged in discussing fair trade, showing empathy for coffee growers and pickers. Form periods are also used to provide additional support for pupils in English and mathematics to enable them to secure even further improvements.
- Pupils in the school form a richly diverse community; they are encouraged to work well together and no form of discrimination is tolerated. Pupils report that bullying is almost unknown, and dealt with swiftly on the rare occasions when it occurs. The school monitors bullying assiduously and incidents are extremely rare.
- Pupils wear badges on their blazers with pride to celebrate their achievements. High aspirations are continually promoted by teachers. An inspector met with members of the school council who talked openly about how transgender issues are dealt with effectively within school and the importance of freedom of speech.
- Pastoral leaders have a clear understanding of pupils in their charge and ensure that pupils are supported well in school. All members of the school are very well versed in how to keep safe, including the risks of being groomed when online. Recent checks by leaders on pupils' well-being, related to personal safety and internet safety, revealed strengths in pupils' knowledge within the school.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. All Year 10 pupils are encouraged to take part in work experience and develop a stronger understanding of the world of work and the importance of employability skills. Careers education is very well planned and delivered through the curriculum from Year 8 onwards. All Year 11 pupils receive a well-informed careers interview and a personal careers pathway, to ensure that they are clear about their next steps. Leaders carefully monitor and evaluate careers provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Leaders have ensured that core values are instilled across the school and this creates an inclusive and harmonious community. Pupils show a high level of respect for one another, and are impeccably polite and courteous to adults and visitors to the school. They have a high sense of pride and treat the facilities of the school with respect. The vibrant wall displays of pupils' work and celebrations of their achievement are all in very good condition and reflect the school's powerful ethos. Inspectors saw no litter or graffiti around the school.
- The attendance rate for all groups of pupils is above national average as a result of a highly proactive and skilled team of staff. The school promotes the importance of attendance strongly among the community and holds parents to account when attendance falls below the school's high expectations. Pupils take little time off school because they value their education and enjoy being part of 'TEAM Wright Robinson'. The number of fixed-term exclusions has decreased rapidly as leaders have successfully implemented anger management sessions and a special support programme, for identified pupils. The school continues to use alternative methods of educating pupils by using the school's own dedicated centre, 'Compass Centre'. This is a provision for pupils at risk of not doing as well as their peers and is housed just off the main school campus. It provides short-term alternative education until pupils are ready to be reintegrated into school.

- Pupils manage their own behaviour extremely well. This is evident in lessons and also at lesson changeover times, in the dining room and during social times. Movement around the school is calm, orderly and purposeful. The strong, positive ethos of the school is such that pupils quickly become adept at managing their own behaviour. Inspectors also saw many examples of pupils' willingness to help each other in a truly cooperative way. Leaders ensure that new arrivals and younger pupils are engaged in school life and promote high aspirations and expectations from the moment they step through the door. New arrivals settle into the school swiftly. Value is placed on being kind and respectful, and contributing to the community.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision have their attendance and welfare checked on a regular basis and achieve what is expected of them.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils enter the school with very low attainment compared to pupils nationally. Some pupils arrive with a considerable learning lag. Leaders have ensured that pupils' targets are aspirational for the end of each key stage. This aspirational culture challenges teachers and pupils to be fearless in reaching for the stars and has resulted in a rise in academic success.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was similar to that found nationally. This represents outstanding achievement for this cohort of pupils.
- For the last two years, by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have made particularly strong progress when compared to national figures. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who made expected and better than expected progress in English and mathematics was well above national figures. Pupils also made significantly better progress than the national average in science, humanities and languages. Current school information indicates that this positive trend is set to continue.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils attaining the English Baccalaureate was higher than found nationally.
- Pupils who take vocational courses achieve outstanding results in qualifications that prepare them very well for their future. The school has established very strong success over time in BTECs such as media and business.
- The most-able pupils benefit enormously from the culture of high expectations and improved teaching, and now make excellent progress. The numbers of pupils gaining the higher A* and A grades rose in 2015 in a number of subjects. In core and additional science, French, Spanish, textiles and business studies, the proportions of pupils gaining the higher A* and A grades are above national figures. This trend is set to continue in 2016.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils' attainment in GCSE mathematics and English was above national figures. In 2016, the predicted progress for disadvantaged pupils has rapidly improved. Disadvantaged pupils are set to make more progress than their non-disadvantaged peers in school and nationally.
- In Key Stage 3, the proportions of pupils making expected and more than expected progress are in line with those found nationally. Across the school in every year group, standards are exceptionally high and pupils' progress is rapid across a large majority of subjects.
- Leaders are acutely aware of the importance of instilling a love of reading and ensuring all pupils have strong reading skills. Pupils with low literacy levels receive well-structured and coordinated support to enable them to make strong progress. The reading recovery programmes are effective in developing and improving pupils' reading. The school library facilities have been improved to encourage further reading and new reading strategies are being closely monitored. Teachers enthusiastically share their choice in reading on their classroom doors and join in emphatically during national reading celebrations like 'World Book Day'. A few pupils do not share their peers' enthusiasm for reading.
- Pupils who arrive at the school with low prior attainment make strong progress as a result of appropriate support and provision. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability also make strong progress. In 2015, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability who gained A* to C grades at GCSE in English and mathematics was above national levels.

School details

Unique reference number	105564
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10010455

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,667
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Brierley
Headteacher	Neville Beischer
Telephone number	0161 370 5121
Website	www.wrightrobinson.co.uk
Email address	c.cooper@wrightrobinson.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than average 11–16 mixed secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the government’s pupil premium grant is more than double the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- There are more boys than girls and 75% of pupils are White British, with the remainder coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils with a disability or special educational needs is below average and the proportion of those with a education, health and care plan is below average.
- A few pupils are educated off-site at the Manchester PRU, and a small number of pupils are taught in the Compass Centre, which is led and managed by the school and housed just off the main school campus. The Compass Centre is a temporary provision for pupils whose behaviour is a cause for concern.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior team, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and governors, and an officer from the local authority and newly qualified teachers. Inspectors also spoke by telephone to members of staff from the external educational providers.
- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons across all year groups, including observations with senior leaders. During these observations, inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to them about it.
- Inspectors formally interviewed a large number of pupils, and spoke to a range of pupils informally at break and lunchtime. Inspectors also observed pupils' conduct and behaviour throughout the school day.
- Inspectors viewed registration periods and an assembly, and made visits to the school's internal inclusion unit.
- The inspection team observed the school's work; scrutinised data about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance; scrutinised pupils' work; looked at documents used by leaders to check the school's work; reviewed minutes of meetings of the governing body; and viewed records relating to the monitoring of teaching. During the inspection, detailed consideration was given to policies and practices relating to safeguarding and also how the school prepares its pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Inspectors took account of the 125 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and also spoke to a parent by telephone. They also considered the responses to the staff online questionnaire and the school's own pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

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Debra Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Clifford	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Gregory	Ofsted Inspector

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