

Welling School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101467
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	355003
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Metcalf

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1611
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lesley Robins
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Khanna
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2008
School address	Elsa Road Welling Welling DA16 1LB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors over two days. They observed 37 lessons taught by 34 teachers across all subjects and covering the full age and ability range. Meetings were held with staff, governors and students. Inspectors looked at a wide range of data and documentation including the school development plan, school policies, assessment data, safeguarding documentation and governing body minutes. The responses to questionnaires completed by staff, students and 66 parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent does evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny and available data confirm improving standards and progress?
- Is the quality of teaching securing sufficient progress and learning for all students across all subjects?
- How well does the curriculum address individual needs especially in terms of literacy, numeracy and the provision of vocational pathways?
- How well do care, guidance and support promote learning and personal development for all students?
- How effectively are leaders at all levels driving and securing improvement, and what is their capacity to sustain these improvements?

Information about the school

Welling School is a larger than average mixed secondary modern school, whose students are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of students from other ethnic groups is increasing, as is the number who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average and the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is well above the national average. It achieved the Sportmark Award in 2008, the Healthy Schools Award in 2009, the silver Artsmark Award in 2010 and was re-accredited as an Investor in People (bronze award) in 2010. The school, which is part of the Kemnal Academies Trust, is designated as a specialist (visual) arts school and is planning to convert to an academy in March 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Welling School is providing a satisfactory education for its students. Provision in the sixth form is good. The widespread weaknesses identified in previous inspections have been systematically tackled, with significant improvement evident in both the quality of provision and in outcomes for students. The headteacher has led the school strongly and resolutely during this period showing a relentless determination to overcome any barriers to students' success. Her resolve has been central to the improvements in teaching and learning and the subsequent improvements in examination performance. The headteacher is very well supported by the senior management team and an increasing number of middle managers. Rigorous monitoring and realistic self-evaluation have been key to these improvements. Middle managers have been increasingly involved in this process, although not all are yet fully effective in securing improvement in their subject areas through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The headteacher's work on developing and encouraging staff at all levels has been recognised through the Investor in People accreditation and has ensured that staff are well placed to continue to escalate the pace of change. The school has good capacity to improve further.

The quality of teaching is much improved as a result of the school's focus on professional development to improve practice. There are, however, inconsistencies in the quality of planning and the use of assessment data to meet individual needs. Marking in books is also inconsistent. Arrangements for tracking students' progress are vastly improved and the progress that individuals and groups of students are making is checked regularly and assessed accurately. Students' achievement is satisfactory across the school and attainment is rising. The number of students gaining five A* to C passes including English and mathematics has risen significantly from 29% in 2008 to 51% in 2010. The data for 2011 show a further improvement. The curriculum has been enriched and strengthened but literacy skills are not reinforced sufficiently in all subjects. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' literacy skills and opportunities are missed to develop them further. Care, guidance and support provided for students are good overall and outstanding in the sixth form.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to at least good and accelerate progress for all students by:
 - developing students' literacy skills consistently in all subjects in each key stage
 - ensuring consistency in marking to support students' individual needs

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- improving the effectiveness of all middle managers in driving improvements in their areas
- sharing best practice in planning, including the use of assessment data, to ensure greater consistency in meeting students' individual needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' achievement is satisfactory but improving rapidly. Their attainment is in line with national averages with strong evidence of further improvement in 2011. There is no discernible difference between the performances of different groups, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and or/disabilities, including those with statements. Attainment on entry is below average, literacy skills are weak and there remains some variation in the performance in different subjects. For example, results in art were significantly above average while those in science were significantly below. On the basis of their starting points, students' progress is satisfactory but improving rapidly. In general, students respond well when expectations are high. Where this is the case they are engaged and motivated and seek to improve their work. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make satisfactory progress as a result.

Discussions with students and responses to questionnaires confirm that they feel very safe in school. Students' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning and the new positive behaviour rewards system gives a greater focus to rewards although students say these are not always given consistently. The school deals with any instances of bullying promptly and effectively. Permanent and fixed-term exclusions have dropped but a few students still find it difficult to conform to the school's high expectations. Healthy lifestyles are given a strong focus in the school as reflected in its national awards. Students have a good awareness of healthy eating which is highlighted through the personal, social and health education programme and supported in lessons such as food technology and science. Students participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and extra-curricular sport. They contribute well to the school and wider community through their involvement in activities ranging from concerts to fund raising, and exhibitions to community work in India.

Students' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are strong but their literacy skills are weaker. Students have a clear understanding of the steps they need to take in the future and receive appropriate information and guidance to decide options and career choices. The school has increased students' attendance and the number of persistent absentees has declined significantly so that attendance is now broadly average. In the sixth form attendance is high. Students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and very well supported through assemblies and tutor time, which is well utilised by teachers.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are improving but are not yet consistent. In the sixth form, they are consistently good. As a result of the school's concerted and comprehensive efforts to improve the quality of teaching, inadequate teaching has virtually been eliminated and the proportion of lessons in which teaching is good or better has increased rapidly. The improvement in teaching is beginning to have a positive impact on students' attainment and progress. Teachers' secure subject knowledge, purposeful pace and supportive relationships are strengths in most lessons. All teachers have access to detailed information about students' individual needs, prior attainment and their progress in meeting challenging targets. The majority of the teaching takes this into account in lesson planning so that there is sufficient support and challenge to ensure that all students make progress. However, this is not yet the case in all lessons and teachers do not always act on the information they have about students to match their teaching precisely enough to their individual needs. Marking in books is inconsistent to support learning and help students understand what to do to improve.

The curriculum has some very strong features, and has improved year on year to broaden choice and to better meet the needs and aspirations of students. However, recent innovations have yet to be fully evaluated to ensure impact. Students are able to personalise their learning by choosing from a range of academic and vocational pathways as well as appreciating cross-curricular links as a result of cooperation between art and

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other subjects. This is a good illustration of the important impact that the school's specialism has on the opportunities provided for students. Students' numeracy and ICT skills are well supported across the curriculum but literacy less so. There is a very wide range of clubs and activities which students can choose to attend before school, at lunchtime and after school. The take-up is extremely high and analysed to ensure all students have access to appropriate provision. The specialism has been a catalyst for improvement and the school recently given the silver Artsmark Award in recognition of its strong links with partner schools and the local community.

Care, guidance and support are good. Students feel safe and know that they are well cared for. Students say that they 'can talk about anything to our teachers' and parents are 'impressed with the level of care, guidance and support in this school' including consultation days, motivational evenings and option surgeries. Transition arrangements from primary to secondary school and from secondary to post-16 education, training and work are thorough and well considered. Form tutors and pastoral teams have a good knowledge of individuals and their personal well-being. The support of vulnerable students is strong through the wide network of partnerships with specialist agencies such as the Learning Zone which works to keep challenging students in school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has responded well to the many improvements demanded of it and has acted decisively to address all recommendations from the last inspection report. The headteacher and senior leadership team are ambitious to raise the level of students' achievement with a focus on improving the quality of teaching while maintaining the school's strong pastoral care. Monitoring and evaluation have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses that are being systematically tackled with purpose and determination. Some middle managers have been very effective in driving improvements in their subjects through rigorous monitoring and evaluation but not all are equally effective in this regard.

The governing body is knowledgeable and has a clear focus on strategic direction, challenge and support; it is committed to the school and to improving performance for all students. The promotion of equality of opportunity for all students is a guiding principle in the school's determination to raise attainment and improve the progress of all students. As a result achievement is improving rapidly and there are no significant gaps between different groups of learners. Procedures for safeguarding students meet all statutory requirements. Policies are regularly monitored and updated by the governing body. The

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school promotes community cohesion well. The school works effectively in partnership with the community and makes very good use of its specialism to highlight and promote the visual arts. The impressive gallery space within the school provides students with opportunities to present art to the local community and collaborate with institutions such as the Tate, Hayward and South London Gallery. The school is also developing links at national and global levels.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students achieve well in the sixth form. The overall pass rate on A-level and AS-level courses is above national averages but there are fewer higher grades than nationally. On vocational courses, attainment is in line with national averages and often above. All students make good progress from their starting points. The specialism has had a significant impact by widening the range of courses, and the quality of teaching in the sixth form and the curriculum is constantly under review to seek further improvements. However, weaknesses exist in students' literacy skills and this restricts their communication skills. An extensive and outstanding programme of enrichment activities makes a significant contribution to students' development.

Teaching in the sixth form is good. Staff use a wide range of resources and methods, and students respond well to this. They have a positive attitude to their studies and enjoy their learning. Progress and assessment of standards are good and targets are shared with students who receive regular and timely feedback so that they understand what they need to do to improve.

The school provides students with outstanding care, support and guidance. Students are clear about how their courses are assessed and expectations of them in relation to future progress. They receive a wide range of guidance about progression routes and

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demonstrate a good understanding of courses available and have appropriate expectations. Most students continue to university as undergraduates or enrol on a one-year foundation degree to access full degree courses a year later. Students are mature, reflective and confident individuals who are carefully monitored and supported if problems are identified. Leadership is good and the provision is organised effectively and safely on a day-to-day basis including the operation of the partnership with other providers and other agencies.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaire was returned by a very small minority of parents and carers. Of those that responded, a very large majority said that their child enjoyed school and agreed that the school kept them safe. Many comments accompanying questionnaires acknowledged the recent improvements made by the school and the contribution of the 'strong leadership team'. Responses confirmed that the school met their child's needs and kept them informed about their progress. A small minority commented about unacceptable behaviour and felt that the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns. A very large majority of parents and carers said that teaching was good and that the school was led and managed effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Welling School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1611 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	38	37	56	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	20	30	43	65	3	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	36	34	52	6	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	30	33	50	5	8	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	15	23	42	64	7	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	24	35	53	10	15	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	15	35	53	13	20	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	24	38	58	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	32	37	56	7	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	30	29	44	10	15	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	21	32	48	12	18	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	21	32	36	55	7	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	39	30	45	8	12	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Welling School, Welling DA16 1LB

On behalf of the inspection team I am writing to thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school and to tell you about our findings during the inspection. You might wish to read the full report.

We concluded that your school provides a satisfactory level of education and that provision in the sixth form is good. The examination results are improving quickly and we were pleased to see the progress that you are making in your lessons and how well you understand what you need to do to improve. We also noted that your attendance had improved but it could be even better.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but improving. It is good in the sixth form. The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. We were pleased to read your positive responses to the student questionnaire and to hear that you enjoy school, feel safe and learn a lot in lessons.

We have asked your teachers to continue their work on raising standards and achievement in the school. The school agrees that this can be done by ensuring consistency in marking, sharing best practice in teaching and supporting middle managers in their work. We have also asked the school to help you to develop your literacy skills across all subjects and in all lessons. You can help by making sure you always attend regularly and working hard to meet your targets.

Once again, thank you for your contribution to the inspection and very best wishes for your future success and happiness.

Yours sincerely

Paul Metcalf

Lead inspector

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