

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106373
Local Authority Trafford
Inspection number 287502
Inspection date 13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Heather Barnett HMI

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

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll (school) | 1315 |
| Number on roll (6th form) | 153 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |

Date of previous school inspection 28 January 2002

School address Wellington Road
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Chair Mr D Holland

Headteacher Mrs Julie Armstrong

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector in a one day visit. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior managers, governors, staff and students. They visited a range of lessons and observed students' conduct at break and lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation and over 400 questionnaires completed by parents.

Description of the school

Wellington is a larger than average 11-18 foundation school with technology college status. It is situated in an area that operates a selective system with 40% of Year 6 pupils going to grammar

schools, which has an impact on the entry profile of Wellington students. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. There are few students from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is below average, but the numbers who need extra help with their learning is above average and rising. The school has achieved a large number of awards, such as Investors in People and the Charter Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which provides a supportive environment in which students blossom. It sets very clear and high expectations, which are known and respected throughout the school community. All students feel valued and are stimulated and motivated to do their best at all times. There are high levels of parental involvement and many parents commented extremely positively on the work of the school in their responses to the questionnaire. For example, 'our daughter has enjoyed every moment of school life.', the school provides, 'wonderful opportunity for learning and development to every pupil' and 'I think the school is a fantastic place for my son'.

Students make outstanding progress and achieve high standards. There are no groups that do not achieve well and the progress made by all students from Year 7 to Year 11 places the school in the top 11% of schools nationally. The success that students achieve as they move through the school raises their aspirations and increases their confidence.

The extremely strong focus placed on teaching and learning permeates all aspects of school life and has been a major factor in the 10 year improving trend in achievement. There are very high levels of consistency so that students receive the same high quality learning experience in lessons and know that they can approach staff at any time for help. The curriculum also supports the high rates of progress as it is differentiated to meet individual needs and is accessible to all. Students have very positive attitudes to learning and their school. Their personal development is outstanding and they appreciate the excellent levels of care, guidance and support they receive.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Senior leaders give a very clear direction to the school and ensure it is focused on priority areas. New initiatives are always piloted, monitored and reviewed before being rolled out across the school which ensures a consistency of approach. There are very clear lines of communication so that all members of the school community are kept well informed. The senior leaders have an excellent understanding of where the school is, of its strengths and where it can improve further. Any issues that arise are

dealt with effectively. The inspection team agree with the school's evaluation of its performance. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been successfully tackled and, in some cases, translated into strengths. The school has excellent capacity for improvement.

The school is using the benefits of technology status to good effect, particularly in enhancing the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and improving information and communication technology (ICT) resources across all areas.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students achieve well on a range of courses suited to their needs and tailored to their choices. Some find the sudden change in ideas and language from GCSE to AS courses difficult and would welcome a smoother transition. Most respond very well to the good teaching they get and make good progress. Overall, students reach standards in line with national levels. More regular assessment is now helping students to have a clearer view of their standards and potential. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to represent the school and are very mature about their roles and responsibilities in it. Managers are fully aware of how to move the sixth form forward and have detailed plans in place. These have already led to some positive effects, but it is too early to assess their full impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan more thorough arrangements for the academic transition from GCSE to A-level courses.
- Ensure that assessment in the sixth form is used consistently to inform and motivate students to reach or exceed their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students make outstanding progress and reach above average standards. In 2005, the progress students had made from Year 7 to Year 11 placed the school in the top 11% of schools nationally. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similarly excellent progress. When students join the school, their standards are broadly average. However, the outstanding progress that students make mean that they reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 3 and well above average standards by the end of Key Stage 4. English results are particularly impressive and place the school in the top 2% of schools nationally for the progress students have made from Year 7 to Year 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' attendance is good and they show a strong desire to learn and succeed. They quickly become cooperative and diligent workers, respecting and responding to teachers and their fellow students. The result is excellent behaviour and a very sensible atmosphere across the large school site. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and their loyalty is high. They feel safe and happy and value the way in which their opinions are listened to. Their confidence, as learners and young people, flourishes as a result. They see and accept their part in changing things, for instance, through the school council. They feel secure in making sensible decisions about diet and lifestyle, thanks to the fitness suite, and the very wide range of PE and extra-curricular activities available. All students acquire very good literacy and numeracy skills and their social skills and awareness are outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are outstanding and a key factor in the excellent progress that students make. The whole school focuses on this area and this ensures a consistency of approach that supports all students in achieving their goals. There is wide spread sharing of good practice, which has been influential in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. The good structure of lessons sets out clearly at the beginning what is to be learnt and reviews at the end what learning has taken place. Students thrive in the atmosphere of high expectations created by staff.

The school uses a wide range of information to track and monitor students' progress effectively and to set challenging targets for improvement. Teachers have a detailed understanding of the needs of individuals and are able to adapt work to meet these needs effectively. The use of new technology, especially interactive whiteboards, is helping teachers present their lessons in interesting and imaginative ways which capture and hold students' attention from the outset.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its students. It has been designed to match the needs of all groups of learners at the school and is one of the reasons why students make outstanding progress. In Key Stage 4, courses are planned which give students a thorough grounding in key areas and ensure breadth of experience. The curriculum is very well differentiated and so accessible to all. The wide range of extra curricular activities has very high levels of participation and is appreciated by the students, as are the very effective study support programmes. The emphasis on literacy across the curriculum supports overall rates of progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care is excellent throughout the school. Students quickly become known as individuals - cherished and guided with sensitivity. For most, 'the school is like a second family,' as one student put it. They have total confidence that teachers will act quickly, wisely and fairly to help them or resolve problems. Systems for supporting vulnerable students are thorough and secure and excellent use is made of outside agencies. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, criticised previously, is outstanding. Procedures for tracking students' progress and highlighting inconsistencies or underachievement are rigorous. Advice about choosing GCSE options, post-16 courses and higher education courses is excellent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior leaders set a clear direction with a very strong focus on teaching and learning. This ensures consistency of approach and facilitates the sharing of good practice. There is a clear understanding of accountability at all levels and senior and middle managers have an accurate view of the standards and progress of all students. The target setting, monitoring and reviewing process is highly effective and involves the rigorous use of data. Self-evaluation is extremely thorough and involves staff throughout the school. It highlights the detailed understanding leaders have of all aspects of the school. This informs planning and has led to a cycle of continuous improvement, with a 10 year improving trend in achievement. Students are proud of their school and parents are overwhelmingly supportive.

The governing body is committed and diligent and has developed an effective committee structure. The governors focus closely on the priorities of the school and play an active part in the life of the school. Resources are deployed very effectively, supporting the different needs of students and giving excellent value for money.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | | School Overall | 16-19 |
|---|-----|----------------|-------|
| Overall effectiveness | | | |
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 | | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 | | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 | | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | | Yes |
| Achievement and standards | | | |
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 | | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 | | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 | | |
| ¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low. | | | |
| Personal development and well-being | | | |
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | | |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | | |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 | | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 | | |
| The quality of provision | | | |
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 | | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | | |

| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 | |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No | |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No | |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, a colleague and I recently spent a day inspecting your school and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. We enjoyed visiting lessons and meeting with you. Your views and those of your parents, from the questionnaire, were most helpful.

Your school provides you with an outstanding education. There is a very strong focus on teaching and learning and staff are very good at making sure you all have work in lessons which meets your needs. This supports you in making excellent progress during your time at school. The teaching you receive is excellent, your teachers have very high expectations of you and you are keen to do well in lessons. You like the choice of subjects you can study and enjoy the extra-curricular activities. Both you and your parents greatly appreciate the excellent support and guidance that you receive from the school. Your school is very well led. The senior managers have a very clear idea of the strengths of the school and areas for development.

The sixth form is good and improving. The teaching is good and you make good progress. More regular assessment is helping you gain a clearer view of your progress. You appreciate the opportunities you have to represent the school. Some of you find the change from GCSE to advanced level courses difficult and would like a smoother transition. The school recognises that it needs to continue to develop in these areas and has detailed plans in place.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about the school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved.

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