

Welling School

Elsa Road, Welling, DA16 1LB

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- By the end of Key Stage 4, students have not made consistently good progress since the academy opened, except in English and mathematics. The progress of students of White British heritage has been slower than similar students nationally in 2011 and 2012.
- Not all teachers mark students' work regularly to a high standard or provide them with subject-specific targets to help them to improve.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The AS- and A-level results and progress of students across different subjects shows a similar pattern of variability, as seen in the GCSE results in Year 11.
- Leaders are not yet tracking the progress of different groups of pupils carefully enough or comparing the school's performance with the national picture.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a school that has improved significantly since it opened. Teaching has improved rapidly and progress is better, as is students' behaviour.
- The headteacher and members of the governing body provide strong and determined leadership. They have acted effectively to bring about these improvements.
- Students' behaviour is good and their positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their learning. They want to do well.
- Staff and students are proud to be members of the school and work harmoniously together. They feel safe in school.
- The quality of teaching is good because of the positive learning relationships developed across the school and the encouraging support teachers give students to learn and work hard.
- The curriculum benefits from the school's specialism in visual arts. Art is successfully integrated into the science and history curriculum to create realistic opportunities to develop students' skills and understanding.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly supported.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and teaching in 49 lessons and activities, taught by 46 teachers. Five lessons were observed jointly with members of the school’s leadership team. In addition, inspectors observed an assembly and made a number of shorter visits to lessons to look at the quality of assessment and aspects of literacy.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, including some in the sixth form, disabled students and those with special educational needs. Inspectors met with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, and the headteacher, together with a representative of The Kemnal Academies Trust and members of the school’s senior and middle leadership teams.
- Inspectors considered the 50 responses to the parental online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 49 staff questionnaires returned.
- The team observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation, including information the school presented as an overview of students’ current attainment and progress. The school improvement plan and self-evaluation documents were scrutinised, along with monitoring information and other records, such as those relating to students’ behaviour, safeguarding, meetings of the governing body and the performance management of staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Hill, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional inspector
Charlotte Evers	Additional inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional inspector
Heather Leatt	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Welling School is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. It has a specialism in visual arts.
- The academy is sponsored by The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT). It opened as an academy in the spring term of 2011 with the same name, and in the same buildings, as the predecessor school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority) is higher than average.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds with a lower proportion than average from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with a special educational need supported through school action is higher than the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- Sixth form provision is part of a consortium, 'Partnership Sixth', with Erith School and Trinity Church of England School.
- The school has a visual arts exhibition space, The Berwick Road Gallery, on-site which is used by community and other groups as well as the school.
- The on-site provision, The Berwick Centre, supports students who have been internally excluded from lessons on a temporary basis. The Learning Zone is a centre which provides students with support and guidance.
- Very few students attend the local authority's alternative provision for students of secondary age.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all students make consistently good progress throughout Key Stage 4, across all subjects, in line with that made in English and mathematics by:
 - carefully tracking the attainment and progress of groups of students, especially those of White British heritage
 - comparing students' progress with the progress of similar students nationally
 - making sure that all teachers mark students' work regularly to a high standard and give students clear subject-specific targets for improvement.
- Improve students' rates of progress in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring leaders and teachers make regular checks on their progress against that made by similar students nationally
 - identifying those who are falling behind and taking immediate action to help them catch up so that progress across each subject is strong for students of all abilities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because there remains too much variation in performance between subjects and the recent increase in the rate of progress overall is yet to be sustained.
- Many students enter with below average standards when they join the school. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment overall remains below average. Most students make expected progress in English and mathematics with many lower- and average-ability students making more than expected progress in mathematics.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers. Students from White British backgrounds make less progress from their starting points than students from similar backgrounds nationally.
- In 2012, the proportion of students with five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics rose sharply from 41% to 56%, in line with the national average. The school's own data indicate that this is set to rise again to 60% in 2013.
- The improvements in teaching are supporting this rapid rise in attainment. The progress of students, classes and subjects are checked. Checking systems do not routinely use the national benchmarks for progress at either Key Stage 4 or in the sixth form, nor for key groups such as students of White British heritage and those eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school enters some students for early entry GCSE in mathematics. Recent results for current Year 11 students show this strategy is effective. Overall, students' numeracy skills are developed well and attainment is continuing to rise in mathematics.
- Results in the school's specialist subject of art makes a strong contribution to student performance at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Achievement requires improvement in other subjects, including geography, history, music, religious studies, Spanish and technology courses, and in some of the sciences.
- Students' achievement in AS- and A-level courses has slowed in recent years. In 2012, students' overall progress on A-level courses was lower than the national average. Achievement is stronger across some vocational courses, such as the Travel and Tourism applied courses.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is improving quickly following a revision to the school's support systems. The school checks on the progress and well-being of those in the on-site special provision and the very few who attend the off-site alternative provision. Students attending these facilities make progress in line with other students.
- Gaps in average points scores between students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and other students are closing and this group is now making better progress.
- Developing students' skills in literacy, particularly reading, is a high priority. An intensive literacy improvement programme is providing weaker students with the skills to access lessons. The gap between these students' literacy skills and those of their classmates is narrowing swiftly.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View feel their child is making good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's records, supported by inspection evidence, show that the quality of teaching has recently improved rapidly. It is now good. There are some examples of outstanding teaching.
- These improvements are too recent to have had the required impact on the achievements of students who completed their GCSE and A-level examinations in 2011 and 2012. Students in

current year groups are making more rapid rates of progress.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons effectively. In a Year 8 Sci-art lesson (a combination of science and art), students made rapid progress because the lesson was skilfully planned to enable students to make such links for themselves. This led to higher-order thinking and a rapid assimilation of scientific knowledge. Students confidently explained how a pin-hole camera can model the working of an eye. In the best lessons, teachers quickly recognise when students need further help or challenge and adapt their questioning and activities accordingly.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good with lessons characterised by high-quality discussion and effective strengthening of students' understanding of examination requirements.
- Relationships between staff and students are very productive. Students trust their teachers and feel very well supported. They consider that the verbal feedback they receive in lessons encourages them to improve.
- Many teachers mark students' work well and provide clear written feedback which students find useful. However, this is not a universal practice. Some books are marked infrequently and do not provide clear guidance as to how students can improve their work.
- Most teaching helps students develop their literacy skills through opportunities to read and to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers working with students who find reading difficult effectively build their confidence and help them to make better progress with strategies to read unfamiliar text.
- Wide training opportunities and in-school coaching are provided for teachers. They are eager to learn from one another and speak highly of their pride in the improvements across the school. As a result, teaching is typically good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in school. There is a calm atmosphere prevalent across the school.
- Students and staff confirm that behaviour has improved considerably. Leaders at all levels have established clear systems which are known and understood by students.
- The number of exclusions has fallen sharply. Students speak highly of the guidance they receive from staff in the Learning Zone. They share the view that The Berwick Centre effectively supports students who are internally excluded. These students are well-supported to re-integrate into their mainstream classes.
- Restorative justice meetings are effective and students have a greater awareness of the impact of their actions on the wider school community.
- Attendance has improved year-on-year and is now average as a result of tailored support provided by staff, in partnership with other agencies, for students and their families. The proportion of students persistently absent is falling.
- Students' punctuality has improved markedly due to the high focus and uncompromising sanctions which students know about and respect.
- Students who join the school other than at the usual times appreciate the personalised support they receive. They quickly feel part of the school community and speak of the friendliness and welcoming manner of students and staff.
- Students are adamant that bullying is rare. They have a clear understanding of different types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe. Records support students' views that incidents are dealt with effectively.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, particularly through the visual arts, the strengthened rewards policies and the extra-curricular clubs.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong, determined and visionary leadership of the headteacher, supported by senior leaders and members of the governing body, has brought about rapid and sustained improvements in students' behaviour and the quality of teaching. The school is now in a strong position to secure and maintain good and better progress in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form as a result of good leadership and management.
- Recent changes in leadership roles have successfully accelerated these improvements. With the increased emphasis by leaders at all levels on the progress of groups of students such as those of White British heritage, boys, more-able students and those eligible for pupil premium funding, the standards of current students are rising rapidly. Staff are more accountable for students' progress. Current data indicate that these changes, together with revised curriculum pathways, are raising achievement more quickly and building on the firm foundations of work in Key Stage 3.
- The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. It has acted quickly to address the underperformance of boys. Single-sex classes have been started and are making the required impact on boys' engagement and progress.
- Targets for students are used effectively to hold staff to account and have laid the foundations to raise standards further. A revised performance management system is effective in supporting teachers' development while clarifying high expectations. The school has identified teachers who need to improve their teaching. Training closely matches the school's improvement priorities.
- The Kemnal Academies Trust is effective in supporting the school through partnership working with other headteachers, regular audits and training opportunities. The school remains in close contact with the local authority through a range of service level agreements.
- The curriculum is good with developing pathways at Key Stage 4. It meets students' needs and aptitudes increasingly well. The visual arts specialism is used effectively to add depth and interest across other areas such as the links between science and history. There are a growing number of educational visits, including an eagerly embraced visit to Spain.
- The sixth form welcomes students of all abilities. There is an increasing range of academic science courses and vocational courses. Students benefit from the additional breadth of curriculum offered through the 'Partnership Sixth'.
- Older students participate in programmes abroad such as recent expeditions to India with Rayleigh International, Zambia with Tag rugby and a visit to Cambodia.
- Safeguarding requirements are fully met and arrangements for child protection are robust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are well informed and compare the school's performance with other schools locally and nationally. They recognise the academy's strengths and areas for further development. High expectations and determination that students are given every opportunity to excel have ensured that the headteacher and senior leaders are held to account. Governors are fully involved in managing the performance of staff and make sure that pay rises are linked to student achievement. As a result, inadequate teaching has been virtually eradicated. Governors are involved in the life of the school, visiting lessons to check on the quality of teaching. Governors are aware of training opportunities and of how the school uses the pupil premium funding, though they are less clear about its impact on students' achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136720
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	406649

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Maintained
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	1,600
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Robins
Headteacher	Diane Khanna
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8304 8531
Fax number	020 8301 6414
Email address	enquiries@welling.bexley.sch.uk

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