

Wellington School

Wellington Road, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 7RH

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding		1
Leadership and management	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good because the overall proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is above average.
- Good teaching supports students' strong progress in English Baccalaureate subjects. Teachers have outstanding subject expertise and use imaginative methods and skilful questioning techniques to develop students' learning and confidence.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding because students are exceptionally attentive and self-disciplined in lessons. Relationships with staff are very positive. Attendance figures are among the very best nationally.
- The new headteacher is committed to supporting teachers develop even more creative approaches to teaching. Leaders have ensured that good teaching continues to secure students' high achievement.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by an excellent range of sporting activities and outstanding teaching across a range of subjects, including: religious education, psychology and art.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvement plans do not identify all the key priorities. They are not focused sharply enough on specific and measurable targets. This means that it is difficult to check the effectiveness of some aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders and governors have not used the information on how well students are achieving to ensure that the gap in attainment for groups of students including those supported by the pupil premium closes quickly or to ensure that achievement in the sixth form is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 52 lessons, 11 of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, the Academy Director and the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 110 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire. They analysed the results of the staff questionnaire, to which 87 replies were received.
- Inspectors analysed the 2012 examination results and the published results for previous years. They looked at the school's data on students' progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the school's checks on how well it is doing and school improvement plans.
- On the first day of inspection the school ran a 'No Pens Day' in Year 7 when normal teaching was suspended and students worked on a range of speaking and listening activities.
- Two HMI visited the school on 23 October 2013 to gather additional evidence.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shirley Gornall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Burke-Jackson	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector
Nell Banfield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds; students from mixed heritage and any other White backgrounds are the largest other minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is below average.
- The school has a humanities specialism.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Wellington School converted to become an academy in January 2011. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Ten students attend home or hospital tuition or off-site alternative provision through the Vulnerable Pupil Referral Unit or G Force.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good and better for those students who are disabled or have special educational needs, those who are educated off-site and those for whom the pupil premium provides support
 - increasing the proportion of A*-B grades achieved by students in the sixth form.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management even further by making sure that:
 - improvement plans have sharply focused specific and measurable targets so that all aspects of the school's work can be checked more easily and so that leaders can evaluate the impact of initiatives aimed at bringing about further improvement
 - governors regularly review information about the achievement of groups of students, to ensure that any remaining gaps in attainment close quickly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with broadly average skills in reading, writing and mathematics, although there is some variation across year groups. By the end of Year 11 the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been consistently above average over a sustained period. This represents good progress from students' previous starting points. An above average proportion of students achieve the English Baccalaureate.
- Achievement data from the last three years show that a high proportion of students make the rates of progress expected in English by the end of Key Stage 4. Attainment in both English literature and language is above average. All students sit their GCSE in mathematics at the end of Year 11 with outstanding success. A high proportion of students make better than expected progress in mathematics because teaching is often outstanding.
- Attainment in a number of GCSE subjects including core science, physical education and French is significantly above average. Students' progress in modern foreign languages is outstanding because they are particularly well motivated by outstanding teaching; all students study a language at GCSE level.
- In geography, religious education and social studies students make very strong progress, reflecting well on the school's specialism.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus achieve better results than their peers nationally in English and mathematics. However, the progress they make across a range of other subjects is not consistently good.
- Pupil premium funding has been used by the school to recruit extra teaching assistants in order to support students' progress in literacy and numeracy. In the past the gap in attainment between students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and their peers has been too wide. School data and inspection evidence show that the projections for Year 11 this year indicate that the gap will remain this year. Data for other year groups suggest the gap is starting to close. For example, Year 10 students known to be eligible for the pupil premium are now roughly one third of a grade behind their peers in English and mathematics. Although this demonstrates that the school promotes equality of opportunity, leaders are yet to ensure the gap closes at a rapid rate.
- Senior leaders recognise the need to support all students' literacy development. 'No Pens Day' in Year 7 was particularly well received by students who enjoyed opportunities to use drama to develop their speaking and listening skills. Excellent use is made of the very-well-stocked library throughout the day. The library is a popular venue with students at break time.
- Extra individual reading support sessions help to improve students' reading skills at a rapid rate. Almost three quarters of students targeted for extra literacy support are now making accelerated progress because the Year 7 catch-up funding is being used highly effectively to provide extra support in phonics (linking the letters with the sounds they make) and to provide mentoring sessions with staff.
- A very small number of students study off site. Their well-being is monitored by pastoral leaders. However their academic progress is not tracked with the same rigour of those students in school so senior leaders do not have such a clear picture of how well they achieve.
- Since the previous inspection achievement in the sixth form has steadily improved. Achievement is good but not outstanding because not enough students attain the higher grades and students' progress, while good overall, is sometimes variable.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their expectations of what students can achieve

are high. Inspectors observed examples of outstanding teaching across several subjects including English, mathematics and history.

- Teachers plan a variety of imaginative and engaging activities which motivate students. Common features of the vast majority of lessons are the excellent opportunities for students to be involved in paired and group tasks. Students collaborate exceptionally well with each other and discuss their learning with very high levels of maturity.
- Teachers use questions very effectively to carefully check students' comprehension, encouraging students to give detailed and in-depth responses. For instance, the teacher's skilful questioning in a Year 10 psychology lesson enabled students to make outstanding progress in their understanding of non-verbal communication.
- Teaching across a range of subjects makes a very positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 12 religious education lesson students made outstanding progress in developing their skills of critical analysis when considering the nature of existence. Similarly, students in a Year 10 art lesson demonstrated outstanding levels of initiative by working independently in mixed media to complete their coursework task.
- Students are clear about their targets. They receive particularly good feedback on their written work, which gives them precise and subject-specific areas to improve.
- Inspectors observed good and some outstanding teaching in the sixth form. Sixth-form students speak warmly of the extra support they receive from teachers outside lessons.
- In a very small minority of lessons where teaching is not as strong, opportunities for students to build their confidence and resilience by finding things out for themselves are sometimes overlooked.
- Teaching for students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is not consistently good. This is because teachers do not always plan in enough detail to support their individual learning needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is consistently outstanding and their attitudes to learning are exemplary. Attendance figures are among the very best nationally.
- Relationships with staff are extremely positive. In lessons students are exceptionally attentive and self-disciplined.
- Good assemblies, open days and awards evenings recognise students' academic and sporting successes. Attractive and up-to-date displays in classrooms and school corridors celebrate students' achievements and convey key messages very effectively.
- Students say they feel very safe at school. They are clear that instances of bullying are very rare because discrimination in any form is not tolerated. In discussion students showed a sensitive and well-informed understanding of different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying.
- Students understand what constitutes potentially dangerous situations and how to deal with or avoid them. For instance, they have a sound understanding of the potential risks of using the internet and social networking sites.
- Opportunities to develop students' leadership skills include becoming form representatives and sports captains. There is a well-established school council. Leaders actively seek the views and opinions of both students and parents.
- Parents, rightly, believe that the school ensures that students are well-behaved. Students move around the site in an exceptionally calm and orderly manner. They show high levels of respect for school facilities.
- Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger students because they are keen to give something back to the school. For instance, Year 12 media students were involved in filming Year 7 students' participation in 'No Pens Day'. All sixth-form students undertake a mentoring role.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has made a good start by focusing closely on key areas, such as supporting teachers' development of more creative approaches to teaching.
- Staff, students and parents give senior leaders their full support; all staff who responded to the survey indicated that they are proud to be members of the school.
- Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are effective, linking closely to the national Teachers' Standards. Teachers' progression to upper pay scales is clearly linked to leaders' appraisal of the teaching quality as well as teachers' wider contribution to school life.
- Subject leaders effectively monitor students' standards of attainment and the quality of teaching within their departments. Senior leaders have not been afraid to tackle underperformance to ensure that teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding.
- Eight staff identified as 'leading light practitioners' are involved in delivering training to their peers. Good practice is shared through the teaching and learning group which focuses on developing specific aspects of teaching practice.
- A range of subjects is offered at GCSE and A level. Students at Key Stage 4 say they receive particularly good support when choosing their options subjects. Senior leaders have plans in place to extend the range of creative subjects even further in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength, evidenced in students' outstandingly positive attitudes and behaviour. Students are enthusiastic about the wide range of sporting clubs and after-school activities.
- The school's view of its own effectiveness indicates that leaders have a good understanding of the school's performance. Even so, not all of the key priorities are identified in the school improvement plans. For example, plans detail neither how the attainment gap for students supported by the pupil premium will be reduced nor how achievement in the sixth form will be improved.
- Improvement plans do not have sharply focused, specific and measurable targets. This means that it is sometimes difficult for leaders to check all aspects of the school's work, particularly to evaluate the impact of initiatives aimed at improving the achievement of specific groups of students. As a result, the gap in attainment between students supported by the pupil premium and their peers has not closed quickly.
- As an academy, the school is no longer obliged to work with the local authority. Good links have been maintained, however, and the local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and the school has effective procedures to tackle discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a range of valuable experience and skills to the school and undertake appropriate training. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because senior leaders provide regular, detailed reports. Governors know that the quality of teaching is strong. They understand the school's arrangements for the management of teachers' work and the link between good teaching and salary progression. Governors are clear about how the pupil premium funding is spent. However, they are unable to provide enough detail on the impact this is having on the achievement of targeted students. This is because they do not yet use the school's performance data fully effectively, such as to check regularly on the achievement of specific student groups.

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	136377
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	412383

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-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	1,356
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Holland
Headteacher	Stuart Beeley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 928 4157
Fax number	0161 927 9147
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