

The Wellington Academy

Tidworth Road, Ludgershall, Wiltshire SP11 9RR

Inspection dates	15–16 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have improved the quality of education at the school since the last inspection. They have nurtured a culture of higher aspiration so that expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are higher.
- Leaders are well supported by the local governing body and the multi-academy trust, which provides the right degree of challenge and support.
- The behaviour of pupils is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. There is little evidence of low-level disruption because, in the main, pupils are respectful towards staff and each other.
- The achievement of pupils has risen, particularly the progress they make in English and mathematics.
- The school has a very inclusive culture. Pupils are made to feel welcome, valued and safe.
- Disadvantaged pupils now make comparable progress with other pupils, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is improving as a result of leaders' actions to share the best practice across the school and hold staff accountable for the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders rightly pride themselves on the quality of their work to develop the moral, social, cultural and spiritual education of pupils. As a result, pupils develop the skills and attributes that enable them to become good citizens.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too many learners following AS-level courses are failing to make the progress expected of them. As a result, attainment on these courses is too low and too many learners fail to continue these courses on to A level.
- Achievement is not high enough in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, although good, are not outstanding because some pupils are not sufficiently curious, enthusiastic or inquisitive.
- The number of exclusions has recently risen. Although this is because the school has rightly adopted a firmer approach to the management of behaviour, the fact remains that the number of exclusions is too high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of learners following AS-level and vocational courses in the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - all learners have appropriate levels of attainment and are following courses most suited to their aspirations and abilities
 - leaders' self-evaluation of achievement is sufficiently accurate to drive further improvement.

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently plan sufficiently engaging and challenging activities that deepen thinking and encourage pupils to become enthusiastic, inquisitive learners who are keen to develop their skills further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The quality of school leadership has improved since the previous inspection. As a result, expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher. Leaders have created a culture in which high standards of behaviour are expected and pupils are encouraged to succeed.
- Recent key appointments, particularly that of the senior vice-principal, have strengthened senior leadership. As a result, the pace of improvement has quickened as leaders have acted purposefully to address key issues highlighted at the previous inspection.
- Teaching continues to improve across the school because senior and middle leaders manage the performance of staff well. The school appraisal process effectively holds staff to account whilst building on the strengths of individual members of staff. This expertise is successfully shared through a range of professional development activities led by different members of staff. For example, staff meet for breakfast sessions called 'CPD (continuing professional development) on toast', where ideas are shared for improving practice.
- Leaders' actions to improve behaviour have created a safe, orderly environment and a culture characterised by respect and tolerance. Pupils are expected to work hard, cooperate with each other and do their best.
- The curriculum is in a process of change as the school seeks to offer courses that will raise the aspirations of pupils. There is now a greater emphasis upon academic subjects, so that pupils will be better prepared for A-level courses and university. A leadership qualification is being introduced for all pupils in key stage 3, to sow the seeds of high aspiration as soon as pupils join the school.
- The drive for higher academic aspiration does not prevent the curriculum from meeting the needs of all pupils. Pupils who have made slow progress in English and mathematics receive good-quality literacy and numeracy support so that they can catch up. Additionally, a small number of vocational subjects are available to pupils in key stage 4 and in the sixth form, and a wide range of enrichment activities enables pupils to extend their learning outside lessons.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to improve outcomes. Leaders have, successfully, focused upon the importance of whole-class teaching, close monitoring of individual pupils' progress and engagement with parents as key factors in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school develops the social, moral, spiritual and cultural education of pupils very effectively. The curriculum, the school environment and enrichment activities allow pupils to explore issues of identity, community and faith. For example, Remembrance Day stimulates discussion of the issues of Britishness and conflict. These issues have particular meaning for the community because of the high number of pupils from service families.
- Leaders' evaluation of AS-level outcomes is over-generous. As a result, appropriate action is not taken to ensure that all learners complete their chosen courses and make progress in line with national expectations.
- Pupils receive comprehensive and impartial advice about their next steps when they leave the school, supported by work experience. As a result, there are no pupils who are not in education, training or employment when they leave the school. However, in the case of some pupils, insufficient account is taken of their attainment to ensure that they follow courses best suited to their abilities when they enter the sixth form.
- Some parents and a small number of staff do not feel that the school is well led and managed. A third of respondents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, stated that they would not recommend the school. This evidence is not supported in the results of the school's own surveys, which are more positive, but leaders acknowledge that they must continue to work with parents and the local community to tackle negative perceptions of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The quality of leadership provided by the local governing body and the multi-academy trust board has improved since the previous inspection. There are now more governors with appropriate experience and expertise who are able to ask the right searching questions of leaders. As a result, the level of challenge provided by governors, particularly in relation to the attainment and progress of pupils, is higher.

- The school sponsor, Wellington College, works closely and effectively with the school. The college has provided expertise that has helped the school to strengthen leadership and develop a culture of high aspiration. The college has also helped to improve teaching by providing training opportunities and sharing teaching staff with the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. All staff receive regular child protection training, including training to recognise and tackle radicalisation and extremism. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and know whom to speak to should they have concerns or worries.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that enable pupils to develop their skills and understanding to make generally good progress. Pupils are clear about what they are supposed to be learning. They are given appropriate resources and provided with suitable opportunities to reflect upon and improve their work.
- Questioning is used effectively across the curriculum to assess what pupils know and to establish how they can improve their work, either orally in class, or in the written feedback that teachers provide in pupils' work. This is because leaders have focused upon this aspect of teaching as an area for development for all teachers. As a result, teachers are clearer about the value of open, higher order questions in getting pupils to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of their work.
- Pupils work with positive attitudes and apply themselves in class. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well so that there is good discipline and an ethic of hard work in most classrooms. Pupils readily follow teachers' instructions and set to work quickly and quietly. However, pupils do not demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning because teaching does not sufficiently fire their curiosity and interest.
- Pupils value the activities and opportunities to discuss and develop their learning outside lessons, for example, during enrichment activities and 'period 7' lessons after school. Pupils also report that they appreciate being able to email teachers about their work.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely in different subjects and to enjoy reading as a leisure pursuit. Pupils regularly read privately at the beginning of English lessons for a short time, but this is also true of other subjects where this might not be expected, such as mathematics. Social spaces, the new library and classrooms highlight the imaginative escapism of books so that pupils think positively about reading.
- The school's new assessment system at key stage 3 is clearly understood by pupils who know how well they are progressing in their subjects. The system assesses pupils in terms of how well they are acquiring skills or knowledge, and how pupils approach their learning. Pupils readily use the language of the system and are able to say whether they are learning, mastering or extending a skill. Teachers use the new system to monitor pupils' progress effectively and to adjust their teaching accordingly to meet individual pupils' needs.
- The feedback that is provided to pupils about their work is not consistently provided by all teachers in line with the school's policy. Where feedback is applied effectively, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve and their work shows rapid gains in progress as a result. Where this is not the case, progress is hindered because pupils are unclear about the next steps that will move their work on.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school because they are valued as individuals, feel safe and are comfortable in speaking to staff if they have concerns. One pupil reported to an inspector that 'the teachers are there for you'. Other pupils mentioned how they valued the mentoring 'buddy' system run by sixth-form learners for the benefit of younger pupils.
- Leaders and pupils working in partnership have created a culture that is informed by the key values of resilience, equality, success, perseverance, enterprise, creativity and teamwork. This has resulted in the 'RESPECT' pledge that pupils sign up to when they join the school.

- Pupils are confident, happy young people. On a number of occasions, pupils greeted the lead inspector with a friendly 'good morning' or 'hello', and smiled as they did so. In lessons, pupils are unafraid to answer questions in front of their peers or contribute to class discussion. The confidence and maturity of pupils were apparent in a Year 10 assembly observed by inspectors when pupils took part in sketches and video clips to draw attention to issues as diverse as body image and abusive relationships.
- Pupils report that bullying is not an issue at the school and that when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively. Older pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the culture of the school had improved in recent years so that behaviour was better, resulting in fewer incidents of bullying. The school's own bullying records support this view.
- The school environment helps pupils to feel comfortable and positive because it is light, open and airy. Pupils' work is on display in social spaces, corridors and classrooms, so that there is a real sense that young people are at the heart of the work of the school.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision that is provided by the school. Pupils have access to programmes that meet their needs, such as vocational BTEC courses, and staff also provide comprehensive pastoral support. Consequently, the attendance of these pupils is higher than the school average. Pupils are very positive about the courses they follow, the support they receive and the progress they are making.
- Pupils from service families are well supported by a services champion (a member of staff from the Troops for Teachers programme), who ensures that transition into and out of the school is as smooth as possible for pupils so that disruption to their learning is minimised.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils are generally industrious, mature and sensible. Pupils cooperate well and treat each other and staff with respect. Outside lessons, for the most part, pupils move around the school site in an orderly fashion.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and improving over time for most pupils. This is because the school has put a number of strategies in place to improve attendance, including weekly monitoring, working more closely with parents, and using the educational welfare officer to better effect. Pupils joining the school in Year 7 at risk of low attendance follow 'flight paths' that trigger earlier intervention if required.
- The punctuality of pupils has improved for two reasons; first, the school day has been reorganised so that learning begins promptly at the beginning of the day, and second, staff operate 'late gate', whereby pupils are greeted at the school gate by staff who are able to monitor and improve punctuality.
- Pupils come to lessons with the right equipment and ready to learn. Pupils wear their school uniform well, taking pride in their appearance and their work.
- Exclusions have risen sharply this year. This is because the school is taking a 'zero tolerance' approach to poor behaviour. Nevertheless, the number of exclusions is too high.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The attainment of pupils has risen over time so that the proportion of pupils achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE is close to the national average. Given pupils' low starting points, this is encouraging. Equally, the proportion of pupils attaining the English Baccalaureate (a suite of five academic subjects including English, mathematics, history or geography, a science and a language) has risen for the third year in a row and is close to the national average.
- The progress that pupils made in English and mathematics rose in 2015. In English, pupils made progress that was in line with the national expectation. In mathematics, pupils made significantly more progress than pupils nationally.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made progress that was comparable with that of their peers and in line with the national average because the gaps that previously existed in the achievement of these two groups of pupils have closed noticeably.

- Pupils currently in the school are continuing to make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics across different year groups. Better progress is being made by current pupils in science and humanities subjects than has historically been the case. Pupils' work is of a higher standard because pupils are being set more challenging tasks and, as a result, more progress is being made. Although leaders have taken action to improve teaching and raise achievement in languages, it is too soon for impact to be evident. As a result, outcomes remain low.
- The most-able pupils who have high prior attainment achieve well at the school. This is because the school is promoting a culture of high aspiration and academic achievement; teachers have high expectations of these pupils. In 2015, the most-able pupils made particularly good progress in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, English. The work of current pupils indicates that the most-able pupils are making strong progress across a range of subjects, particularly in key stage 4.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability made comparable progress with that of their peers in 2015. This is because leaders have prioritised the academic achievement of pupils. As a result, the progress pupils make is carefully monitored through the course of the year and support provided as required. However, the impact of this work is not evident across all year groups.
- Pupils who fall behind in English, mathematics or science in key stage 3 are helped to catch up by joining the 'Aspire' class, which provides intensive, small-group support. This resource is effective in boosting the progress that pupils make, so that they can re-join their peers in mainstream classes when they have reached the appropriate level.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Outcomes for learners following AS-level courses require improvement. Pass rates are too low and nearly a third of learners fail their AS level. This is because learners frequently embark on programmes with low levels of prior attainment; for example, a learner with grade D in German at GCSE is enrolled on AS-level German. As a result, many learners change courses at the end of their first year of study.
- Learners on vocational courses do not make sufficient progress relative to their prior achievement due to high numbers not successfully completing their childcare and public services courses. Learners' outcomes in vocational courses have been negatively affected by the loss of specialist staff in some vocational areas. However, many learners on vocational courses progress into relevant employment or further education.
- Leaders do not fully evaluate the impact of the 16 to 19 study programmes on learners. They do not take a sufficiently critical view of outcomes. The weak progress of learners relative to their starting points on AS-level and vocational courses, and low AS-level pass rates are not recognised and the school wrongly identifies that learners are making progress in line with national expectations.
- Provision in the sixth form meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes well. All learners who have not achieved a grade A* to C in GCSE mathematics or English in Year 11 receive effective, timetabled teaching time that enables many learners to achieve these grades in the sixth form.
- Teachers assess learners' progress well. They closely monitor learners' progress towards their target grades and provide them with useful feedback on how to improve the quality of their work. Teachers set work that is appropriate for the course learners are studying and their progress to date.
- Leaders have introduced work experience for all learners. They have worked closely with some large local employers, and also take into account learners' aspirations to ensure that work-experience placements develop learners' skills.
- Learners prepare well for work-experience placements during lessons and reflect on the skills they have developed. These placements are used by learners to help them make decisions about their progression. For example, a learner who went on a work-experience placement to a primary school was motivated by this experience to apply to university to study to become a primary school teacher.
- The school has set up exciting opportunities for learners with high aspirations to follow internships in London or abroad during their final year of study as part of the 'Momentum' programme.

School details

Unique reference number	135804
Local authority	Wiltshire County Council
Inspection number	10008191

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	834
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	146
Number of boarders on roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Cowley
Principal	Dr Michael Milner
Telephone number	01264 405060
Website	www.thewellingtonacademy.org.uk
Email address	admin@thewellingtonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2014

Information about this school

- The Wellington Academy is an average-sized secondary school with a smaller than average sixth form. The school has provision for up to 100 boarders.
- The school is sponsored by Wellington College and is part of a multi-academy trust. The college provides support through its own staff and the Teaching Schools Alliance.
- The principal has been in post since September 2013. There have been other recent appointments to the senior leadership team and the school is currently reorganising its staffing structure.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. A high number of service children attend the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability who receive support is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also in line with the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision established and run by the school not far from the school site.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 36 lessons, nearly all of which were jointly conducted with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and support staff, groups of pupils, and representatives of the local governing body and the trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, attendance, behaviour and the safeguarding of pupils and learners.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 70 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 60 staff questionnaire returns.

Inspection team

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John White	Ofsted Inspector
Marion James	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector

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