

Inspection of a good school: Wellington School

Wellington Road, Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 7RH

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

Outcome

Wellington School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are happy and proud of their school. They said that they enjoyed the varied extra-curricular opportunities that leaders provide for them.

Pupils receive carefully tailored academic and pastoral support from adults in school. This well-planned guidance helps pupils to meet the high expectations that staff have of their achievement and behaviour. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, achieve well across most subjects.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and towards each other. Students in the sixth form act as role models for their younger peers. Pupils said that they feel safe at Wellington School.

Leaders work effectively with parents and carers, and with the whole-school community, to tackle and prevent bullying. The majority of pupils said that bullying is dealt with effectively.

Pupils and students are keen to contribute to the wider school community. Anti-bullying and mental-health ambassadors are proactive and wear their badges with pride. Sixth-form students recently delivered an assembly to raise pupils' awareness of the impact of sexual harassment and the use of derogatory language on one another.

Pupils and students told inspectors how much they appreciated leaders' commitment to making everyone feel valued. Pupils spoke passionately about the 'equalities council', the recent evening Eid celebration that was held in school, and the proactive LGBTQ+ club.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors are ambitious for every pupil and student to succeed, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Overall, leaders are

successful in ensuring that pupils and students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

The curriculum, including that in the sixth form, is broad and ambitious. Leaders have deliberately and appropriately increased the breadth of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are able to study a wide range of subjects at key stage 4, including the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum is designed across key stages 3 to 5. They have identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils and students to learn. Leaders have taken great care to decide the order in which new knowledge must be taught.

In most subjects, the design of the curriculum enables pupils, and students in the sixth form, to successfully build on their learning over time. However, in a very small number of subjects, teachers do not design activities to deliver new knowledge in the way that leaders intend. In these subjects, leaders do not check effectively enough how well the curriculum is being delivered by teachers. This prevents a few pupils and students from achieving as highly as they could.

Leaders have improved the reading curriculum. The majority of pupils who need help to catch up with their reading knowledge are supported well. However, a small number of pupils need extra support to read fluently in key stage 4. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to address pupils' gaps in reading in this key stage. They are successfully ensuring that all pupils gain the knowledge that they need to become fluent and confident readers.

Across the school, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use assessment systems well to identify most pupils' and students' misconceptions. Overall, teachers' appropriate use of assessment helps pupils and students improve their knowledge and understanding of subject content.

Leaders identify those pupils with SEND quickly and effectively. Teachers tailor the delivery of the curriculum appropriately to ensure that these pupils access the same learning as their peers.

Most pupils and parents said that bullying is dealt with effectively. However, a small number of pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of others in and around school. Inspectors found that leaders have implemented a wide range of suitable strategies to address any misbehaviour. They also ensure that pupils can report any concerns and get help quickly to resolve any issues. These include online alert systems and boxes for anonymous messages.

The extra-curricular opportunities that leaders provide to broaden pupils' and students' wider development are a strength of the school. Leaders ensure that pupils and students receive useful careers information, advice and guidance. Across all year groups, pupils and students are given the opportunity to engage with meaningful experiences of the world of work. They said that they value these opportunities.

In key stages 3 and 4, pupils benefit from an effective personal development programme. This helps them to develop a strong understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, including age-appropriate advice about sex and relationships. In the sixth form, leaders are in the process of refining and developing the personal development programme. This is to reflect students' changing personal needs and to reflect local and national skills needs.

Trustees, and the local governing body, provide high levels of appropriate challenge to leaders so that the quality of education continues to improve for pupils and students.

Staff are appreciative of leaders' actions to address their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They gather safeguarding information from a wide range of partners to inform whole-school safeguarding projects and initiatives. These initiatives successfully raise pupils' and students' awareness of potential risks. Leaders are also very cognisant of issues relating to pupils' mental health and well-being.

All staff receive regular training and clear, appropriate information regarding pupils' vulnerabilities and potential barriers to learning. Staff are confident in using leaders' systems to identify and report concerns regarding any pupil who may be at risk of harm.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding know pupils' individual circumstances and work effectively with families to ensure that they receive the support they need. This includes working with external agencies, when appropriate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In one or two curriculum areas, leaders do not check that teachers design activities to deliver new subject knowledge as intended. As a result, a few pupils and students do not achieve all that they could in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that they make checks on how well teachers are implementing the curriculum in these remaining subjects so that pupils and students achieve as highly as they should.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136377
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10212458
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1443
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Lawson
Headteacher	Stuart Beeley
Website	www.wellington-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new chair of governors and several new governors to the local governing body.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers and one unregistered provider for small numbers of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the trust board, including the chair of the trust board
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, business studies and modern foreign languages. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' and students' work and spoke with pupils, students and teachers. Inspectors also observed and spoke with pupils at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' own evaluation documents, external quality assurance documents and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils, students and trustees to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. An inspector checked the measures in place to safeguard those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

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