

The Wellington Academy

The Wellington Academy Trust

Tidworth Road, Ludgershall, Wiltshire SP11 9RR.

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Wellington Academy is a state day and boarding school for young people aged 11 to 19 years. The Wellington Academy is sponsored by Wellington College. The Wellington Academy provides boarding for up to 100 young people. At the time of inspection, there were 61 young people boarding. Boarding accommodation is purpose-built and is on the academy's campus. It provides bedroom accommodation for boys and girls in two separate wings.

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The boarding school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 7 September 2015

Key findings from this inspection

This boarding school is outstanding because:

- Residential students make exceptional progress both academically and

personally. They develop significant confidence and skills to progress onto chosen career paths and mentoring programmes. Residential students' academic progress exceeds that of day students. Boarding at the residential provision has enabled these students to be successful.

- Residential students and staff have developed excellent relationships. Staff manage the complexities and challenges of children living away from home, sometimes from another country, very well.
- Residential students take part in an extensive range of activities that take into account their individual needs. Their participation and views contribute to the smooth running of the residential provision. Residential students and their families provide overwhelmingly positive feedback about the young people's experience.
- Residential students feel safe and are kept safe. Staff identify, understand and manage risk well. Residential students are supported in line with their risks and needs, and are allocated their bedrooms taking this into account.
- There is a prominent focus on safeguarding; there are clear processes and excellent training for staff. In addition, residential students are helped to learn to keep themselves safe. Safeguarding arrangements protect residential students and meet all statutory responsibilities, including working with other agencies. Recruitment procedures are thorough.
- Leaders and managers are ambitious for residential students' achievement and demonstrate inspirational practice. They develop programmes and projects that are informed by research. These projects have been instrumental in achieving sustained outstanding outcomes for residential students.
- Leaders and managers demonstrate excellent role modelling and lead by example. They routinely take part in continued professional development. The residential provision has an excellent development plan. Policies are regularly reviewed. During the inspection, the senior management team was open to reflect on and discuss practice. Staff visit other establishments and implement their own learning, which has had a positive impact on the residential students' experience.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is excellent. Staff demonstrate a well-informed understanding of the family backgrounds of residential students. Residential students engage in a very inclusive well-being programme that promotes their social and emotional development, as well as promoting difference and diversity.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Update the closed circuit television (CCTV) policy and review the use of surveillance cameras inside the boarding accommodation.
- Implement a stand-alone female genital mutilation (FGM) policy to raise the

awareness of leaders and managers further.

- Ensure that electrical testing of the hardwiring of the building and portable appliances are carried out at appropriate timescales.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Residential students are provided with an outstanding level of support that helps them to make significant progress with their studies and chosen career paths. Last year, 88% of residential students leaving the academy applied to university, all of whom gained a place. This represents the highest proportion of residential students going to university since the residential provision opened, and included five international students who chose to remain in the UK. Their residential experience supported them to develop their English language skills.

Residential students play an important role in the development of the academy. Their experiences provide excellent opportunities to develop responsibility and confidence. Residential students make up one fifth of the total number of sixth-form pupils and half of the academy's house leaders. International Women's Day at the academy is predominantly led by residential students. It is from the residential provision that the head girl and head boy, as well as prefects, are recruited.

Residential students participate in an excellent variety of programmes offered by the academy that help them with their future employment goals. They gain access to the Combined Cadet Force, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and a number of projects and internships, specifically designed to enhance their career prospects. Residential students grow in confidence and knowledge as a result. A previous residential student who was part of the Momentum scheme said in feedback: 'Momentum helped me by believing in me and helping me find some relevant work experience that was lacking in my (medical school) application. Without Momentum, such opportunities would've been very hard for me to organise and I wouldn't be in the position I am today. So thank you Momentum for changing my life!'

The Momentum scheme originates from this academy and has grown since its first introduction, now offering more places to students. Residential students make up a high proportion of successful applicants on the scheme; four out of six applying are successful. This scheme has also been shared with other schools, including those in this multi-academy trust.

Other examples of outstanding progress by residential students who have recently moved on include young people who have entered into youth parliament, individuals returning from living in university halls to support residential students here, and others who have completed internships abroad, one of which has resulted in the young person training as a head of care in a boarding school in China.

Residential students are given excellent support throughout their time at school and

as they are due to leave. The academy prioritises keeping in touch with leaving sixth-formers and links in with former Momentum students. They return to the academy on Alumni Day to support residential students who are about to leave, and can set up links to help support the residential students who are moving on from the academy.

Residential students achieve better academic outcomes than day students. They benefit from supervised study periods each day in which to do their homework, giving them the opportunity to seek guidance when required. Those who need or desire further support benefit from extra private tuition. Each student is assigned an academic and pastoral mentor for the duration of their time in the residential provision. Communication between the academy's teachers and residential staff is excellent.

Residential students benefit from excellent additional activities as a result of staying in the residential provision. Students told the inspectors that they 'really enjoy their boarding experience', and 'It benefits our educational studies because there is structured 'prep' time and access to all the school's facilities.' Residential students' feedback compiled by the academy in October 2017 shows that residential students feel safe and secure with the residential provision and that the majority feel that they have a positive relationship with all or most of the staff. Comments from students as part of this survey include, 'I feel that boarding is like a family. It has helped me be more independent and also helped me improve my fitness level. I have become more confident because I was able to take up a position of responsibility in the main school. I am also able to socialise better now. It's an amazing house.'

Residential students have very good opportunities to develop their personal and emotional skills alongside their academic studies. They take part in a well-being programme run weekly on current issues and topics, which includes using external speakers. The sessions are tailored to the residential students' age groups. Students take the opportunity to learn and debate about key topics as they mature to adulthood, such as alcohol use, healthy relationships, sexual health, social media, managing finances, healthy eating and bullying.

Residential students benefit from attending the academy's weekly assemblies. The abundance of topics covered here helps them become more aware of social, cultural and topical issues.

Residential students stay in excellent-quality boarding accommodation. The residential provision was built six years ago and has a contemporary style, providing plenty of space for relaxation and recreation. Residential students have mixed-gender common areas as well as two recently redesigned single-gender common areas. The girls and boys report that they like some separated space to enjoy their interests. They use the many leisure amenities and games within the accommodation, as well as accessing a sports centre located in the school building. Residential students are provided with nutritious and wholesome meals, as well as healthy snacks when returning from school and late into the evening. The food available takes into consideration students' cultural backgrounds and preferences, as well as specific dietary requirements. Students can choose to take part in a wide

range of evening and weekend leisure activities, which take into account their contributions and ideas.

Residential students feel listened to and report that staff are very approachable. They are involved in choosing new furnishings for the building, the recruitment of staff and inductions for new families and students. Staff-led committees for food, boarders and charity groups ensure that residential students have an input into the running of the provision.

Residential staff manage the complexities and challenges of children living away from home effectively. Residential student prefects take on some responsibilities to help new or younger students settle in. On occasions, they will read with them at night-time and help tidy their room.

The residential provision is a welcoming and diverse community. The academy identifies day students attending the school who could benefit from the support that the residential provision offers. There are good examples of the academy using a bursary scheme to provide places at the residential provision to students in need of help, due to difficulties in getting to school or difficulties at home. This scheme has been successful in improving these students' attendance and educational attainment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Residential pupils are safe and enjoy staying at the residential provision. They are overwhelmingly positive about their life at the school. They have a good level of freedom and choice, and as they mature this is increased. Residential students are confident with the procedures to keep them safe, though they feel they could be given more opportunities to demonstrate trust, especially as they mature towards adulthood.

Residential students are protected by a range of recording systems used effectively by staff. Paper-based and electronic versions of documents ensure that there is monitoring and reviewing of incidents, allegations and referrals. Residential students are provided with various means by which they can share concerns, worries and complaints. The allocated leads in safeguarding undertake sufficient training which keeps them up to date with research and best practice. The appropriate passing on of information across the academy means any concerns about residential students are shared sensitively with staff, thus helping to ensure that students are kept safe and feel supported.

Residential students receive extensive support on internet security and well-being through assemblies and workshops. Training takes place for both residential students and staff. A whole-school internet security system is in place to prevent students accessing inappropriate material. Residential students can ask for access to specific websites that are not accessible to all students to mirror the freedom they would have at home. Residential students can also use their own devices, both in the provision and away from the academy. There have been no incidents of concern as regards residential students accessing inappropriate material, going missing or

placing themselves at risk.

All residential staff are trained in safeguarding procedures. To ensure that they are up to date with the latest practice, they have been trained to understand the 'Prevent' duty, terrorism, self-harming behaviours and sexual exploitation. Bullying is addressed by the director of boarding organising restorative meetings between the individuals concerned, to help prevent it happening again and promote positive behaviour.

Sanctions are fair and residential students say that they are fair; they say they understand them well. The director of boarding uses a system of sanctioning, separate to the school day to ensure that no sanction is moved from school to boarding.

As residential provision accommodates girls from backgrounds where they may be at risk of female genital mutilation, this subject is discussed with all students and staff complete some training. It also forms part of the academy's child protection policy; however, it would now benefit from being written as a stand-alone policy to prioritise the matter further.

Staff recruitment procedures are thorough to help ensure that only suitable people are being employed at the academy. The human resources manager has excellent oversight of the information collected on new staff. She has a strong understanding of safeguarding children and the underlying reasons for such recruitment procedures being in place. Residential staff living at the accommodation abide by an appropriate code of contract with respect to their visiting guests. Any volunteers throughout the academy are subject to the same checks as new employees.

The individuals with the designated safeguarding responsibilities deal effectively with any safeguarding issues regarding residential students or members of staff. They liaise effectively with external safeguarding professionals when necessary. Referrals to the local authority multi-agency safeguarding hub have resulted in positive and improved outcomes for children. Also, concerns raised about staff performance in relation to potential safeguarding matters are managed sensitively with the appropriate support to help them develop.

Recommendations are made for leaders and managers to review the use of surveillance cameras in the residential provision, which has increased since the last inspection. The residential staff team has agreed to take this point to the next residential student committee to seek their views. Also, a recommendation is made to ensure that the testing of portable electrical equipment and the electric hardwiring of the building are completed at appropriate timescales.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The director of boarding ensures that inspiring and creative work takes place within the residential provision. He regularly completes professional development opportunities that help underpin his practice with current research. As a result of his work, residential students feel better valued and respected.

The director of boarding has been instrumental in devising a number of other new

practices that are underpinned by research, which have now been disseminated across other schools in the academy and outside the county. For example, he undertook a one-year piece of research into the sleeping needs of young people. The result is that older residential students are allowed to stay up later and attend school later in the morning. The impact of this is that these residential students' academic achievements have improved; they feel respected and valued and there is an incremental means of recognising maturity. This system has been rolled out across the multi-academy trust.

He has also contributed to implementing a summer and winter timetable, which ensures that residential students benefit from playing outside during the maximum amount of daylight hours.

The director of boarding has been influential in producing and implementing a system of recording to monitor and evaluate residential students' progress, safety and outcomes. It has now been introduced and implemented across the multi-academy trust, providing a safe system for the recording, sharing and reviewing of information.

There is excellent oversight and scrutiny by the board of governors. Enthusiastic and experienced members of the governing board monitor the residential accommodation and regularly speak with the students. They are able to demonstrate an overview of its progress and the progress of the residential students and their outcomes. The Chair was instrumental in the development of the Momentum programme, which has produced outstanding results for some residential students. The programme has now been shared across the multi-academy trust and out of county schools in Cheltenham and the Isle of Man.

A detailed and structured induction programme is provided to all staff when they first start and as annual refreshers and through updates. Staff spoke highly of the support and training they receive. There is a stable staff team, with a variety of experience and professional qualifications. Most of the team have worked at the provision for a number of years and also work in the school, providing residential students with a consistent experience. Staff report that there are opportunities for career progression and gaining further qualifications within the residential provision.

Staff have excellent training opportunities. They complete modules of learning with the Boarding Schools Association and share their findings to help inform their colleagues' future practice. Staff also access learning through an online system and face-to-face workshops to complement their training. They receive regular good-quality supervision and annual appraisals of performance. Staff have visited other residential provisions to glean 'golden nuggets', which they bring back and implement to improve this provision. For example, residential students are given daily scores for the tidiness of their rooms that count towards a big end-of-term reward; staff and student profiles are on display so everyone can get to know each other; and the girls' and boys' separate common rooms have been decorated.

Parents and carers provide overwhelmingly positive feedback about their child's experience at the residential provision. All individuals who responded to the inspectors' questionnaire stated that their child enjoys the boarding experience and it

helps their child's progress and development.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: SC459408

Headteacher/teacher in charge:

Type of school: Boarding School

Telephone number: 01264 405060

Email address:

Inspector(s)

Guy Mammatt: social care inspector

Linda Bond: social care inspector



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