

The Wellington Academy

Tidworth Road, Ludgershall, SP11 9RR

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students do not make enough progress in English and mathematics to reach the standard expected of them.
- The amount of good and outstanding teaching is spread too thinly across the school to ensure that students learn well in all their lessons.
- Not enough effort is going into teaching students to write well.
- Some students have to wait too long before their work is marked.
- In some lessons the work is too easy or is not explained well. This has a negative effect on students' attitudes and enthusiasm for learning.
- The governing body has not taken the necessary steps to improve governance since the last inspection.
- The governing body has not worked smartly to ensure that systems for monitoring safeguarding arrangements are watertight.
- Too many of the students and staff, whose views on bullying were sought, consider it is not well managed.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The combination of determined leadership and good provision has yet to result in better achievement for all sixth form students.
- Boarding is inadequate because the school does not meet all of the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools.

The school has the following strengths

- The Principal of the school has exceptional leadership qualities. With the executive headteacher he has acted swiftly to root out practice that compromises the high expectations of the sponsor and senior leaders.
- A broad range of experiences in and out of school deepen students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The outcomes and provision for boarders are good. They feel safe and are well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 31 lessons, 18 of which were jointly observed with members of the leadership team.
- The inspectors held meetings with the Principal, executive headteacher, senior leaders, head of the sixth form and the heads of subjects. They also met four members of the governing body and Wellington Academy sponsors. They met informally and formally with groups of students, representing most ages and abilities, to discuss their experiences of school.
- Inspectors viewed a large range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, documents relating to safeguarding and student welfare, records of monitoring teaching and data about students' achievements and attendance.
- They took account of the views of 69 parents from the online Parent View survey, 115 students in Year 10 who completed a survey on the second day of the inspection and the views of 70 staff who returned questionnaires.

Inspection team

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Additional Inspector

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Additional Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- The Wellington Academy is sponsored by Wellington College. It replaced the Castledown Foundation School in 2009. The school is typical in size for a secondary school with a sixth form that is slightly larger than average. The Wellington Academy provides boarding for up to 100 students.
- The school has a high proportion of students from service families stationed in the garrison towns nearby. Many of these students join and leave the school at times other than the start of the academic year.
- The percentage of students supported through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority and students with a parent in the armed services. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is typical of the majority of schools nationally. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The vast majority of students are from a White British background.
- There has been considerable movement of staff in and out of the school in the past twelve months. The Principal and executive headteacher were appointed in September 2013, with the three vice principals also new in post.
- The academy sponsor, Wellington College, is providing support through their own staff and the Teaching Schools Alliance.
- The school met the government's 2012 floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that students make good progress in all lessons by:
 - providing plenty of support in lessons for students to acquire and use vocabulary relevant to the subjects they are studying
 - increasing the guidance given to students on how to structure their writing so this more accurately reflects what they want to say
 - reducing the gap between students completing their work and teachers marking it
 - building, into the discussions between teacher and students, questions that challenge students' thinking and deepen the quality of their answers.
- Ensure a consistent approach in dealing with bullying and ensure pupils are well behaved at all times.
- Link subject action plans more closely to the school improvement plan and regularly monitor their impact on teaching and students' progress.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- The school must meet the following National Minimum Standards for boarding schools.
 - The records specified in Appendix 2 (Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards) are

- maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13)
- Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance (as referenced in 'Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards') issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 14).

Ensure that boarders are able to receive medication at school to avoid returning to the boarding house during the school day

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students' standard of attainment on entry to Year 7 in reading, writing, and mathematics is low. In 2013 the proportion of students gaining five good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was significantly below the national average. Too many of them failed to make the nationally expected rate of progress in their English and mathematics skills and consequently were poorly equipped for the next phase of their education.
- The school leaders have taken immediate steps to rectify this situation and provide a substantial amount of additional teaching for students who are not on track to reach a good level in English and mathematics. Students who left at age 16 last year without reaching a good level in English and mathematics have been provided with an opportunity to continue studying these subjects.
- Achievement has not improved over the last two years for a number of reasons. At the root of the problem has been too much weak teaching of the basic skills. For example, reading ages across the school are significantly lower than expected. This is being turned around and the indications from lessons and school data is that around half the students are making faster progress than they were last year. This is encouraging. Ambitious, but realistic targets have been set for Year 11 students. The school has discontinued using early entry to GCSE courses because it was not proving effective.
- Over time the school has been successful in ensuring that very nearly all students gain a good grade in at least five GCSE subjects, or equivalent subjects. However, those subjects dependent on writing and mathematical skills have tended to perform less well than others. Few of the more-able students secure the highest grades A* or A. The stretching targets for the more able students in all their subjects are now kept under review, with signs that girls in particular can reach these.
- School data show that mathematics is improving more rapidly than English. Mathematics lessons are more accurately pitched to the needs of the students. More English lessons are now taught and extra classes have been put on for groups of students to help narrow the gap between their current attainment and what they could be expected to achieve. But the weakness in teaching writing dilutes the impact of this extra help.
- Data on students' progress, particularly in Years 7 and 8 demonstrate that students are responding well to the smaller class sizes resulting from the use of the Year 7 catch-up premium and the higher expectations set in lessons.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported well. The adaptation of subject timetables for these students, combined with the extra skilled staff who provide support to improve their communication and fluency in reading and writing, results in good progress.
- The gap between the achievement of students supported through the pupil premium and others is wide. It narrowed to around the equivalence of one year in mathematics in last year's examinations. In English it widened to one and half years. The additional funding for these students is being better channelled into specific programmes in mathematics and more appropriate reading schemes. The funding is also used for a comprehensive teaching programme for those who arrive midterm. This is already making a difference; in some cases students make as much as one year's progress in three months.

- Students in the sixth form are responding to good teaching and improved guidance on how to attain higher goals. This is an improvement on previous years and their achievement is improving. Leaders are more accurate in judging student's progress and providing better support to reduce variations in progress between subjects. The proportions of students staying on to complete their final year are increasing significantly, as are the numbers gaining a place at university. In 2013 all students went into work, training programmes or higher education.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Discussions with students about their work and experiences over time reflect an improvement in the quality of teaching and better engagement in their learning. The school's recent evaluation of teaching and learning, its quality and impact on learning is accurate. It echoes the finding of the inspectors that there is too much variability in the quality of learning that goes on in lessons.
- Inappropriate behaviour is being challenged by most staff. In lessons where the expectations are not high enough, or the teacher's explanations in answer to a student's questions lack sincerity, then students respond inappropriately. For example, some were seen tapping rulers or deliberately doing work that is poorly presented.
- Some teachers are much better than others at setting work at the right level and sustaining this through the lesson. The best teaching was typified by skilful lesson structure and work that challenged students every step of the way. This maintained excellent engagement in the lesson.
- In these lessons students made good, and for some of them outstanding, progress because their subject knowledge was continually developed and the pace was demanding.
- The feedback to students varies between teachers and lessons. There are lessons where teachers ask, 'Is everything OK?' or use the red, amber and green cards to see if students have understood, without following up on those that are unsure. Students get mixed messages about the importance of feedback. In some instances the marking in students' books is useful in showing how they can improve their work. This is not then backed up by teachers asking the student questions in lessons to check they have improved. In some of the books, particularly in English, students have to wait too long before they get any feedback on the quality of their work.
- In some lessons teachers do not make the purpose of the lesson clear or discussions are muddled. This limits students' ability to make the progress they should.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons to help students work on the tasks they are given. The best are quick to pick up when a student has begun to grasp an idea or a skill and stand back to give them time to explore for themselves. They play a major role in teaching students to read, and their positive relationships with students at these times has done much to encourage reluctant readers to re-engage with learning.
- Teachers do not tackle weak writing skills with enough determination in all subjects. Some teachers do not pick up on spoken language that is grammatically incorrect. There is not enough guidance in the lessons on how to ensure a grammatically correct piece of writing and often students are not encouraged to explain ideas and thoughts succinctly or to spell accurately. In subjects other than English students seldom see enough examples of what a well-written answer looks like.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students, staff and parent questionnaires still show that significant numbers do not think the school is managing behaviour well enough. One student summed up the view of a number of other Year 10 students, saying that, 'the teachers focus more on those that misbehave than on the students that want to learn. This means that other students are missing out on learning'.
- Exclusions are now a rarity and the removal of students from lessons for unacceptable behaviour is falling fast. Discussions with students who have been sanctioned for poor behaviour reveal that attitudes are changing.
- Students conduct themselves around the expansive campus safely and sensibly. They require little prompting to be in lessons on time, even when this involves moving between sites. They respect the need for regular attendance and a neat and tidy appearance. One student was observed requesting a fresh shirt because there was a stain on the one he was wearing.
- Good behaviour is commended through points and rewards schemes and students respond proudly when praised for positive attitudes to learning and effort.
- Nonetheless, students' behaviour still requires improvement. For example, in the seated area near the lobby a dropped packet of crisps with its contents spilt across the floor was not picked up. Students were observed standing on chairs outside the library and in some classrooms students started packing up before the end of the lesson.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. There is a very obvious focus on raising awareness of bullying, but half of the students in Year 10 still perceive it is going on, despite low levels of recorded instances. Not all teachers are respectful of students in the language they use to address them.
- The school is a safe place for those who wish to express themselves differently. Students have a mature respect for those who have different needs or are from different backgrounds. They are not prejudicial towards others from different faiths or racial backgrounds. They understand how to stay safe and recognise the power of social media to cause harm to others.
- Attendance rates dropped last year to broadly average. Some of this is due to service families requiring leave. The school works closely with the army liaison team in managing expectations in this area. The attendance of students eligible for free school meal is much lower than others. Support is now provided to these families to help get their children to school, through the use of the pupil premium, which funds a home-to-school liaison manager.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The Principal, supported by the executive headteacher, is determined and fully committed in the pursuit of excellence for the students and community of Wellington Academy. The Principal and executive headteacher are experienced and insightful leaders. Change is swift with high expectations that all senior staff will carry out their roles to a high standard.
- Policies and procedures which are key to turning around behaviour, and encouraging students to engage with a renewed focus on high aspirations for themselves, have been implemented. There is no room for complacency and the distance travelled already is impressive.

- For example, a wide range of information from teachers on student's work, including their reading skills, is being collected and checked through tests and examinations. This is used by subject leaders to challenge teachers' expectations of students' work and ensure additional support is timely and effective.
- Pupil premium funding is being used smartly as a boost to those who are behind in their reading age. There is a system for staff and subject leaders to bid for funding for particular initiatives, such as staffing a homework club in their subject, or providing additional lessons on Saturday. Good support in and out of school for those children looked after by the local authority is ensuring they are engaging in lessons. The school community services co-ordinator and regular links with the army welfare network help to keep children safe.
- There have been alterations to the curriculum to ensure that middle- and higher-ability students, who could reach higher academic standards, are now on the right GCSE courses. Smaller class sizes have been arranged for English and mathematics in Years 7 and 8. This is helping teachers give more one-to-one attention in lessons. Raising expectations of what can be achieved in lessons has also been a key driver to secure improvement in learning.
- The partnership with the sponsor college is effective in driving improvement in teaching through coaching teachers and sharing best practice between the two schools. It is also being used to plug gaps in expertise in the science department and the teaching of A level courses.
- Students speak positively about their links through challenge days and the additional guidance and support they get from the sponsor college in planning their futures.
- The process of setting targets for teachers has been used to confront teachers about commitment and identify what is required of them to improve and by when. Support is there for staff to get better through training adapted for individual teachers. The Principal is constructive in his feedback to staff but unrelenting on his focus that only the best teaching is good enough.
- The pace of change has been rapid and successful in building a culture of high expectations of attitudes towards learning and aspirations of the students for their futures. This change has not been without difficulty and half the staff returning the questionnaire disagreed that the school is well led and managed.
- School leaders have identified accurately what needs to change and why. As yet there is no detail about when the impact of actions is to be checked and how this will be measured. This contributes to some uncertainty amongst staff that the change is making a difference. Furthermore subject leaders' action plans are not yet linked to the school improvement plan. This dilutes wider staff engagement in strategic planning and review.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is extensive extra-curricular provision that supports personal development. Many students take part in activities in sport, the arts and drama at inter-school and community levels. A rich range of cultural experiences strengthens students' views of themselves and the world they are growing up in.
- Tolerance and, in particular, values of hard work and equality of opportunity are strongly supported. Student leader roles promote confidence and involvement of students. There were examples of more able students helping others in lessons, offering reading support and academic tutoring.
- There are good links with the army community. Guest speakers are suitably vetted in order that

balanced views are presented.

- Leadership of the sixth form is good. There is a determined drive for improvement and the sixth form is ambitious for its students. This is backed up by clear systems of monitoring, evaluation and accountability. The strong partnership forged with Wellington College is leading to higher aspirations and improving standards.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- In the past, governors were not aware of the extent of the problems besetting the academy. There were insufficient checks on the quality of the teaching, learning and results. Governors were too reliant on the school for this information. They had not taken action to tackle the issues about governance reported at the last inspection. This is beginning to change, but the change is too slow. Some governors have a more visible presence in the school and are more active in seeking answers to questions. They are involved in looking at the data, as they understand this in the format it is presented. They have taken part in the process of setting targets for staff and are also reviewing and auditing the way government money and the sponsors’ money is being spent. They have not adequately carried out their duties regarding safeguarding with respect to a small number of issues around the single central record of those staff working in the boarding house. This typifies the piecemeal manner in which they carry out their responsibilities.

Outcomes for boarders	are good
Quality of boarding provision and care	is good
Boarders’ safety	is inadequate
Leadership and management of boarding provision	is inadequate

- The academy has not consistently applied safer recruitment practices. The procedures are not sufficiently robust and, as a result, the welfare and safety of boarders is not adequately safeguarded. There are management failings in ensuring that boarders are kept safe. The lack of monitoring of recruitment records has led to the inability to manage risk effectively.
- Matters of child protection are dealt with by trained staff and the academy has appropriately involved other agencies such as the police and social care in managing some incidents. The designated person is suitably trained and knowledgeable in her role within the academy.
- Outcomes for boarders are good. They benefit from good pastoral care delivered by an enthusiastic staff team. Structure and boundaries have been established to enable boarders to feel safe and consequently develop their personal, social and academic skills. Boarders are motivated to achieve well as staff set aspirational standards. Regular study time, additional tuition and activities extend learning for boarders. This leads to improved grades in comparison to day pupils. Boarders benefit from the links with the sponsor college, in particular joining the programme for leadership skills.
- Boarding accommodation is of a high standard. Boarders report that they feel safe. Good levels of supervision and the management of health and safety matters support their security. Boarders like the comfort and design of their boarding house and benefit from a large social space at the heart of the building, where they mix and socialise with each other. Boarders are proud of their boarding house and feel a sense of belonging. One boarder said, 'My boarding

house isn't a boarding house, it's a family.

- The health and welfare of boarders is managed through safe systems for medical treatment. Occasionally boarders who may be ill during school time have to return to the boarding house for medication. Some boarders express their dissatisfaction with the food, though there have been recent improvements through an effective food council. Staff encourage a healthy lifestyle through activity and diet. Sensible information encourages boarders to make safe choices with regards to their personal wellbeing.

- The director of boarding provides strong and effective leadership. Boarders, staff and parents speak very highly of him and his development of the boarding provision. The strength of relationships between boarders and staff ensures good communication. A prefect system is evolving. The prefects are proud of their role and recognise their contribution to this development of student leadership. There are many forums for boarders to have their say and contribute to boarding life and the academy as a whole.

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>

Boarding provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135804
Social care unique reference number	SC459408
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	426794

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1072
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	260
Number of boarders on roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cowley
Principal	Dr Michael Milner
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2011
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