

Wellington Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135804
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	381924
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Massey HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
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	855
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cowley
Principal	Andy Schofield
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tidworth Wiltshire SP11 9RR
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers, and held meetings with governors, academy staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the academy's planning and monitoring documents, minutes of meetings, safeguarding and health and safety documentation. The team analysed questionnaires from 80 staff, 125 students, and 71 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The rate of learning and progress and the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics.
- The reasons for the fall in mathematics results in 2011, and whether current predictions for 2012 are accurate.
- Whether the curriculum is meeting the needs of all students, especially the most able.
- How leaders, including the governing body, demonstrate at least satisfactory capacity to improve outcomes for students.

Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2009 and moved into new buildings in April 2011. The academy is slightly smaller than the average secondary school but the roll is rising rapidly. About 40% of students are from military families stationed at the nearby garrison and some students have a parent currently on active service. The sponsor is Wellington College, a public school with a military tradition, and there are strong links between the two schools. Boarding facilities for 100 students opened in September 2011, but not all the places are currently filled. This provision did not form part of this inspection. The academy has business and enterprise and language specialist status.

The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is low, and there is a higher than average number of students joining the academy at times other than the start of the school year. Most students are of White British heritage, so the proportion who are at the early stages of learning English is low. About a third of students in the current Year 11 and about a quarter of students in other year groups have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is above the national average. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than is found nationally.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Most students say they enjoy their learning at the academy and are proud of the opportunities it is giving them. Attendance is rising and is well above the national average in all year groups except Year 11. Students are very appreciative of the new building, the high-quality resources available to support their learning and the fact that the academy is open beyond the school day so they can use the facilities. The easy access to computers prompted one sixth former to say that the whole academy is like a classroom, which makes learning accessible for everyone. Many students take advantage of the healthy food available and the wide range of sporting opportunities. The quality of care and guidance provided for students is good and ensures that everyone is included in the life of the academy. Strong partnerships with a range of local agencies and the military community provide additional support, especially for those students who are vulnerable. Some older students have found that the links with Wellington College have helped to increase their self-confidence and ambition.

In the two years since the academy opened almost all students in Year 11 have achieved grades A* to C in at least five subjects, and the number attaining the highest grades has risen. However, when English and mathematics are included, the proportion is significantly below the national average, because students are not making fast enough progress in mathematics to make up for a legacy of underachievement in previous years. In English, the rate at which students make progress has accelerated and as a result achievement in all year groups is in line with that found nationally. In 2011, nearly all students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Year 11 were boys. Although this group of students performed in line with their peers, overall boys' attainment in mathematics was much lower than girls'.

The academy's leaders have made a detailed analysis of the reasons why students are making much slower progress in mathematics and have taken steps to remedy the problems, but work is at an early stage and its impact is not yet securely evident. Improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to accelerate students' progress in all subjects is at the heart of the academy's development plan. With the recent appointment of a new vice principal taking responsibility for this area, systems for monitoring are increasingly thorough and accurate. As a result, teachers are very aware of the high expectations of the academy's leaders, and the proportion of good and better lessons is rising. There is a clear link between the quality of teaching and the amount of progress that students make. Where teaching is most effective,

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students make good or better progress and their behaviour is good because they are engaged and interested. In these lessons, assessment information is used to plan a wide variety of tasks that match students' individual needs, questioning is used to deepen understanding and what students need to do in order to achieve well is made explicit. This is not consistent across all subjects and in weaker lessons there is sometimes low level disruption which affects the pace of learning and other students find frustrating. More-able students are not always sufficiently challenged. The quality of the feedback given to students about their work is inconsistent across the academy. There are good examples of students being given high-quality subject-specific advice, which leads to conversations about learning that help them improve. However, when marking is not done promptly or thoroughly enough, students take less pride in their work because it is not valued, and they do not have enough information to help them make progress. Many students arrive at the academy with low literacy levels, and although extra help is provided in Years 7, 8 and 9, there is less support for older students whose reading skills are weak. Teachers are not systematically tackling literacy issues through other subjects.

The governing body is very ambitious and supportive of the academy, knows its strengths and weaknesses well and challenges leaders effectively. Since the academy opened much of governors' time has necessarily been taken up with management of the new building project, the opening of boarding facilities, developing links with the Wellington College and financial issues, with less emphasis on day-to-day involvement with the academy. Some aspects of the governing body's legal responsibilities are insecure, and agreed actions are not always carried out in a timely way. A new committee structure and procedures to remedy this have recently been agreed and are starting to be implemented.

There have been rapid improvements in many aspects of the academy's work; for example, in the quality of teaching, rising attendance, reduced exclusions and development of a broad curriculum which has contributed to raising achievement in a range of subjects. In spite of this, and in line with its own self-evaluation, the academy's capacity to improve is satisfactory, because students' progress in mathematics is too slow, with current improvements still fragile and not happening fast enough to demonstrate sustained improvement. In addition, the governing body's response to concerns about safeguarding and its statutory responsibilities has been too slow.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and accelerate students' progress, especially in mathematics, through improvements to the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - using assessment information more effectively so that learning activities

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- are accurately tailored to challenge students of all abilities, including the most able
- ensuring that assessment through marking and oral feedback consistently helps students to enter into a dialogue with teachers about how to improve their learning
 - improving the quality of questioning in order to deepen understanding and extend thinking
 - developing a systematic approach and consistent language to support reading and writing across the school so all students have full access to the curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that the new systems recently set up are implemented rapidly to:
- ensure safeguarding arrangements are robust and rigorously monitored
 - review regularly, monitor the implementation and assess the impact of statutory policies on staff, learners, parents and carers
 - ensure that the pace of change is accelerated with a strong focus on making improvements that will lead directly to higher achievement for students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students' attainment on entry to the academy is below the national average. In lessons where the teaching is stimulating, well-planned and feedback is effective, students make good and sometimes outstanding progress. The academy's leaders estimate that this is the case in about half of lessons and inspectors found that their judgements about the quality of teaching were broadly accurate. Overall achievement is therefore satisfactory, but this masks considerable variation between year groups and subjects. In Years 7 and 8, students are making more rapid progress than those in older year groups. The good achievement on vocational courses, extensive business and enterprise experience, high attendance rates and the fact that nearly all Year 11 students from 2011 are now in education, employment or training, means that they are well-prepared for the future.

Nearly half the students who completed our questionnaires do not feel that behaviour is good, and this is also a concern for a small minority of parents and carers. A new system for managing behaviour has just been introduced and is at an early stage of implementation. Inspectors found that around the academy building students are cooperative and friendly, responding appropriately to sanctions. Although there is a very small number of students whose social and moral awareness is not well-developed, in lessons students' behaviour is often closely linked to the quality of planning and teaching. Students know how to keep themselves safe and are aware of the risks linked to information and communication technology, particularly the internet and social networking sites.

Students' contributions to the local community, both through the local garrison and

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the town are strong. Students are regularly involved with fundraising for the charity Help for Heroes. The student council is just starting to represent students' views, but is not yet having a substantial impact, and the opportunities to make a contribution to the academy community are limited. Students' awareness of their place in multicultural Britain is underdeveloped.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' subject knowledge is good and many of those teaching vocational subjects have practical experience which underpins their skills. Teachers' planning is detailed and is often done collaboratively in departments. Comprehensive information is available about the specific needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and teaching assistants provide good quality support. However, sometimes clear modelling of exactly what is expected and the structured guidance that these students need in order to learn effectively is not provided and, as a result, they do not make fast enough progress.

The academy provides a broad curriculum, with a wide range of vocational courses that meet the needs of students. Local links through the school's business and enterprise specialism, and well equipped facilities, for example for construction and hair and beauty courses, make these attractive options for students. In younger year groups there is an increasing focus on academic subjects, with the intention to retain a wide choice at Key Stage 4. For example all students study two languages initially and all students in the current Year 10 study at least one. Although students have

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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easy and regular access to information, communication and technology, skills in this area are not systematically developed at Key Stage 4. Students say they are given good advice and guidance as they transfer from one stage of their education to another, for example with option choices for GCSE courses. A wide range of extra-curricular courses are available and a high proportion of students take part, especially in sport. Large numbers of students have been involved in joint musical productions with students from Wellington College.

The academy has developed very effective systems for encouraging attendance, which has risen sharply since the academy opened. Students are known well as individuals and have someone to talk to and help if they find themselves in difficulty.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the monitoring visit a year ago, there has been significant change within the senior leadership team. The principal and senior leaders have nevertheless successfully managed the move into the new academy building but have also maintained the priority of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching staff and middle leaders recognise the need to shift from providing intervention for students to remedy previous underperformance towards long-term sustainable change through improvements in teaching and learning. An increasingly secure and accurate system to track students' progress has been put in place. Although these data are not used systematically by teachers to inform their planning, students' progress is monitored regularly and teachers are held to account for achievement. Middle leaders feel that their views are valued and listened to by the senior team. The quality of improvement planning has developed since the monitoring visit, but there is still not a strong enough emphasis on evaluating the impact of actions taken, in order to inform future initiatives.

The academy promotes an inclusive ethos, and takes steps to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to participate in the curriculum, both in and out of the classroom. Students say that racist or homophobic incidents are rare and if they do occur they are dealt with promptly. Analysis of the performance of different groups is carried out regularly. However, a wide gap in performance between boys and girls was evident in GCSE results in 2011.

The academy promotes community cohesion effectively through its links with the

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local community and European schools within its specialist language status. Students' awareness of wider global and multicultural issues is less well developed.

Although students who are vulnerable are well looked after and staff understand and implement procedures for safeguarding students effectively, a safeguarding governor has only just been appointed and there are weaknesses in the underlying administrative systems. In spite of concerns being raised a year ago at the time of the monitoring visit, a system to ensure that the governing body reviews and monitors its statutory policies, has only just been put in place. The academy's principal and senior team have taken the lead in developing more secure systems for safeguarding students.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Numbers in the sixth form are rising as more students choose to stay on at the academy at the end of Year 11, with the first group of students going on to higher education and employment at the end of the last academic year. Overall students make satisfactory progress from their starting points. A range of both academic and vocational courses are offered for students of differing abilities which meet their needs. The academy does not currently provide a comprehensive personal, health and social education programme for the sixth form, nor enough access to physical education for all to take part regularly.

Students are articulate, thoughtful and have clear views about the academy's strengths and weaknesses. Opportunities for the majority of students to make a significant contribution to the main school are limited and their potential as role models and leaders for younger students is not fully used. For a limited number of

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students, the links with Wellington College provide an opportunity to share experiences with others from diverse backgrounds and with different aspirations. These links have been significant in helping them make decisions about their future.

Unavoidable changes in leadership in the sixth form over the last year have meant that students have not received really high quality, thorough advice and guidance for higher education, although the administrative systems to support university applications for example, are secure. Students are nevertheless very positive about their experiences at the academy and the quality of care and support they receive. They are particularly appreciative of the efforts some individual teachers make to support and help them with their work, especially as they are expected to work more independently than in Year 11.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a very low return to the inspection questionnaire with only 7% of parents and carers responding. Almost all those responding said that their child enjoys school, they are safe and that they are kept informed about progress. Their main concerns are about the behaviour of some students who disrupt the learning of others. Inspectors have reported that the atmosphere in the academy is calm and orderly, with any poor behaviour frequently linked to the quality of teaching, and whether teachers have provided activities that are well-matched to individual students' needs. One in four respondents did not feel that the academy helps them to support their child's learning. In contrast, most feel that the academy makes sure their child is well-prepared for the future and inspectors agree.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wellington Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 855 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	39	41	58	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	44	35	49	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	38	36	51	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	38	31	44	11	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	23	43	61	7	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	31	32	45	12	17	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	20	48	68	4	6	2	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	23	37	52	5	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	25	41	58	9	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	21	35	49	12	17	6	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	21	38	54	9	13	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	21	30	34	48	6	8	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	46	27	38	7	10	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Wellington Academy, Tidworth, SP119RR

Thank you very much for your help when inspectors visited recently. You told us how much you like the facilities in the new academy building and that most of you enjoy your learning. Older students said they enjoyed the wide range of courses on offer. We were impressed by the improvement in your attendance over the last year.

We found that the academy is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. The principal and his senior team have made improving teaching a priority and this has made a difference to your achievement. More of you are making better progress and so GCSE examination results have risen in many subjects, especially English. However, many of you do not make enough progress in mathematics, and we have asked the academy's leaders to focus especially on making improvements in this subject. In addition, we think they could make even more improvements to teaching in every subject to help you make even more progress, so this is what we have asked them to do.

- Plan activities that suit your ability, so that work is challenging.
- Ask you questions that really make you think hard.
- Make sure that your work is marked in a way that is helpful to you to improve.
- Help you to improve your reading and writing skills in every lesson.

We have also asked the school's governors to tighten up the systems for keeping you safe and to make sure that they help the academy to make any changes that will help you all achieve more.

Yours sincerely

Mary Massey
Her Majesty's Inspector

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