



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE WELLINGTON ACADEMY

Name of School:	The Wellington Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Steven Paddock
Hub:	Wootton Bassett
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	10/11/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	15/03/2016

1. Context and character of the school

The Wellington Academy is a large 11-18 school which serves the community of Ludgershall and the 'Super Garrison' covering Ludgershall, Tidworth and Bulford. There is a boarding house which currently houses 42 students which was judged outstanding by Ofsted in 2016. There has been a growth in numbers of students entering the school, including in the sixth form.

Student mobility is high due to families being posted to different army bases across the country. The school is in the top 20% of schools nationally, with fewer than 50% of Year 7 students going all the way through to Year 11. The percentages of disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) are below the national average.

The academy was brokered over to the Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust (RWBAT) in April 2020, having previously been part of the Wellington College Academy Trust. The current headteacher has been in post since April 2020.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Senior leadership at The Wellington Academy is characterised by a commitment to the academy's vision of enabling all students to be 'inquisitive, ambitious and independent'. The inspiring, dedicated leadership of the headteacher has established a relentless focus on improvement, resulting in continued momentum and rapid improvement. He is ably assisted by an equally committed and passionate senior leadership team.
- All senior leaders play a vital role in modelling and embedding the values, ensuring that all staff and students embrace both the ethos and direction of the academy. Students subscribe to the expectations of them, with attendance rates improving and fixed term exclusions reducing. Students are proud to be part of Wellington. 'It is good being a student at Wellington and staff make the school what it is' said one student; other students commented that it was both 'encouraging and friendly'.
- Senior leaders are highly analytical and, through frequent monitoring and evaluation, next steps and improvement planning are precise and well thought through. There is already evidence of significant improvement in key areas, including students' respectful behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and their futures. Leaders are constantly aspirational for students. For example, the fortnightly lunchtime presentations, such as the recent talk by the headteacher of his experience of being in New York at the time of 9/11, spark students' interests and extend their experiences of the world.
- The rigorous monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders of curriculum implementation informs continuing professional development (CPD) and there are

examples of teachers being supported to extend their practice, such as the successful questioning now seen as in post-16.

- Senior leaders' message for all teachers is to be 'good at your craft' and CPD supports this through a broad range of provision. The Friday briefing enables teachers to showcase their approach to different aspects of the learning cycle and these sessions are well attended and well received. High quality CPD is fostering a culture of and desire for pedagogical improvement. Early careers teachers benefit from CPD and the rigour of the 'learning cycle'.
- Leaders' investment in staff development extends to the role of subject leaders. This has resulted in strong middle leadership in some areas, such as English and subject leaders are now poised to take on key areas, such as assessment. Subject leaders feel well supported by senior leaders and they value being able to enrol on NPQML courses and to take advantage of awarding body roles and courses.
- A focus on improvement in the sixth form has resulted in growing numbers enrolling for post-16 from The Wellington Academy and other schools, as well as stronger academic progress from 2016 to current cohorts.
- Students are exposed to a broad range of enrichment experiences and leaders are assiduous in ensuring a meaningful, rich offer for all. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) plays a significant part in the life of the academy. This was seen in the Remembrance Day service at which all students showed high levels of respect as they listened and watched attentively to the messages of the army padre, wreaths laid by the different regiment personnel and poems and songs given by Wellington Academy students. It was a highly moving occasion.
- The values curriculum provides students with the building blocks to be ambitious, aligning with the academy's vision for its students. Careers education is delivered through a careers adviser and there is a charter for all students to access meaningful work experience. A partnership project with a school in Africa will be studied through the curriculum, with a focus on science and medical issues.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

...every middle leader used their evaluation of teaching in their subjects and subject specific CPD time to develop and embed consistently strong pedagogy more quickly.

...all leaders used assessment to reshape their curricula.

...leaders pulled together the different strands of the academy's rich and varied values curriculum so that it aligns fully to academy values.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders have developed a coherent, well-sequenced curriculum which is aligned closely to the newly introduced 'learning cycle' which sets out clear expectations for all. This extends to the sixth form where it is adapted, as appropriate, to prepare students for post-18 learning. Staff and students have embraced the introduction of

the 'learning cycle' and it is already reaping benefits of consistency in approach. Students value the consistency of the 'learning cycle' across lessons and the way in which the activities build. It enables them to be more confident about their knowledge and understanding and students say that it helps them to learn by enabling them to look back on previous lessons. In the 'activate' phase, where slides and resources have been kept simple, this makes learning accessible for all students as it limits cognitive overload.

- Teachers present in lessons as confident experts. For example, in a Year 12/13 BTEC PE lesson, the teacher was using his experience of refereeing to impart knowledge and challenge via questioning. In a mathematics lesson, clear explanations enabled students to understand key concepts in the first phase of the lesson which supported subsequent learning. In a music lesson, the teacher's clarity in the modelling of how to play the ukulele made it accessible to all.
- Teachers' folders indicate their knowledge of the students, such as the one-page profiles and annotated seating plans.
- Where teachers use questioning to probe students' understanding and where questions are targeted based on assessment, students deepen their knowledge and are poised to respond and engage in the learning.
- Positive and productive student-teacher relationships form the bedrock of successful learning. Students trust their teachers and respond to what they are asked to do; for example, in a library lesson, because students understood the reading systems and the purpose of learning, they set to read their books promptly and with commitment, enabling them to become 'independent, ambitious, inquisitive'.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and learning. These create classroom environments which are conducive to learning. Well-established procedures ensure the smooth running of lessons and teachers' consistent use of systems, such as the names on the board, enables students to reset their own behaviour rather than going to the reset room. Once again, this aligns with the vision of student independence.
- Books show a growing effectiveness in the use of 'IAC', with some very strong examples, and the use of feedback to improve students' learning. Books show the depth and quality of thought in students' responses to teachers' comments in extended writing in English and history. Leaders have also identified a broad range of subjects where 'IAC' is being used well, such as in IT where written work in books is aiding students' understanding of the theory and practical aspects. Feedback practice and students' response are consistent in English.
- The literacy strategy is gaining momentum with the appointment of literacy champions in subject areas. There are emerging examples of leaders and teachers planning for literacy. For example, in history, students review and assess the 'Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' for historical accuracy and students' comprehension skills are practised through analysis of primary source data. In an English lesson about the poem 'Ozymandias', students showed that they knew the context of the poem and, through subtle scaffolding and by incorporating tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, students' language 'grows every time' in their ability to explain and expand.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...all teachers applied the academy feedback/IACT policy consistently well in order to secure and extend students' knowledge, skills and understanding.

...teachers built on the positive behaviour of students in classes by increasing students' confidence in discussing and sharing their learning.

...all teachers used effective questioning strategies at the right time to check and deepen the understanding of all students.

...all teachers ensured that students were challenged at the appropriate level and at the appropriate point.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- With over half of the school population from service families, there is high priority placed on meeting the needs of students from military backgrounds. Transience and mobility are challenging issues and leaders have put in place a military liaison office who manages the well-established, supportive links with the different regiments. Bespoke arrangements are made where students need extra care due to parental absence. Leaders also focus strongly on students' academic achievement through the use of assessment, including GL assessments upon entry to the academy, and curriculum planning which takes account of awarding bodies in schools based in other garrison towns to aid students' move to different schools nationally. There are growing links with other schools in garrison towns to share approaches to achieving smooth students' transition.
- Leaders have recognised and acted upon the need to bring about improvement in the provision and outcomes for students with SEND, including through the 'learning cycle'. The mechanics of supporting pupils with SEND are in place. An external SEND consultant has completed a review and leaders have already taken action, including the appointment of a new SENCO.
- There is a clear strategy for meeting the needs of disadvantaged students. Teachers know these students in their classes and annotated plans indicate the support. Learning explorations showed no difference in the learning or attitudes of disadvantaged students.
- Leaders are forensic in finding, implementing and evaluating a range of successful strategies to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. Examples include: a metacognition focus group of Year 10 students coached in learning to learn and revision techniques which, following its success, will be extended to disadvantaged students in Year 11; boarding house sponsored placements for students in overcrowded households which have resulted in significant success stories of students who have gone on to university and secured high quality jobs; the 'Talent

Tap' programme which offers high end work experience in London for post-18 disadvantaged students.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...all teachers used individualised student targets to meet the needs of disadvantaged students.

...leaders embedded the well-planned developments for the provision and outcomes for students with SEND in order to bring about improvements in this area.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Leaders would like to reflect upon this.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.