

Welling School

Elsa Road, Welling, Kent DA16 1LB

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve highly enough by the end of Year 11. In 2017, pupils achieved poorly in their GCSE examinations.
- Leaders and managers have in the past made poor curriculum decisions which have hampered pupils' achievements.
- The quality of teaching, though improving, remains too variable. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their knowledge, including through extended writing tasks.
- Not all teachers plan learning which takes sufficient account of pupils' different needs, including pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' achievement has also been affected by instability in staffing and the school's difficulties in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form declined last year in their A-level subjects. Better teaching is now improving outcomes for current students but variability remains in achievement between different subjects.
- Leaders, governors and members of the trust did not identify quickly enough that pupils were underachieving last year so that timely action could be taken to secure good achievement.
- Some pupils do not behave well enough. On occasion, the poor behaviour of a few pupils disrupts the learning of others. A small minority of pupils do not arrive at their lessons on time.
- Pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is underdeveloped. They also lack opportunities to study arts subjects regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, governors and members of the trust have now got to grips with the weaknesses which led to poor achievement last year and standards are rising again.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are strong and ensure that pupils are well looked after. Support for vulnerable pupils is wide-ranging.
- Provision for pupils who receive some or all of their education in the Elsa Centre is strong. These pupils are making very good progress.
- Strategies to raise the achievement of the most able pupils are working.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - maintaining the increased oversight of the school provided by members of the trust so that the pace of improvement accelerates
 - tackling the remaining weaker teaching quickly so that all pupils receive teaching that is consistently of good quality
 - strengthening provision for the teaching of literacy across the curriculum
 - maintaining stronger oversight of how well teachers meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that additional support and training can be provided where necessary
 - strengthening the curriculum by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to study performing and creative arts and to learn about fundamental British values.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for pupils, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers apply the school's revised behaviour policy consistently and that senior leaders provide additional support to staff where it is needed
 - providing pupils with more regular opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in extended written work so this aspect of pupils' achievement improves
 - ensuring that staff help pupils to correct their spelling, grammar and punctuation errors in their written work
 - ensuring that pupils are able to identify more confidently how they can improve their work and are given opportunities to do so
 - strengthening teachers' skills in planning work that meets the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that all teachers make effective and consistent use of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of 16 to 19 study programmes by:
 - eliminating variability in achievement between A-level subjects
 - increasing the range and quality of non-qualification activities in the sixth form to enhance students' wider personal development and their preparedness for further education, training and employment
 - making more systematic checks on the progress of students who receive some of their teaching elsewhere in the sixth-form partnership.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders, governors and members of the trust have not had an accurate understanding of the quality of education at the school. They fully accept that pupils' GCSE results were not good enough last year. They had anticipated that pupils' achievement would dip, but not to the extent that it did.
- Leaders have in the past made poor curriculum decisions which contributed to pupils' underachievement. These decisions did not take into account the changes to the GCSE examinations in 2017. As a result, pupils were entered for too many examinations in some subjects and their performance was negatively affected.
- Leaders have learned from this, and now ensure that current pupils are being prepared for their GCSE examinations appropriately.
- Other improvements to the curriculum have been made to ensure that pupils in key stage 4 have sufficient time to cover the required courses. This strategy is enabling pupils to improve. Pupils now take an appropriate range of qualifications.
- Strategies to improve teaching are working. Pupils recognise these improvements. Leaders have made good appointments this year, with the result that teaching has improved. Appropriate strategies are also in place to support staff who need to improve their practice. Teachers speak very positively about opportunities for their professional development. Leaders recognise, however, that there is more work to be done to ensure that all teachers meet their expectations.
- Strategies to strengthen pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum are not yet embedded.
- Leaders now ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are accurate. Good arrangements have been put in place with other schools in the trust, and in the South-east London Schools Alliance, to ensure that teachers' judgements about how well pupils are achieving are accurate. Middle leaders now regularly work with colleagues from other schools to moderate their judgements about pupils' work.
- Senior staff and governors have also brokered support from a range of subject and curriculum experts to ensure that their judgements about the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment are accurate. These strategies have proved to be effective in identifying where further improvements can be made.
- Members of the trust acknowledge that they did not have sufficient oversight of the school last year and did not react swiftly enough to the emerging signs that achievement in Year 11 was set to dip. Since September, arrangements for trust scrutiny have become much more robust.
- The school now receives weekly support from a National Leader of Education (NLE) in the trust to ensure that the changes being made to remedy underachievement are being implemented effectively. The NLE is making good use of his experience as the headteacher of an outstanding school to ensure that the school improves quickly.
- Pupils in key stage 3, and some of their parents and carers, report that they are disappointed that they receive only one lesson of drama and one lesson of music each

fortnight. This limits pupils' achievements in these subjects and their cultural development.

- The philosophy and ethics curriculum is imaginative and delivered well. It is effective in promoting pupils' understanding of different faiths, cultures and beliefs in modern Britain and the wider world well. It ensures that pupils understand the importance of tolerance and their respect for diversity.
- Other aspects of the values which underpin British society – such as democracy and the rule of law – are not planned systematically by leaders. Hence, pupils' social and cultural understanding is not fully developed.
- Leaders make appropriate use of the additional funding received to support disadvantaged pupils. The school's strategy to support these pupils is informed by good quality analysis of pupils' barriers to learning. Like other pupils, however, these pupils achieved less well last year because aspects of teaching and the curriculum did not meet their needs well enough.
- Additional funding provided through the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium is also used effectively. It has a particularly notable impact in improving the reading ages of pupils who join the school below age-related expectations.
- Strong support is provided for students who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, including those who learn in the Elsa Centre. Leaders and governors do not ensure, however, that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities consistently receive appropriate support in lessons.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a realistic view of the quality of education provided by the school.
- In response to last year's disappointing GCSE results, they immediately commissioned a review of governance to see how governance might be improved. They have acted quickly on the findings and further refined the way they make checks on the school. The governance structure has been improved to enable governors to focus sharply on pupils' achievement, personal development and well-being.
- Governors' minutes show that they now continually insist that leaders provide evidence to support their assertions about pupils' achievement and personal development. They probe carefully the information they are given to ensure that it is reliable.
- Governors are maintaining stronger oversight of the curriculum than in the past to ensure that the decisions leaders make are well-founded and in the best interests of the pupils.
- Governors ensure that they receive up-to-date training, for example in safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The specialist team of staff are well trained and led effectively by the designated safeguarding leader. She ensures that all safeguarding referrals made to the team are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Children at risk of harm are known to the team and receive good-quality care and support. Senior staff are quick to refer more serious

concerns to colleagues in social care and track the actions taken carefully to ensure a timely and appropriate response.

- Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and frequently pass on any concerns they have about a pupil's well-being. They know that seemingly minor concerns should be reported and recorded in case they form part of a wider pattern.
- Staff have received up-to-date training and have read the statutory documentation required. As a result, they are knowledgeable in this area. Careful records are kept to ensure that all staff comply with this requirement. Leaders ensure that new staff are trained immediately.
- Children in public care are well known to key staff and well cared for.
- Leaders ensure that their practice is as effective as it can be by commissioning external audits of their safeguarding arrangements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, though improving, remains too inconsistent to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Some teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' additional needs to plan learning activities which enable these pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not all teachers follow the school's policies as required. In these cases, teachers fail to make regular use of homework to consolidate or extend pupils' learning. Not all teachers follow the school's assessment policy because they do not help pupils identify errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- A small minority of teachers do not implement the school's revised behaviour policy. This results in learning time being lost because of the low-level disruptive behaviour of a few pupils.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, for example through extended activities and extended writing. This hinders their attainment. Strategies to enable pupils to improve their work are used well in some subjects, such as English, but are not used as effectively in all curriculum areas.
- The quality of teaching is improving, however. More specialist staff are in post this year and fewer lessons are being delivered by supply teachers. There is stronger teaching across a range of subjects, including, for example, English, mathematics, science, history, philosophy and ethics, physical education and business studies. However, variation in the quality of teaching within and between departments remains.
- Strategies to increase the level of challenge for the most able pupils are proving to be effective, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The most able pupils are challenged particularly well in mathematics.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders do not ensure that sufficient emphasis is given to developing pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of wider issues. As a result, pupils' knowledge is underdeveloped in these areas.
- Pupils are well informed about potential risks to their well-being through a well-planned and responsive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). They receive regular information, including from the police, about how to keep themselves safe, for example from knife crime, child sexual exploitation and the risks associated with drugs and alcohol. Pupils told inspectors that the quality of sex and relationship education is good.
- Pupils benefit from good-quality and impartial careers information and advice. The school has a strong track record of ensuring that all pupils progress to further education, training or employment. Younger pupils spoke positively about careers education but said they would like more.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is usually dealt with effectively. Good use is made of restorative justice, where appropriate, to tackle incidents of bullying. Careful records are maintained so that leaders can identify any patterns or trends in unkind behaviour, and that the actions they have taken to resolve any incidents of bullying are effective.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- While most pupils behave well, a small minority of pupils misbehave when their teachers do not insist on, or manage to achieve, high standards of behaviour. When this happens, the behaviour of a few pupils hinders the learning of the rest of the class.
- Pupils usually arrive to lessons with the right equipment and wearing their uniform appropriately. However, not all pupils ensure that they get to lessons on time, particularly after lunch. This results in them losing valuable learning time and slows the pace of the lesson for the pupils who do arrive on time.
- Leaders and staff do not ensure that all pupils meet the school's expectations on behaviour. For example, some pupils use their mobile phones between lessons despite the fact that this is not allowed.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly below average. This is because a very small minority of pupils are regularly absent. A comprehensive range of strategies is in place to promote good attendance and tackle this persistent absence. The pupils who struggle to attend school regularly are well monitored by staff, who do not hesitate to involve external agencies to ensure that the absent pupils are safe. The school has had some success in reintegrating pupils who have been absent from education for a long time, for example through provision in the learning zone.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, outcomes for pupils were not good enough, given their starting points. Pupils' progress across a range of subjects was poor. This includes the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inappropriate curriculum decisions, problems with the school's assessment systems and inconsistent teaching combined to hinder pupils' achievement.
- While the achievement of current pupils remains variable, it is improving because of the effective strategies leaders have put in place.
- Increased rigour of assessment is enabling leaders to identify more accurately how well pupils are attaining, including through moderation with staff from other schools. The school's own assessment information shows that pupils are attaining more highly than they were at this stage last year.
- The quality of teaching in Year 11 indicates that teachers are preparing pupils for their public examinations effectively. In the lessons visited, Year 11 pupils were focused, working hard and revising well. Their teachers made good use of examination criteria to ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to achieve well.
- Better teaching overall is ensuring that the progress of different groups of pupils is improving, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, some weaknesses remain, particularly when some teachers do not respond effectively to the needs of these pupils.
- The achievement of higher-attaining pupils is beginning to improve across the school as a result of strategies introduced in September to target provision for these pupils. Inspectors spoke with groups of most-able pupils about their work and progress. Overall, they were complimentary about how this aspect of the school has improved. Pupils in Year 10, for example, were very keen to stress how hard they are being pushed. Pupils in Year 9 reported that they are challenged more in the core subjects than in some of the foundation subjects. Inspectors' findings from lesson observations support the pupils' views.
- Pupils who receive support in the Elsa Centre are making very good progress because teaching in the centre is of good quality, responsive to their needs and underpinned by teachers' high expectations.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Students' achievements in their A-level subjects dipped last year, having previously been in line with other students nationally. This was because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and because some students were enrolled on courses that did not meet their needs, or were too demanding for their level of prior attainment. This resulted in students taking these qualifications without the necessary knowledge and understanding required to achieve well.
- Since the last inspection, students' achievements in vocational qualifications have been in line with those of other students nationally and in some cases higher than the national averages. Leaders are rightly cautious in their forecasts for current students,

given the changes to how these qualifications are assessed this year.

- The proportion of students who improve their GCSE grades in English and mathematics is generally in line with the national average. This year, half of the students who are resitting English or mathematics GCSEs have already secured a standard pass.
- Teaching in the sixth form has improved. In most lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to support students' learning and to help prepare them for their forthcoming examinations. As a result, sixth-form students in these lessons work hard and productively. Strong teaching was seen in history, for example, and students were highly complimentary about the strategies that the teacher used to support them.
- Students who met with inspectors all spoke very positively about the quality of teaching they have received across a range of subjects. Leaders know, however, that not all teaching is ensuring that students make good progress in all subjects. Their current assessment information shows that variation in achievement between subjects remains. Better monitoring of students' attainment is enabling them to tackle these variations more effectively than before.
- Leaders now ensure that students are better directed on to the appropriate courses. The curriculum has broadened and entry requirements on to some A-level courses have been raised to ensure that students are aware of the nature and demands of the courses they choose.
- Leaders make good provision for some students to participate in work experience, for example for students studying childcare or music technology. Students are also encouraged to take on positions of responsibility in the school in order to develop their leadership skills. However, these opportunities are not made available widely enough for all students.
- Leaders have strengthened systems to check on students' progress and have become more effective in holding subject leaders to account for the quality of sixth-form teaching. However, leaders do not monitor carefully enough the quality of teaching experienced by students who receive some teaching at the other schools in the partnership.
- Sixth-form students' attendance is very high. Students arrive punctually to lessons.

School details

Unique reference number	136720
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10041992

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,424
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	192
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Atkins CBE
Headteacher	Diane Khanna
Telephone number	020 8304 8531
Website	www.wellingschool-tkat.org/
Email address	swanc@wellingschool-tkat.org
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized comprehensive secondary school.
- Approximately 75% of pupils are from white British backgrounds. The other pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEN support is over twice the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is similar to that of other schools.

- The school uses four alternative providers to provide education for a very small minority of its pupils. These are Wize up, Horizons, Newhaven School and Social Arts for Education (SAFE).
- This year, the school has set up a specialist resource base, the Elsa Centre, for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder.
- Some teaching is provided in the Berwick Centre, used as an alternative to fixed-term exclusions and to support pupils who find coming to school difficult.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The school is a member of the Kemnal Academies Trust. The board of trustees delegates some responsibilities to a local governing body.
- The school's sixth form is in a partnership with two other local sixth forms, known as Partnership 6th.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in subjects across the curriculum and in all year groups. Some of the observations were carried out with senior members of staff from the school. They visited the Berwick Centre and the Elsa Centre to observe pupils' learning.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, teachers, governors and senior staff from the trust. They spoke by telephone with staff from the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13. They also spoke with pupils, including Year 11 pupils, informally around the school and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's safeguarding arrangements, the trust's scheme of delegation, curriculum plans and records regarding pupils' behaviour, bullying and attendance. They scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and the minutes of meetings of the local governing body.
- Inspectors considered the 124 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 39 parental responses made using the free-text service. They also considered the views of 74 staff and 31 pupils who completed Ofsted questionnaires.

Inspection team

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