

Inspection of Welling School

Elsa Road, Welling, Kent, DA16 1LB

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Brian Griffen. This school is part of the Kemnal Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Karen Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gaenor Bagley. There is also an executive headteacher, Daniel Hatley, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Typically, pupils are happy at school. Older pupils speak about how the school has changed for the better. Improved behaviour around the building means that pupils feel safe. There is little bullying and name calling. On the rare occasion that it happens, pupils are confident about how to report it. They are sure that staff will take prompt action to resolve any problems. Pupils trust staff at the school. They know that staff care about them.

Leaders have clear oversight of behaviour, providing a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Pupils enjoy earning rewards that can lead to 'golden tickets' and outings. Pupils know and understand their school values. Increasingly, they are staying after school to take part in extra-curricular clubs. Pupils enjoy having a say in the way the school runs. Their views have led to more subjects being offered.

Staff have increasingly high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. However, these expectations are not realised consistently through teaching. This impacts on pupils' ability to recall their learning securely across many subjects.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide a broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review. This year they added physical education and business GCSEs alongside vocational qualifications. The sixth-form offer is also broad and inclusive.

Typically, subject leaders have given thought to the planning and sequencing of the curriculum. In most cases, they plan a curriculum that revisits the important knowledge pupils need. This builds in a step-by-step way. For example, teachers introduce Year 7 pupils to the elements of music. Pupils explore these in more detail through blues music in Year 8 and popular song in Year 9. Leaders identify the needs of pupils well, including by working with external agencies. They provide personalised support to pupils with SEND, particularly for literacy and numeracy.

In most cases, teachers present new content clearly. They ensure that pupils with SEND can access the intended curriculum. However, teaching does not systematically check that pupils in Years 7 to 11 have understood content securely. This means that pupils do not recall their learning in enough detail. Teaching moves on too quickly. Consequently, gaps in pupils' knowledge get bigger. In the sixth form, teachers use questioning skilfully. They encourage students to make connections to previous learning. Teachers in the sixth form check carefully that pupils have understood subject-specific vocabulary. However, there is not a shared approach to the teaching of vocabulary in Years 7 to 11.

Pupils' experiences of teaching in the school are still too variable. This impacts on the behaviour and attitudes to learning of a small number of pupils. They lose focus when teachers do not present information and check understanding well enough. Leaders have ensured that pupils' attendance at school is much improved. The

school is using a range of effective strategies to work with pupils who are not regularly at school.

Leaders have a well-planned approach to reading. It includes phonics support to help pupils develop their reading fluency. Pupils choose books from the library that match their reading age. Leaders are developing a culture of reading in school. Pupils are beginning to enjoy reading for pleasure.

Leaders have ambitious plans for pupils' personal development. They are well on the way to implementing these plans. Staff have ensured that all pupils understand the range of academic and vocational options open to them when they leave school. This includes bespoke support for pupils with SEND. Pupils benefit from the well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum. Over time, leaders intend for all pupils to complete the 'Welling Pledge'. This consists of 12 opportunities for social and cultural development. It includes residential activities, trips and visits. There are over 40 clubs on offer each week, including a breakfast club for all pupils. Currently, not enough pupils take up this offer. Sixth-form students run the school leadership group, which reports to leaders regularly. They also coordinate charity initiatives. In consultation with pupils, sixth-form students are raising money to support a local hospice.

Leaders have all but eradicated disruptive behaviour within a short space of time. They have built a culture based on positive working relationships between staff and pupils. The trust continues to work closely with the school. It is prioritising training for teachers to develop their confidence in the planning and delivery of the curriculum. Staff enjoy working at the school. They report that workload can be heavy on occasion due to the rapid pace of change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In Years 7 to 11, teaching does not use formative assessment well to support the delivery of the curriculum. This means that pupils' misconceptions are not typically addressed with consistent rigour and accuracy. The school should provide further training for staff to ensure that approaches to checking pupils' learning are used consistently and purposefully in all subjects.
- Many pupils do not participate regularly in the range of clubs and enrichment opportunities available to them. The school should do more to encourage pupils' take up of these opportunities. This will enhance their wider development above and beyond their learning in class.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136720
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10290169
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,137
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gaenor Bagley
Headteacher	Brian Griffen
Website	www.wellingschool-tkat.org
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In April 2023, the school appointed a new headteacher and two new deputy headteachers.
- The school is part of the Kemnal Academies Trust.
- The school provides specially resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder in the Elsa Centre.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff in the school, including those responsible for the quality of education, behaviour, attendance, personal development, sixth form and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust and the local governing body. These included the senior regional director, the director of education for secondary, and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art, business, English, mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and inclusive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Gale	Ofsted Inspector
Olivia Page	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Lebrecht	Ofsted Inspector

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