

# Inspection of Welling School

Elsa Road, Welling, Kent DA16 1LB

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Sixth-form provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders' expectations for pupils' behaviour are too low. The management of behaviour by staff is not consistent across the school. Low-level disruptive behaviour causes frequent pauses in learning. The high number of pupils in the corridors during lesson times causes further disruption. Where pupils felt unsafe, this was due to poor behaviour. Pupils reported that bullying was frequent. They lacked confidence in staff to tackle it. Staff do not do enough to address bullying and get it to stop.

Recently, leaders have worked to develop curriculum thinking. Pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects and have a wide range of subjects to choose from in the sixth form. However, leaders' expectations of academic achievement lack ambition overall. Teaching does not routinely support pupils to remember knowledge securely over time. In class, the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not well met.

Pupils are taught the value of respecting each other's differences through personal development lessons. They are encouraged to engage in cultural debate and discussions about current affairs. Leaders have developed a mentoring programme that supports the most disadvantaged pupils.

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

Curriculum subject leaders have spent time thinking about what they want pupils to know and remember. They have identified key knowledge in each subject. In some subjects, leaders have also considered how to make learning relevant to pupils. For example, texts studied in Year 7 and Year 8 English lessons reflect a wide range of cultural backgrounds and differences. In other subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is not as thoroughly developed. In the sixth form, students benefit from the strong subject expertise of their teachers.

Teachers regularly plan opportunities for pupils to recall what they have already learned. However, pupils do not habitually remember knowledge securely over time. Teachers do not generally check that pupils understand key ideas before they move on. This means that pupils who may be at risk of falling behind are not routinely identified and helped to catch up quickly.

Leaders do not prioritise reading strongly. Few pupils read for pleasure. Pupils who need help to develop fluency in literacy are not well supported. In the sixth form, teachers do not provide strong support for students with weaker literacy or numeracy skills.

In lessons, many pupils behave well and are keen to learn. However, a significant minority of pupils lack motivation and do not pay attention in class. This low-level disruption hinders the teaching of the curriculum. Some pupils do not follow the instructions of teachers, are late to lessons or are truant in corridors and cause

significant disruption to learning. Variability in the way staff respond to behaviour issues encourages some pupils to show a lack of respect for staff and their peers. In the sixth form, students have positive attitudes to their learning.

Many pupils expressed concerns about bullying. Leaders have introduced an anti-bullying website, with an online reporting tool, but typically pupils were not aware of this or use it to report issues. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear picture of bullying in the school. Staff do not do enough to address pupils' concerns and deal with problems that arise.

Provision of independent careers advice and guidance is uneven across year groups. Pupils considering the next steps in their education are encouraged to look at alternatives to joining the school's sixth form. Students in the sixth form have joined online events with higher education providers. Outings and enrichment activities have been restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic and have not resumed fully. There are some extra-curricular clubs available, including football and design and technology, but few pupils are motivated to attend.

Leaders are skilled in identifying and assessing the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) benefit from the expertise of staff. However, in mainstream classes, teaching does not meet the needs of pupils with SEND as equally well.

School leaders, members of the local governing body and members of the trust have identified areas of weakness and are working to address these. The impact of this work can be seen, for example in developing the school's curriculum thinking. Initiatives to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions are showing early signs of success. Action to improve behaviour and attitudes, and reduce bullying, has not been as effective in securing necessary improvements.

Staff at the school felt supported by leaders to develop their teaching skills. They appreciated the recent training they had received to develop the curriculum. However, leaders have not supported them sufficiently to manage poor behaviour.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that robust child protection procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. Staff know the possible signs that a pupil may be at risk, and they report concerns. Leaders work with external agencies effectively to manage the safeguarding of pupils. Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are secure.

Staff with responsibility for the care and guidance of pupils build effective working relationships with them, their parents and carers. Pupils receive age-appropriate information on issues such as sexual harassment and consent. They are encouraged to take steps to keep themselves safe, including online.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not implement the behaviour policy consistently. This undermines the policy that is in place and leads to poor behaviour because expectations are too low and unclear. Leaders should ensure that all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, apply the school's policy and challenge poor behaviour consistently.
- A significant minority of pupils are disruptive in class, absent from or arrive late to lessons. Action to address this behaviour does not have the desired impact. Leaders should ensure that pupils are supported to understand the school's expectations, feel committed to their learning and follow appropriate routines.
- Action to address bullying is not effective. Few pupils are familiar with and use the anti-bullying website or reporting tool introduced by leaders this year. Pupils have little confidence that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with effectively. Leaders should ensure that all bullying concerns are taken seriously and dealt with by staff whenever they arise so that bullying stops.
- In mainstream lessons, the needs of pupils with SEND are not routinely well met. As a result, sometimes pupils with SEND are not helped successfully to access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders should ensure that all teachers know how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Leaders do not prioritise reading across the school or encourage a love of books. Pupils are not motivated to read, and the weakest readers are not strongly supported to catch up. Leaders should ensure that the school's literacy programme encourages all pupils to read widely and fluently.
- Few pupils develop their interests through taking part in enrichment and extra-curricular clubs. Leaders should ensure that the wider curriculum offer engages pupils' interest and motivates them to take part in this aspect of their personal development.
- The careers curriculum is not equally well developed in all year groups. Leaders should ensure that all pupils receive independent careers advice about the full range of options open to them.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136720
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211667
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,545
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gaenor Bagley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Pett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wellingschool-tkat.org/">www.wellingschool-tkat.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- In April 2019, the school appointed a new headteacher.
- In January 2021, the school appointed a new executive headteacher.
- The school provides specially resourced provision for up to 10 pupils with autism spectrum disorder in the Elsa Centre.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the executive headteacher and other school leaders. They also met with the chair of the local governing body and another member of the local governing body. They met a representative from the trust.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's improvement plan, policies and the written records of trustees' meetings.
- In order to evaluate the quality of education, inspectors undertook deep dives in mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, history and music. In each subject, inspectors held meetings with subject leaders, made visits to lessons in each key stage, had discussions with staff and pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited tutor-time sessions and personal development lessons.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff's recruitment, scrutinising documentation related to safeguarding and meeting with the leaders with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to staff at the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors visited the Elsa Centre.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses that were submitted by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views.

## Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lascelles Haughton	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lucy Bruce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Hook	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Hall	Ofsted Inspector

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