



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

WELLESLEY HOUSE SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Wellesley House School

Full Name of School	Wellesley House School		
DfE Number	866/6001		
Registered Charity Number	307852		
Address	Wellesley House School 114 Ramsgate Road Broadstairs Kent CT10 2DG		
Telephone Number	01843 862991		
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Email Address	hmsec@wellesleyhouse.net		
Headmaster	Mr Simon O'Malley		
Chairman of Governors	Mr Tim Steel		
Age Range	6 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	133		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (78 boys; 55 girls)		
Numbers by Age	6-11:	66	11-18: 67
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	33	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 0
Number of Boarders	Total:	100	
	Full:	38	Weekly: 62
Inspection dates	01 Feb 2011 to 02 Feb 2011 02 Mar 2011 to 04 Mar 2011		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in January 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to pupils' education and development in general. The full Ofsted report refers to an inspection in November 2008 and can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Wellesley House School was founded for boys in 1869 at Conygham House in Ramsgate and moved in 1898 to Wellesley House, which was purpose-built as a school. In 1964, the school became a charitable trust and merged with St Peter's Court School, becoming co-educational in 1977. Since then, extensive building and modernisation have been undertaken. The school has a board of governors who meet regularly. The school is non-selective and welcomes pupils at any age throughout the academic year.
- 1.2 Aims included in the school's mission statement are to provide the highest academic standards within a caring, family community, and to develop the self-esteem and self-confidence of pupils whilst recognising and nurturing individuals' skills. The school further seeks to promote a love of learning, leading to the acquisition and development of skills for independent learning, and to encourage pupils to explore new activities. The whole school community is expressly included in the intention to open up a world of possibilities. This philosophy is at the forefront of the school's thinking and decision making.
- 1.3 Pupils are largely from professional families, and many are of British white heritage, while a number have international backgrounds. Pupils are drawn from Kent and London, with an increasing proportion from East Sussex and beyond. The headmaster has been in post since 2006. Currently, the school has 133 pupils, of whom 78 are boys and 55 are girls. Of the 100 pupils who board, 59 are boys and 41 are girls. In total, 33 pupils attend on a day basis.
- 1.4 The school does not administer national tests but, from other data available, the overall ability of pupils is judged to be above the national average. The school provides learning support for 41 pupils with some form of learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD). Those pupils with statements of special educational needs or who have English as an additional language receive specialist support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
JH	Year 3
JB	Year 4
4L; 4K	Year 5
3A; 3	Year 6
2A; 2	Year 7
1A; Remove; 1	Year 8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of pupils' achievements is excellent overall, in line with the school's aim to allow all pupils to feel valued within an environment of high expectations, and where they can develop skills, attitudes, concepts and knowledge through the diversity of a broadly based curriculum. Extremely well-developed skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) extend pupils' ability to apply them effectively in other subjects, and contribute to the pupils' excellent progress over time. Pupils are successful in all aspects of their learning, which is reflected in their considerable achievement at the age of thirteen in scholarships awarded to independent schools. The curriculum is excellent, well balanced, stimulating and structured. It meets the aims of the school, and is accessible and suited to all pupils. The quality of teaching is excellent and involves all pupils effectively. Pupils' achievements are strongly supported by challenging and interesting lessons. New systems for assessing the pupils' progress throughout the school in order to track this more accurately against national norms are not yet fully established. Notable successes have been achieved by pupils who have participated in extra-curricular activities and competitions, for example in music, chess, athletics and swimming.
- 2.2 The pupils' personal development is outstanding, being well supported by excellent pastoral care arrangements. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. They show a keen sense of responsibility. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and recognise fairness to be important. Pupil welfare is paramount, and the excellent measures and procedures to safeguard and promote this and the health and safety of the pupils are thorough and successful. Staff are suitably trained and all required checks and records are in place.
- 2.3 The quality of governance is excellent, with well-defined structures, which enables governors to provide effective oversight of the school. Governors offer a wide range of experience and a number have undertaken relevant training. They have clearly defined roles and discharge their statutory duties responsibly. Leadership and management of the school are excellent overall. Structures and routines are clear, comprehensive and well communicated, and are effective at all levels. Roles and responsibilities are clear although leadership skills in some areas of senior and middle management are not strongly developed. The school promotes highly successful links with parents, who responded extremely positively to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Continue to develop and embed recently introduced assessment procedures to improve monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school.
 2. Provide training in leadership skills for senior and middle managers.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements is excellent overall, in line with the school's aim to allow all pupils to feel valued and to develop skills, attitudes, concepts and knowledge. Pupils are articulate and listen well. They are able to reason and develop solutions for themselves. Pupils are well grounded in literacy, with an emphasis on reading, comprehension and spelling. Mathematical and numerical skills are continually extended and pupils have the ability to apply them effectively in other subjects, such as science and geography. Pupils have a high level of understanding and well-developed skills across a broad range of subjects. They successfully apply their knowledge, and think and act critically and creatively, responding to high expectations. The pupils' skills in ICT are developing well, and the use of these in cross-curricular activities is increasingly integrated into the wider curriculum, particularly in the areas of research, presentation of graphs and writing.
- 3.2 The pupils show understanding, ask searching questions, give considered answers, analyse and reason well. Excellent examples of sensitive and thoughtful evaluation of each other's work were observed during lessons. These skills are well developed, particularly in science, religious studies (RS), English, and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), where pupils are willing to risk an opinion and happy to share ideas. Art work displayed around the school invites discussion amongst pupils and they expressed their enjoyment of creating an original piece of art. Notable successes have been achieved by pupils who have attended activities, for example in music as winners of a local festival choral competition, as finalists in Independent Association of Prep Schools chess and swimming competitions, and as county winners in athletics.
- 3.3 Pupils' attainments cannot be measured in relation to performance against a fixed national average, but on the evidence available from the inspection, it is judged to be above average. In relation to their abilities, this represents good progress. Pupils with LDD are well supported in class and make good progress as a result, as do gifted and talented pupils, who enjoy opportunities for investigative work throughout the curriculum. Over the last four years, all pupils have achieved entry to their first choice senior schools, many gaining awards.
- 3.4 The pupils show good attitudes to learning. They persevere well in tasks set and are eager to achieve high levels of success. A striking feature is the pupils' enjoyment of their lessons; in interviews, they showed great interest and enthusiasm in talking about their subjects and activities. The presentation of work is of a high quality. Examples within lessons of pupils engaging in independent learning were frequent. Pupils are focused, and able to sustain concentration.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.5 The contribution made by the curriculum is excellent, and meets the aims of the school. The curriculum is balanced, structured and stimulating, accessible and suited to all pupils. It offers pupils opportunities to develop both inside and outside the classroom through the setting and maintaining of high academic standards. Good opportunities allow pupils to discover and develop individual talents and interests within a framework that is secure yet challenging.
- 3.6 Curriculum planning is thorough and, supported by detailed policy documents; it ensures continuity of education and progress across the years. Schemes of work are comprehensive, both in the medium and long term, and take account of assessment data that is collected at regular intervals during the pupils' time at the school.
- 3.7 The preparation of pupils for the next stage of their education is excellent and is built on the aim to ensure that pupils achieve and follow individually tailored requirements for their chosen school. Through the subjects of the National Curriculum and the addition of PSHCE, RS, French, Latin and Greek, there are many excellent opportunities for pupils to think critically and work independently. Pupils within each year are grouped according to their abilities to ensure they meet the right level of academic challenge.
- 3.8 Skills associated with speaking and listening are developed in English and RS lessons where pupils have opportunities to think, discuss, make judgements and draw conclusions on topical issues. The physical education and games curriculum enables pupils to participate in and enjoy a range of physical activities, whether as individuals, in groups or in teams.
- 3.9 The needs of those pupils with LDD are met well and the school carefully monitors their progress. The close liaison between learning support staff and classroom teachers ensures that the needs of these pupils are met. Gifted and talented pupils also enjoy appropriate provision.
- 3.10 The extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, both inside and outside school, offers opportunities for developing creative, sporting and academic interests. These are well attended and pupils speak enthusiastically of them. A wide range of opportunities is offered for pupils of all ages to visit local places of interest, including museums and theatres. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are able to join residential trips where they undertake a number of challenging outdoor activities as part of developing their social skills and confidence. Visits to the Continent include educational trips to France in Years 5, 6 and 7. The choir is currently preparing for a musical singing tour to Rome.
- 3.11 The school positively encourages pupils to contribute to the life of the local community and links are strong. Included are the choir singing in residential homes, contributions to an annual local Dickens festival and the distribution of harvest gifts to a local family 'drop-in' centre. Visitors to the school speak to the pupils about a variety of occupations and professions.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The quality of teaching is excellent overall, supporting the school's aims. Lessons are well planned and meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, including those who require support for their learning, enabling them to acquire new knowledge, make progress, increase their understanding and develop their skills. Lessons are characterised by varied and effective teaching methods, together with good pace and challenge. Open-ended questioning supports and develops learning, and allows pupils to develop their own strategies and ideas.
- 3.13 The teaching encourages pupils to strive to the best of their abilities, enabling them to work well independently, reflect thoughtfully, and contribute openly and confidently when developing and exchanging ideas. It further stimulates and encourages many aspects of the pupils' intellectual, physical and creative development. With good use of time, they have opportunities for research, independent work and investigations. However, pupils are sometimes not sufficiently encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, unlike in the many well-planned lessons where they are enabled to make good use of the opportunities provided. Classroom behaviour is exemplary, with pupils always willing to add to class learning in a most constructive manner when invited to discuss or to offer their own views and ideas.
- 3.14 Assessment arrangements provide good support for learning. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly both formally and informally. New systems being introduced for assessing the pupils' progress throughout the school in order to track this more accurately are not yet fully established, although planning is beginning to take account of data gathered. Marking is regular and clear. Meaningful comments written by some teachers as a dialogue with pupils, which may be continued orally in class, offer additional help and encouragement.
- 3.15 Teachers are well qualified and have a good knowledge of their subjects, which they share with their pupils. Good resources are used effectively to support teaching and learning. ICT is employed well in lessons and the pupils are confident in its use.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. The school's aim, to value each pupil and adult, and to promote the ideals of community, good citizenship and equal opportunity, is fully achieved. This builds further on the good practice in place at the last inspection. The ethos of the school and its Christian values are held in high regard by pupils and staff. Across the school, pupils' social and emotional development is given a high priority.
- 4.2 Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They are confident and articulate, and have a tremendous sense of pride in their own and others' achievements. Acknowledgement and celebration of success, and praise for something well done, are all part of the school's life, through which the pupils develop self-confidence and self-belief. They learn to value and respect themselves and others. High quality art work around the school highlights pupils' fascination with the process of creating an original piece of art, and their obvious pride and enjoyment in the result.
- 4.3 Through their work in the creative arts and RS, pupils develop an appreciation of different faiths, and associated cultures and traditions. Assemblies and chapel services invite pupils and staff to join together in celebrating school and individual successes. Time for quiet reflection allows pupils to value their contribution to the well-being of their school.
- 4.4 Moral development, which permeates daily life at the school, is outstanding; pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and recognise fairness as important. Behaviour within and outside the classroom is of a consistently high standard. Charity events have raised a considerable sum of money to build and equip an additional classroom for a school in Kenya. Many other charities, both local and national, are supported through an extensive range of pupil-led fund-raising activities. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefit of charitable giving.
- 4.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent social awareness and feel that they are a valued part of a caring school. Older pupils show consideration for younger pupils. Through the PSHCE course, the personal development of pupils is enhanced as they learn about public institutions, social services, the wider community and how they should respond in difficult situations, including bullying. They know who they can turn to for help and advice if they have a difficulty. A relaxed yet respectful relationship between pupils and staff allows them to share the common goals of a joy of learning and seeking to do their best, whatever the task. Year 8 pupils are enthusiastic about taking on responsibility as 'captains' and are dedicated to helping improve their school. The 'head boy' and 'head girl' appoint a selection of pupils to form a food committee to liaise with the catering staff about menus for meals.
- 4.6 Pupils develop culturally very successfully; they display a strong interest in and respect for their own and other cultures and faiths. They are tolerant, open-minded and keen to engage with and understand cultural differences. Pupils were eager to speak of opportunities to develop their independent thinking and consider world issues, along with an understanding of the needs of people in other countries. The level of understanding, tolerance and harmony throughout the school is excellent. The Christian ethos is evident in the school's aims, alongside studies of other world religions.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.7 The quality of the pastoral care and the attention given to the welfare of pupils is excellent throughout the school. The caring and friendly environment is a major strength of the whole school, where pupils feel valued and independence is fostered. The pupils' welfare is paramount in the aims and ethos of the school, and the measures and procedures to safeguard and promote this and the health and safety of the pupils are comprehensive and most successful; they are kept constantly under review. Staff are supported in the day-to-day pastoral care of their pupils by a well-planned structure. Parents are extremely happy with the care, help and guidance given to their children.
- 4.8 The school has effective measures in place to promote good discipline and behaviour, which are understood by all pupils. Pupils of all ages move around the school purposefully and happily, and settle quickly into lessons. The anti-bullying procedures are highly effective and include the development of awareness of cyber-bullying through PSHCE and ICT lessons.
- 4.9 A caring atmosphere pervades all areas of school life. All staff take opportunities to promote the pupils' welfare through praise and encouragement. Due to the excellent arrangements the school has put in place, pupils are confident that they can ask an adult for support if they have a concern. Strong relationships exist between pupils and staff, and amongst pupils themselves. Members of staff know the pupils well.
- 4.10 Through the school curriculum, and with the support of the school nurses, pupils are taught the importance of choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical exercise. The school provides a choice of freshly prepared, balanced and nutritious meals.
- 4.11 The safeguarding of pupils is good; all staff are properly trained and all required checks and records are in place. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards; regular fire drills are held and staff receive fire training. Health and safety procedures are effective, with risk assessments covering all aspects of school life. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. The admission and attendance registers have been accurately maintained and stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.12 The quality of the boarding experience is excellent and fully supports the ethos of the school that success follows success, whether in or outside the classroom, and occurs naturally in pupils who are happy and motivated. The good quality facilities seen at the time of the last Ofsted inspection in November 2008 have been maintained and developed, and all recommendations made have been addressed. Boarding accommodation is provided in two buildings. The main school has junior and senior houses for boys who board and there is a separate building a short walk from the main school for girl boarders. New boarders are made welcome with an informative handbook. The school has two weekend exeats per term.
- 4.13 Relationships within boarding, both between pupils and adults, and amongst pupils themselves, are excellent and positively support pupils towards developing their independence whilst offering a consistent and highly effective level of care. This is much appreciated by the boarders and their parents. Pupils say that staff in the boarding houses help to create a family atmosphere.

- 4.14 The pupils enjoy their boarding experience; for example, they welcome the many opportunities available for hobbies and recreation, and enjoy the social aspects. Activities in the evenings and at the weekends are well organised and give pupils a range of experiences.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The structure of the governing body is well defined and enables governors to provide effective oversight of the school. Governors offer a wide range of experience and expertise, and a number have a personal connection with the school. All new governors have an induction day at school and a number have undertaken relevant training. Governors now have clear, specific roles including safeguarding, regulatory compliance, staff welfare, health and safety, and boarding. Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities effectively, and take a full part in the overall strategic planning, educational development and management of the school, and provide critical support as necessary. Governors work actively with the headmaster to ensure that a high quality of education is provided and that the aims and values of the school are upheld. Much time has been given to formulating a plan for the future development of the school.
- 5.2 Improved systems of communication enable governors to keep in touch with the progress of the school. The chairman meets regularly with the headmaster. Governors frequently visit the school and meet with staff. Senior staff are now invited to address governors at their summer term meeting. All policies, including those for health and safety, and child protection, are reviewed annually.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 Overall, the quality of leadership and management is excellent. Structures and routines are clear, comprehensive and well communicated. Leadership and management are effective and exercised always in a considerate and sensitive manner.
- 5.4 Through the headmaster and management team, the school is led with vision and a commitment to achieving the best possible standards in academic pursuits, pastoral care and the personal development of pupils. A clearer vision and educational direction for the school have emerged, which have inspired a growing fulfilment and confidence amongst the staff and which allow significant delegation to take place. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined although leadership skills in a few areas of senior and middle management are not fully developed. The school's development plan is comprehensive; it is based on a thorough evaluation of current provision and is the result of extensive consultation.
- 5.5 Senior staff work closely together, combining their expertise to set high standards and expectations for themselves and for others for whom they are responsible. Middle managers are successful in monitoring and improving standards in the quality of teaching and learning.
- 5.6 The management team meets regularly each week to discuss matters of current importance in routine management and to plan pro-actively for future developments in the school. Minutes are kept, and decisions are made and effectively implemented across the school.
- 5.7 There are appropriate arrangements for the recruitment of suitable staff. Recruitment procedures are efficient and safe, and all checks on staff, regular

assistants and visitors are undertaken and recorded correctly. Arrangements for induction for staff new to the school are excellent. This includes support before joining to ensure a smooth start to their career in the school. The school pays careful attention to the development of its staff. All teachers take part in a regular appraisal system.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.8 The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents that makes valuable contributions to the pupils' learning and personal development. This maintains the high standard seen at the time of the previous inspection.
- 5.9 The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire completed by about one-third of the parents indicate that they are very satisfied with the school. They were particularly pleased with the teaching, their children's progress and achievement, the range of subjects taught, the worthwhile attitudes and values the school promotes, and the standard of behaviour. Parents and pupils are pleased with the quality of education and care provided by the school. The inspectors agree that these views are fully justified. A small minority of parents expressed some concern about the lack of information about the school. The inspectors judge that the school offers good opportunities for parents to obtain the information required.
- 5.10 Communication with parents is strong and meets all requirements for the provision of information, which is helpful and informative, and includes a parents' handbook. Parents receive regular, informative newsletters. Detailed reports are issued twice termly, keep parents informed of their children's progress and include guidance as to how pupils might improve their work. Formal parents' evenings are held regularly for each year group.
- 5.11 The school handles the concerns of parents carefully and sensitively. Close communication between home and school ensures that most difficulties are resolved informally and speedily. An appropriate formal complaints procedure is in place.
- 5.12 Parents have suitable opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school. They give generously of their time and support the pupils well. The Friends of Wellesley group's events, both social and fund-raising, further support activities at the school. Recent projects have allowed for the purchase of electronic whiteboards.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Frank Skipwith

Mr Henry Phillips

Mr Vaughan Jelley

Reporting Inspector

Head, IAPS school

Deputy Head, IAPS school