



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Wellington College

June 2023

School's details

School	Wellington College			
DfE number	867/6001			
Registered charity number	309093			
Address	Wellington College Dukes Ride Crowthorne Berkshire RG45 7PU			
Telephone number	01344 444000			
Email address	info@wellingtoncollege.org.uk			
Master	Mr James Dahl			
Chair of governors	Mr William Jackson			
Age range	13–18			
Number of pupils on roll	1095			
	Day pupils	231	Boarders	864
	Seniors	612	Sixth Form	483
Date of inspection	27 June 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Wellington College is an independent, co-educational boarding and day school. Opened in 1859, it is a Christian foundation which welcomes pupils from all faiths. The school has a board of governors, who are also the trustees of the Wellington College charity. The school offers two curricula in the sixth form: A levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Pupils are mostly from the United Kingdom, with a small minority of boarders from Asia, Europe, North America and elsewhere. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has 294 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are 48 pupils who are either bilingual and have English as an additional language (EAL), and all are able to access the curriculum fully. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in May 2022.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to a change the age range from 13 to 18 to 12 to 19 and increase the maximum number of pupils from 1100 to 1200. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 2, paragraph 5 (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety); NMS 9	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety); NMS 10	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils); NMS 20	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18–21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 5, paragraphs 23–30 (premises and accommodation); NMS 4	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5]

- 2.1 The school meets the standard.
- 2.2 Pupils throughout the school follow a wellbeing curriculum which appropriately promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (SMSC). This is bespoke curriculum, the content of which appropriately meets the regulatory requirements. Pupil forum groups have significant input into the SMSC programme content. Senior leaders produce a curriculum audit, which is monitored by the education sub-committee of the governing board. Beyond the taught programme the majority of pupils participate in the 'Global Citizenship' programme which promotes sustainability, leadership and cultural understanding beyond the UK. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and LGBTQ+ pupil committees promote racial and diversity awareness through regular meetings and awareness raising activities. The pupils show clear awareness of the school's direct link with the armed services through its foundation as a memorial to the Duke of Wellington.
- 2.3 The school's initiative against sexual violence, developed together with an outside agency, provides an age appropriate and sensitively balanced series of sex and consent related educational lessons. This programme operates as part of the extended pastoral programme and is highly valued by the pupils. The course appropriately supports the pupil code of conduct and has resulted in the pupils' development of a heightened awareness of their responsibilities in promoting appropriate and respectful pupil relationships. 'Inclusion Ambassadors' operate in each boarding house to support and develop an inclusive culture. Pupils receive training around EDI and promoting inclusive behaviours within the house setting. Events to celebrate Black History, Women's History, LGBTQ+ and neurodiversity include a series of assemblies as well as themed talks and workshops by visitors. These enable pupils to deepen their understanding and respect of others. The 'All Faiths' group promotes awareness and understanding of different faiths and beliefs effectively through sharing celebration and the wider details of these faiths amongst the community.
- 2.4 The current arrangements for SMSC are likely to meet the needs of the increase in age range and number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.5 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.6 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.7 The school meets the standards.
- 2.8 Safeguarding arrangements are well known by all staff and implemented effectively. Senior leaders ensure appropriate support for pupils' needs, including pupils with SEND. Records confirm that staff listen to children and take appropriate and timely action when they raise concerns. This includes in cases where allegations of inappropriate relationships arise, either inside or outside the school. There is timely and appropriate communication with external agencies when this is required and appropriate support is offered to both victim and perpetrator. Pupils unanimously expressed confidence in being able to talk to a range of staff about any safeguarding concerns they may have. A comprehensive

sexual education programme, designed with input from staff, pupils and parents, includes appropriate components on sex and consent. These provide effective guidance about the dangers and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and relationships. Regular pupil surveys target inappropriate behaviours and senior pupils join staff in safeguarding walks across the campus. These include visits to day and boarding houses to promote the school's safeguarding culture and encourage pupils to share their concerns.

- 2.9 All staff receive regular and appropriate training, including on their Prevent responsibilities, and have been trained on the recent changes in statutory guidance and online safety. When new staff are appointed, they complete a comprehensive induction process which ensures they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff spoken with showed appropriate familiarity with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) Part 1 and Annex B. They understand the code of conduct for staff and whistleblowing procedures. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies have sufficient time, status and authority to undertake their roles. They have the appropriate level of training, which is in line with local procedures. The DSL provides regular updates to all staff and opportunities to discuss any changes to safeguarding policies and their implementation.
- 2.10 Staff recognise the importance of 'early help' and intervention strategies. They are clear about the procedures for reporting any concerns about pupils and they implement these appropriately. Staff understand the types of child-on-child abuse that can occur, including sexual harassment or sexual violence, and the need to react to and appropriately report such behaviours. Appropriate and detailed records of any safeguarding concerns are maintained, including of low-level concerns. Records of safeguarding incidents demonstrate a culture in which detailed analysis of any incidents takes place. This is supported by effective monitoring systems, overseen by the safeguarding governor. Senior leaders liaise appropriately and promptly both with parents and the local safeguarding partnerships.
- 2.11 There are appropriate measures in place to handle any allegations against adults working in the school. Staff understand these and are prepared to report any concerns they may have. The governing board undertakes an annual safeguarding review with due diligence. All governors receive suitable safeguarding training. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for all governing board meetings. Governors demonstrate suitable rigour in their oversight of arrangements, which includes undertaking a review of any safeguarding incidents that may occur.
- 2.12 The current arrangements are likely to meet the needs of the increase in age range and number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11; NMS 9]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school has a suitably structured health and safety organisation. The school health and safety representatives meet regularly with governing board sub-committee members who have specialist knowledge in health and safety matters. Half termly reports are made to the full board. Governors undertake regular auditing of policy and procedures. All staff have suitable health and safety induction training. There are regular updates for both staff and governors on a termly basis, supplemented by online training as required. Appropriate health and safety checks are undertaken and recorded effectively. All injuries are recorded appropriately with those requiring medical attention being referred to suitably qualified nurses in the health centre. There is clear and appropriate guidance for staff leading trips and excursions, including those for pupils venturing overseas or on adventurous training. Security arrangements are appropriate. Access to the site is controlled in so far as is reasonably practical given the nature of the school site and its semi-rural location.

- 2.15 Site tours and discussions with school leaders confirmed that the current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increase in age range and number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12; NMS 10]

- 2.16 The school meets the standards.
- 2.17 The school meets the compliance requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by ensuring that the fire safety policy and all fire risk assessments are reviewed appropriately. Fire evacuation procedures are regularly rehearsed by staff and pupils, at least on a termly basis, with a report being made to the risk and compliance governing board committee. These include drills in boarding time. All school buildings are fitted with a fire alarm system and are serviced annually by external fire engineers, ensuring that the school has effective fire prevention arrangements. Scrutiny of records of fire risk assessments, fire evacuation procedures and logs of the maintenance of alarms, detectors and servicing arrangements confirm that fire safety is suitably promoted.
- 2.18 During site tours and in discussions with the college leaders, there was no indication that an increase in age range and pupil numbers and age would have an adverse impact on fire safety arrangements.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.19 The school meets the standards.
- 2.20 Appropriate arrangements ensure that pupils of all age groups are suitably supervised and that their individual needs, such as those of pupils with SEND, are taken into account. Throughout the school, staff to pupil ratios are appropriate and a number of extra staff appointments are already in place to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Guidance for staff involved in supervision duties is detailed and risk assessments are used to ensure that supervision levels are always appropriate. At all times pupils are supervised by qualified and experienced staff who know and understand their needs. Where senior pupils assist with younger pupils, the school ensures that they are directed and supervised in their duties. Satisfactory staff supervision is in place to ensure appropriate supervision of pupils during all break and lunch time periods, including when they are using the school's recreation and sports facilities. Supervision arrangements in boarding are appropriate, including at night.
- 2.21 The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increase in age range and pupil numbers envisaged in the material change request.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; NMS 9]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 An efficient and effective approach is taken to managing risk to ensure the welfare of all pupils in the school. An appropriate risk assessment policy is in place, and staff have all received training in assessing risk for their respective areas and for organising school outings, including overseas trips. Scrutiny of risk assessment documents show that appropriate evaluations are undertaken across all age groups, which include consideration of the needs of any vulnerable pupils. These identify likely risks and provide suitable measures to mitigate these. All risk assessments are reviewed and signed off by senior leaders, including oversight of school trips both in the UK and overseas. Governance, through the risk and compliance committees, provide suitable oversight of the risk assessment process

and its implementation. External consultants are engaged to give professional advice where required. Appropriate pupil welfare risk assessments are produced to support vulnerable pupils.

- 2.24 The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increased number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.25 The school meets the standards.
- 2.26 The school ensures that it carries out the appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff prior to a person beginning work in the college. These include checks of the person's identity, right to work in the UK and overseas checks, where applicable. In addition, appropriate teaching and management prohibition checks are carried out if required, and all staff complete a medical self-declaration form. Part time staff, volunteers and governors are all subject to the appropriate checking procedures, and senior management and governors undertake routine spot checks of the single central register and associated staff files. All staff files contain a useful summary sheet of checks carried out, and these correspond to the details held on the single central register.
- 2.27 The current arrangements are likely to be sufficient to meet the needs of the increase in age range and number of pupils envisaged in the material change request.

Premises and accommodation [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23–30; NMS 4]

- 2.28 The school meets the standards.
- 2.29 Tours of the school's accommodation confirmed that adequate toilet, washing and changing facilities are available to all pupils in the school, including within the day and boarding houses. Separate and appropriately labelled toilet facilities are provided for pupils, and suitable changing and showering facilities are provided for all pupils when taking part in physical education. Separate facilities are available for staff and visitors to the school. All the above facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in age range and pupil population.
- 2.30 Tours of the school campus visiting teaching and recreation areas indicated that maintenance regimes are of an appropriate standard, suitably managed and documented. The school uses an online system for reporting maintenance requirements which prioritises responses in terms of the health and safety priority of the item logged. Governors provide suitable oversight, and management of maintenance and refurbishment. Additional input is provided by members of the school's health-and-safety committee. The above provision and facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in age range and the pupil numbers.
- 2.31 A suitable health centre, staffed by qualified nurses, enables 24/7 coverage of the health needs of the pupils, including boarders. The provision includes separate facilities for male and female pupils including an isolation facility. There are eight single bedded rooms available for pupil use, with suitable wash basin facilities and adjacent toilets, including a facility for a disabled pupil if required. Additionally, consultant rooms are available for the general practitioner who visits each weekday and for other support agencies. Pupils' medical notes and reports are confidentially secured as are any medicines, which are kept in locked cupboards in the health centre offices. All the above facilities are suitable to meet the requirements of the projected material change requirements.
- 2.32 Tours of the school's accommodation confirmed that suitable acoustic and lighting arrangements and water supplies are in place and suitable throughout the school. Adequate sound insulation is provided where required. Boarding accommodation is appropriate for sleeping, private study and relaxation. The new sixth form boarding house and new sixth form centre are intended to provide additional

accommodation and resources for older pupils, including those in the higher age range proposed in the application. Internal and external lighting is adequate for the needs of the pupils and staff. External lighting for security purposes also allows evening functions to take place across the college campus after dark. Suitable water supplies are available across all areas of the college with hot and cold water as required, including ready access to drinking water. The current facilities, including the new buildings, when commissioned, will be likely to be suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in age range and school pupil population.

- 2.33 All age groups in the school site have direct access to suitable and appropriate spaces for physical education, recreation and relaxation. Boarding and day pupils have access to an appropriate range of facilities. These include a sports and fitness centre; tennis courts; indoor and outdoor pools; and an extensive area of grass playing fields. The size and variety of the current provision means that pupils can be divided up into age-appropriate specific groups as required. The current facilities are suitable to meet the needs of the projected increase in age range and the population.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.34 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website and are provided to parents on request.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.35 The school meets the standards.
- 2.36 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards and requirements are met consistently, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Members of the governing board regularly monitor the required standards and ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and relevant to the college's needs. The inspection visit confirmed that the senior management and the governing board have been effectively managing a gradual increase in pupil numbers across all sections of the school. A strategic development plan, covering the years 2022 to 2025, informs this process. Scrutiny of senior management and governing board minutes confirms that suitably careful consideration has been made of the implications of the proposed increase in ages and numbers of pupils.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 Current growth, planned for and monitored appropriately, is likely to see the school exceed its current maximum number of 1100 pupils. Facilities and provision during the visit were found to be appropriate for a maximum number of 1200 pupils and an increase in age range to cover 12 to 19-year-old pupils. It is therefore recommended that approval be given to allow the number of pupils on roll to increase to the requested maximum number and to allow the age range to be adjusted as requested.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with chair of governors. He visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mr Tony Halliwell

Reporting inspector