

# The Wellington Academy

Tidworth Road, Ludgershall, Wiltshire SP11 9RR

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

The Wellington Academy is a state day and boarding school for children and young people aged 11 to 19 years. The Wellington Academy is part of the Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust.

The Wellington Academy provides boarding for up to 100 children and young people. At the time of inspection, there were 38 children and young people boarding.

Boarding accommodation is purpose-built and is on the academy's campus. It provides accommodation for boys and girls in two separate inter-joining houses.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 18 to 20 May 2022

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected      requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Date of last inspection:** 23 January 2018

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Boarders benefit from boarding, both academically and socially. Boarders say that since being at this school their confidence has grown, they have learned new skills and feel well prepared for moving to university and adulthood. Boarders' attendance and school and academic achievements exceed that of day pupils.

The quality of care and support that the boarders receive is good. House parents skilfully build positive relationships with the boarders and, as a result, they know them well. Boarders say that if they have any worries or concerns, they feel able to speak to any of the boarding staff.

Boarders are unanimous in their views that they thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience. They say that it feels like 'home from home'. They feel respected and listened to. Boarders found it difficult to identify any areas that could improve their boarding experience.

An impressive outcome of boarding is the secure friendships that boarders make. Boarders say that they have made 'friends for life' and they stay in touch with them during the holidays. Boarders enjoy having the option to invite friends who do not board to spend the evening with them, stay for dinner and have sleepovers. These positive opportunities help relationships to flourish.

Boarders enjoy a wide range of activities both on site and in the local community. This helps their health, well-being and social skills. They say that they look forward to the weekend activities and that day trips out, such as go-karting, are fun.

Boarders have a good understanding of each other's diverse cultural needs. They say that their cultural and religious needs are met, and they enjoy meeting and getting to know children and young people from other cultures and religions. Inspectors noted very positive interactions and relationships between boarders. Despite this positive outcome, the boarders' induction into boarding does not include informing them about how their religious and cultural needs will be met.

Leaders and managers ensure that the health needs of the boarders are clearly understood and met. The management of medicines is effective.

Generally, the boarding accommodation is homely and welcoming. Boarders make good use of the communal areas. However, some areas including the corridors where the bedrooms are located, and bathing facilities, are looking tired and worn. This detracts from the homely environment that boarding staff have created in other areas.

Generally, boarders enjoy the meals that are provided. They have access to snacks in addition to mealtimes. Some boarders say that there are inconsistencies in the

quality of the food that is provided. Boarders who attend the food committee have shared their concerns with the boarding staff. Appropriate action is being taken to address the boarders' concerns.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Leaders and managers' prompt oversight of health and safety concerns, specifically fire safety, requires improvement. Leaders and managers took too long to rectify faulty fire evacuation doors. While these doors were working properly during the inspection, health and safety records show that they had been reported faulty for nine consecutive weeks before being fixed. Delays in repairing the faulty doors had the potential to place boarders, staff and visitors at risk. Fire evacuation records do not confirm that all boarders and staff have taken part in drills or attended fire awareness training.

Staff manage risk effectively. However, the quality of written risk assessments does not support direct practice well enough. These documents are not specific enough about the current risks for all boarders.

Safeguarding concerns are managed well. Leaders and managers ensure that they maintain effective links with safeguarding agencies. All potential safeguarding concerns are reviewed by the school's safeguarding team, which follows safeguarding procedures effectively. Boarders have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Behaviour is well managed. There have been no reported incidents of the use of physical intervention, bullying or theft. Boarders show care and respect for one another. Boarders say that when house rules are broken, consequences are fair. However, consequences used are not always restorative, which can limit the opportunity for learning.

Leaders and managers ensure that there are effective recruitment and selection processes in place that safeguard children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The head of boarding has been in their role since the last inspection and understands the benefits of boarding life. Together, they are committed to providing good-quality boarding provision. Boarding is seen as an integral part of the school. Senior leaders and managers are motivated and ambitious to learn from inspection and monitoring activities to drive improvement.

Leaders and managers are very visible, and their accessible approach is appreciated by the boarding staff. The boarding staff team is consistent and stable. Staff members say that they feel very well led and managed. Boarding staff enjoy working

with the boarders. One member of staff summed this up by telling the inspector, 'The boarding house runs well. Members of staff work together to ensure that the boarders are the focus of everything we do.' Other staff echoed this feedback. The inspector saw this happening in practice.

Senior leaders and managers have established an inclusive culture. Communication and information-sharing is good and means that boarding and education staff work well together. This cohesive approach has resulted in a supportive and open culture and means that the school values are applied across all aspects of boarding and educational life.

Weaknesses identified at this inspection relate to the effectiveness of leaders and managers' oversight of some records. Weaknesses in records include fire safety, risk assessments and staff supervision. To date, these weaknesses have not had a significant impact on the boarders, but have the potential to do so if not addressed.

All boarding staff have completed basic mandatory training that enables them to meet the needs of boarders. Senior house parents are qualified to undertake their role effectively. However, opportunities for boarding staff to improve their professional development have not yet been considered, for example obtaining additional qualifications relating to the care and support of children.

Generally, the boarding accommodation is homely and welcoming. However, leaders and managers have not prioritised or scheduled an ongoing maintenance programme. For example, some corridors and bathrooms are looking tired and worn, which undermines a homely environment.

## **What does the boarding school need to do to improve? Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (NMS 7.1)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (NMS 13.9)

### **Recommendations**

- The provider should continue to review the need and purpose of using surveillance cameras inside the boarding accommodation.
- The provider should ensure that all boarding staff receive regular reflective supervision.
- The provider should continue to review the quality of food provided to boarders.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Boarding school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC459408

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Steven Paddock

**Type of school:** Boarding School

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## **Inspectors**

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector

David Kidner, Social Care Inspector

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