

# School inspection report

14 to 16 January 2025

## Wellingborough School

London Road

Wellingborough

Northamptonshire

NN8 2BX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have a clear vision for school development based on effective monitoring and self-evaluation. Leaders are well supported by governors who contribute a wide range of relevant specialist experience, enabling them to ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
2. The curriculum is suitably broad and designed to meet the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. Children in the early years are provided with a suitable range of activities which develop their skills. Teaching is effective in considering the needs and prior attainment of pupils so that they make good progress. Pupils' performance is systematically monitored, and this information is used by leaders to ensure that support is targeted effectively.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because of the appropriate and personalised support they receive.
4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) rapidly acquire fluency in English because of the targeted and appropriate support they receive from teaching and pastoral staff.
5. The curriculum is complemented by a well-resourced co-curricular programme, which benefits pupils of all ages and abilities. The programme is wide-ranging and well-coordinated and is designed to support pupils' skills, interests and personal development. Pupils' participation is closely monitored, and the programme is adapted to meet pupils' changing interests. This is a significant strength of the school.
6. Pupils' emotional and mental health is successfully supported by pastoral staff, tutors, the wellbeing centre and house staff in the houses. Consequently, pupils have a number of adults to whom they can go with any concerns. Behaviour is generally good around the school and in lessons.
7. There is a systematic approach to the management of health and safety at the school. Measures to mitigate risk are suitably implemented and reviewed. Fire safety protocols are well understood. First aid is readily available.
8. Pupils have a ready understanding of tolerance and respect for others. Effective links with the local community ensure that pupils are well informed and well prepared to contribute positively to British society. Pupils benefit from a well-structured careers education programme at the upper end of the senior school which enables them to make informed choices about their next steps. However, this programme is less well developed in the younger years of the senior school.
9. Governors review safeguarding practices rigorously at the school and staff understand the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders carry out recruitment checks correctly, and these are recorded appropriately. Pupils know how to keep safe, including online. Leaders have a strategic approach to the management of risk and take effective and appropriate action to mitigate the risks identified.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen careers education in the lower years of the secondary school so that these pupils are better informed about options for their next steps.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders and managers have the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, including actively promoting the wellbeing of pupils. Governors assure themselves that the Standards are met by effective scrutiny and monitoring of the school's practice and procedures. They provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders.
11. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and areas for further development, and carefully consider the impact that their actions have on pupils' wellbeing and success. They are informed about formulating strategy through methodical and detailed self-evaluation.
12. Leaders manage any parental complaints appropriately and keep thorough records of these and any actions taken by the school in response. Complaints are dealt with within the timeframes stated in the school's policy.
13. Parents receive reports regularly about pupils' progress, attitudes and attainment. All other required information, including the school's aims and ethos, is made available to parents, largely through the school's informative website. The school annually reviews the provision for any pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan and provides funding local authorities a statement of income and expenditure annually.
14. Leaders have a comprehensive and robust approach to risk management. Leaders have an effective understanding of physical, welfare and safeguarding risks and respond with urgency and diligence to areas of risk when identified. Risk assessments identify potential risks thoroughly and detail appropriate steps taken to reduce or remove these. Leaders systematically monitor risk assessments to check their continued effectiveness.
15. Leaders have developed a detailed accessibility plan that includes actions to facilitate access to the premises for any pupils with a disability. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders structure the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and balanced to match pupils' ages and aptitudes. The curriculum helps to prepare pupils for their future lives by enabling them to perform in music and drama with confidence, create detailed artworks and solve complex mathematical problems. There is an appropriate focus on the development of practical skills in science, and pupils work effectively both collaboratively and independently. Clear schemes of work and centralised resources ensure that appropriate plans are in place to support pupils' progress.
18. Communication and language skills are given appropriate priority in the early years. Children are encouraged to speak clearly and to listen to stories to help them gain new vocabulary. Older pupils across the school use subject-specific terminology accurately.
19. Pupils are well supported in their acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons are well planned with a clear understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils. Leadership in the early years setting ensures that appropriately qualified staff deliver a programme of activities that is suitable to children's educational needs and enables them to enhance their skills.
20. Pupils who speak EAL are supported in lessons, with teachers liaising with specialist staff who provide individualised support for each pupil. This support is age-appropriate and tailored to the needs of each pupil, for example through a focus on literacy and the sounds that letters represent for younger pupils. This enables these pupils to take a fuller part in their learning and to make good progress.
21. Effective teaching and high-quality resources enable pupils to access challenging content. Positive reinforcement, alongside supportive and constructive feedback from teachers, enables pupils to be increasingly secure in their understanding of curriculum content and to acquire additional knowledge and problem-solving skills. Careful exposition by teachers enables pupils to make cross-curricular links. Thoughtful questioning and reinforcement of subject-specific vocabulary enables pupils to access challenging subject matter. Pupils gain confidence from a collaborative approach to feedback with their teachers, which enables pupils to respond to marking and to redraft their work in order to improve.
22. At all ages, pupils' progress is systematically assessed and monitored. Performance tracking is rigorous. Teachers use this information to inform their lesson planning. Leaders use this data to identify relative strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and to identify pupils who require additional support. Data shows that pupils, including those who have SEND, make good progress. Pupils perform well at GCSE and A level. Detailed reports and parents' evenings ensure that parents are informed of their child's progress and attitudes.
23. Leaders have implemented effective systems for the identification of pupils who have SEND which are well understood by all staff. Teachers are supported by the learning development team to provide targeted provision and adapt their lessons, enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning and personal development.
24. The curriculum is complemented and supported by a well-resourced activities programme which benefits pupils of all ages. The programme is exceptionally wide-ranging and there is a focus on the development of pupils' teamwork and leadership skills and their wellbeing. Along with well-established activities, the programme frequently changes and develops in response to pupils' needs

and interests. This is because of the commitment of staff to listening to the needs and interests of pupils. Pupil-led initiatives, such as the astronomy club, are encouraged and well supported. Pupils' participation is systematically monitored and supported so that all pupils have the opportunity to take part appropriately. The programme engenders enthusiastic commitment as well as developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**25. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

26. Pupils respect each other and celebrate difference. They recognise and value the diversity of their school community. The pupil-led equality and inclusion group are successful in promoting values of inclusivity in the school and this enables all pupils to understand the importance of respect for others.
27. The school promotes pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils are supported by pastoral staff in year groups and in the single-sex houses, which ensures that they are able to name a variety of adults to support them. Positive relationships are developed across the school through focused encouragement and praise provided by teachers. Pupils are happy to speak to their tutors about concerns and understand that further support is available at the wellbeing centre if required. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons help pupils of all ages to understand how to safeguard their own physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as that of others.
28. Pupils' wellbeing is supported by a range of physical activities provided through physical education (PE) lessons and the games curriculum. Pupils learn about the benefits of exercise, warming up and sports-specific skills such as those in netball and football. These are complemented by a range of sports options available in the activity programme. Lessons about how to stay physically healthy include suitable guidance on oral hygiene in the early years and regular guidance on healthy food choices throughout the school.
29. Regular chapel services across all year groups and a multi-faith room encourage pupils' spiritual and moral development. Although there is a focus on Christian understanding, the school ensures that all major faiths are recognised and respected.
30. Leaders have implemented a comprehensive relationships and sex education (RSE) programme that is well structured and effectively delivered. Systematic assessment verifies that pupils develop essential knowledge and skills. This programme allows pupils to develop their understanding of issues such as puberty and consent in an age-appropriate way.
31. A clear behaviour policy is in place and is understood by pupils and staff. Behaviour is tracked and both rewards and sanctions are recorded and analysed. Trends are identified and any patterns are recorded and dealt with appropriately. Occasionally, incidences of low-level misbehaviour go unchecked in lessons.
32. Any reported issues of bullying are dealt with in a timely, proportionate and effective manner. Education is provided to all pupils around bullying and appropriate action is taken when staff become aware of incidents of bullying. The school liaises with parents appropriately. A clear anti-bullying policy is in place which is underpinned by pupils' active participation in preventing it such as through the anti-bullying ambassador scheme.
33. Leaders ensure that the school premises and accommodation are well maintained and conducive to learning. There is frequent review of procedures, and accident logs are analysed with a view to ensuring that the site is as safe as possible. These generate clear action points with responsibilities

and timeframes for action. Fire prevention and evacuation procedures are effective and well understood.

34. Leaders maintain the school's registers of admission and attendance correctly. Appropriate processes are in place for registration. Absences are correctly recorded. Any patterns of absence are monitored, and the local authority is notified appropriately of any concerns. The local authority is informed of any pupil leaving or joining the school at non-standard transition points.
35. Pupils, including those in the early years, are well supervised by staff in and around school, for example while moving between lessons, at recreation time or when arriving or going home.
36. First Aid is available to pupils at all times and is delivered in a timely and competent manner. Medication is stored securely and only administered by trained staff. Many staff have received first aid training, with all early years staff having received training in paediatric first aid.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 37. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

38. The school's well-planned curriculum enables pupils to learn about the society in which they live and the wider world. Studies of, and engagement with, different communities within the United Kingdom and around the globe encourages pupils to have respect for other people. The school provides a curriculum that enhances pupils' understanding of the value of different cultures and how this relates to life in Britain.
39. Leaders ensure that the early years provision gives children access to outdoor and collaborative activities, with a focus on social development for those below school age. Staff ensure rich language, songs and modelled speech are used to communicate and develop these skills in the youngest children.
40. The PSHE curriculum fosters pupils' economic awareness effectively. Younger pupils learn about managing money. Older pupils learn about student finance, tax and mortgages.
41. Leaders promote British values, which encourages pupils to show tolerance towards their peers. From an early age, respect and tolerance towards people from different cultures and those who hold different beliefs is encouraged. Assemblies and cultural days introduce pupils to a range of festivals and cultures. The school engenders a sense of belonging, mutual support and respect. Consequently, pupils enjoy kind relationships with other pupils and adults alike. This is evident in the classroom and in the wider life of the school.
42. Leaders have implemented comprehensive careers guidance within PSHE lessons, assemblies and subject teaching. This provision is well developed in Years 10 to 13. This ensures that pupils in these year groups are well informed of options for their future careers and develop essential skills such as interview techniques, financial literacy and career planning. The provision for younger years in the senior school is effective but less detailed in its content.
43. Pupils appreciate the roles of responsibility available to them at the school. Local community groups are actively supported by pupils. Children from the early years gain a greater understanding of the local community through learning about the lives of elderly members of a local community group and by undertaking music-making activities with them. Consequently, pupils are well-equipped to make a positive impact in their community.
44. The curriculum prepares pupils effectively for life in British society. Pupils are given an opportunity to develop leadership and volunteering skills, for example by gaining qualifications in these areas in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), and leading sports events for younger pupils. Pupils understand the rights of people within British society to express views openly and appreciate that they have a voice within their own school community which is responded to positively.
45. Pupils benefit from a well-structured programme of PSHE which includes exploration of democracy including barriers to voting, the democratic process and the implications of minority governments and hung parliaments. The school's curriculum and assemblies provide a balanced perspective on political issues. This helps pupils develop critical-thinking skills and understand diverse viewpoints.

46. The school actively promotes the values of respect, responsibility and resilience. This is well understood by everyone in the school community and consequently there is a consistent approach to these by staff and pupils in ensuring that these values are upheld. Pupils listen and respond to each other when offering opinions. Consequently, pupils have an effective understanding of right and wrong and how this relates to the school's ethos.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

- 47. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

48. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect the requirements of current statutory guidance. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns that arise. They consult with external safeguarding partners and refer safeguarding concerns to them when appropriate. Suitable arrangements for the handling of allegations against staff or senior leaders are in place. These are well understood by staff and followed when required. Leaders keep suitable records of safeguarding concerns and the decisions and actions taken in response to these.
49. Governors maintain an effective overview of the safeguarding policy and procedures. The governor with particular responsibility for safeguarding visits the school regularly to ensure that measures in place are secure and carried out effectively. All governors undertake training in safeguarding.
50. Safeguarding training for staff, including that for the safeguarding team, is thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Leaders provide safeguarding updates and scenario-based training for all staff, followed by quizzes to review understanding. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to escalate concerns when required. A suitable induction process is in place to ensure that new staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
51. Leaders are aware of the contextual risks and challenges facing pupils beyond the school, including risks relating to radicalisation and extremism.
52. Leaders provide a number of ways for pupils to raise any concerns that they might have. Pupils are informed of whom they can go to should they wish to share any concerns.
53. Leaders ensure that all appropriate safer recruitment checks on adults are made in a timely manner and are accurately recorded in a suitable single central record of appointments (SCR). Staff files are well organised and accurate.
54. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring procedures are in place. These systems are tested regularly by the school and any alerts are immediately reviewed by members of the safeguarding team who take action as required.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

55. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Wellingborough School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	940/6010
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1101485
<b>Address</b>	Wellingborough School London Road Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 2BX
<b>Phone number</b>	01933 222427
<b>Email address</b>	reception@wellingboroughschool.org
<b>Website</b>	www.wellingboroughschool.org
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Governors of Wellingborough School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Tyldesley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Holman
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	800
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 to 25 March 2022

## Information about the school

56. Wellingborough School is a co-educational day school situated near the centre of the town of Wellingborough. Founded in 1595, the school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. It comprises two sections: the preparatory school for pupils in the early years to Year 6, and the senior school for pupils in Year 7 to Year 13.
57. The early years setting shares a building with Years 1 and 2. There are 31 children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
58. The school has identified 86 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for six pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to create a warm, supportive and challenging environment that promotes the health and happiness of every child and enables them to flourish. It seeks to encourage pupils to discover their potential and to decide who they want to be, equipping them with the necessary skills to allow them to tackle the next stage in their lives with confidence.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

14 to 16 January 2025

61. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with a governor
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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