

Inspection of The Wells Academy

Ransom Drive, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG3 5LR

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

The Wells Academy is an inclusive and diverse school. Leaders ensure that all pupils feel included. For example, pupils enjoyed a 'culture day' where they learned about the different cultures in the local community. Pupils said that this helped them to understand each other's backgrounds.

Most pupils say they enjoy school. They say they feel safe. Most pupils are respectful to each other and to staff. Pupils state that bullying sometimes happens. They are confident that staff will deal with any issues effectively. Pupils behave well at break and lunchtimes. Most lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils say that lessons sometimes get disrupted by poor behaviour. They say that teachers do not always use the behaviour policy consistently.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These expectations are not always realised. Some teachers do not always insist that pupils produce high-quality work. Some pupils do not always complete work in lessons.

There are a range of clubs that pupils can attend. For example, pupils go to football, badminton, volleyball and art club. Some pupils also attend the free breakfast club the school provides.

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

Leaders' actions to improve the school are at an early stage. Some inconsistencies remain in the delivery of the curriculum and how staff manage behaviour.

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum in place for all subjects. Leaders have detailed the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn and in what order. Where teachers deliver the curriculum well, for example in science and physical education (PE), they present information clearly. They question pupils to check understanding and address misconceptions. Pupils' work shows that they build on what they have learned. As a result, they achieve well in these subjects. In other subjects, teachers do not always use assessment well to check pupils' understanding. Gaps in learning and misconceptions are not always addressed. This means that some pupils do not progress well through the curriculum and do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They use reading assessments to accurately identify any pupils who may need extra support. The support these pupils receive helps them to become more confident readers.

Leaders have not ensured that all teachers have high expectations for the quality of pupils' work. They do not always insist on the correct use of punctuation and

spelling. This means that some pupils' work contains repeated mistakes that are not corrected.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. Some pupils with SEND go to the 'nurture' provision for extra help. These sessions are well planned and help pupils to access the curriculum. However, in some lessons, teachers do not adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils struggle to understand the work they have been given and fail to complete it. This leads to gaps in their learning and so they do not achieve as well as they could.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and respond well to classroom routines. However, leaders have not ensured that all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently well. Sometimes, teachers do not address off-task behaviour. This means that some pupils do not complete work and do not learn as well as they could. Sometimes, low-level disruption is not dealt with effectively. As a result, there is disruption to other pupils' learning.

Leaders have ensured that there is a well-thought-out programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and how to be safe. They learn about different faiths, cultures and equality. They know to treat others with respect. Pupils benefit from a well-planned careers programme. This prepares them well for their next steps.

Trustees know the school well. They know what needs to improve. The trust provides tailored support for the school. Staff feel well supported. Leaders are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained. They know the risks that pupils may face. There are clear procedures for reporting concerns. All staff understand these.

Leaders take timely actions to address any concerns. Leaders work well with external agencies. This means that pupils and their families get the support they need. Safer recruitment procedures are robust. The trust provides effective oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Pupils know who they can talk to in school if they have any concerns. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is not a clear assessment policy in place. This means that teachers do not always systematically check pupils' understanding. Gaps in learning and misconceptions are not always identified and addressed. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that assessment procedures identify gaps in learning and misconceptions, and that teachers use this information to address these.
- Pupils with SEND do not always have their needs met in lessons. This means that some pupils cannot access the curriculum and do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand the needs of all pupils with SEND and implement the agreed strategies to meet these pupils' needs.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff consistently apply the behaviour policy. This means that off-task behaviour is not always addressed, and some pupils do not complete their work or learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently so that all staff meet leaders' expectations of pupils' conduct.

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.

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

Unique reference number	147456
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10267816
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	715
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hamlin
Principal	George Coles
Website	www.thewellsacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school opened in September 2020 as a new school after a demerger from Nottingham Academy.
- The principal joined the school in January 2023. There have been changes to the senior leadership team since January 2023.
- The school uses the services of five registered alternative providers and two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons in other subjects and tutor time.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils at break, lunchtime and at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation, behaviour, attendance and governance.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- An inspector held telephone conversations with leaders of unregistered alternative provision.
- The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of trustees, the chief executive of the trust and other trust leaders.

Inspection team

Paul Halcro, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Sammy	Ofsted Inspector
Keval Thakrar	Ofsted Inspector
Imtiaz Patel	Ofsted Inspector

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