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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Standard Inspection

Wellington College
Belfast

Inspected: October 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

Wellington College is a co-educational, controlled grammar school situated on an attractive site in south-east Belfast. The school was founded in 1989 following the amalgamation of Carolan and Annadale Grammar Schools and moved into a new building, procured through the Public Private Finance Initiative, in 2002. At the time of the inspection, the enrolment was 765 pupils, approximately 6% of whom are entitled to free school meals. In the current academic year, almost all of the pupils enrolled in year 8 obtained grades either A or B in the Transfer Procedure. The school has identified 10% of the pupils as being in need of additional support with their learning.

1.2 THE VIEWS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF, GOVERNORS AND PUPILS

The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection included the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the Board of Governors (governors), and groups of pupils from years 8, 12, 13 and 14. One hundred and fifty-four questionnaires were issued to parents; 54% were returned to the Department of Education (DE) and 53 contained additional written comments. The responses from the questionnaires indicated, in most cases, high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. In particular, the parents mentioned the support and encouragement given by the staff, and the many opportunities the school provides for the pupils through a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Over half of the teachers and ten support staff completed a confidential questionnaire. The staff responded positively on a range of issues related to teaching, and the working relationships between teachers and pupils. A majority of the staff who responded raised concerns related to aspects of leadership and management and internal communication.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the senior leadership team (SLT) and a representative of the governors, the matters emerging from the parents', teachers' and support staff questionnaires. Some of these matters are dealt with in the body of the report.

The governors expressed their support for, and commitment to the work of the school. The pupils talked enthusiastically about their experiences in school, and reported that they felt safe and secure on the school premises. From the discussions held, there is evidence that they know what to do if they have any worries about their safety and well-being.

1.3 FOCUS

The inspection focused on learning and teaching, and leadership and management at all levels across the school and, in addition, on the provision for English, geography and mathematics. The provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection were also evaluated, as was the school's general approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. As additional evidence for the inspection findings, inspectors observed classes in a range of other subjects. A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas in focus can be found in Appendix 1.

2. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' WORK

2.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

The pupils are motivated and display a positive attitude to learning. The school provides a wide range of subjects at both General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level, and is adding usefully to the provision a number of applied and vocational subjects offered in collaboration with neighbouring schools. There has been a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining seven or more GCSE grades at A*-C over the past three years: the overall standards achieved by pupils in grades A*-C at GCSE are now at the average when compared with similar Northern Ireland (NI) selective schools.

Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils achieving three or more GCE A Level grades at A-C has been below the NI average for similar selective schools: these results need to be improved. While a majority of subjects are within five percentage points of the NI average, a minority are more than five percentage points below the NI average, and a further significant minority are more than ten percentage points below. The school has identified this as a major priority for improvement, along with an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving seven or more GCSE grades at A*-B. The inspection findings endorse the raising of standards in examinations as a key priority. More information about the results achieved in public examinations is given in Appendices 2 and 3.

2.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

In most of the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of the teaching was at least good; in a majority of the lessons it was very good or better. In the most effective practice, the teachers made good use of active learning strategies which engaged and motivated the pupils, and encouraged the pupils to reflect on their learning through effective plenary sessions and consolidation. In all of the lessons observed, the pupils cooperated well with their teachers and with each other.

2.2.1 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. This is evidenced by the very good working relationships between pupils and staff, the wide range of extra curricular activities on offer and the high level of commitment of the pastoral team, led effectively by the Vice-principal with responsibility for pastoral care.

2.2.2 CHILD PROTECTION

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding the pupils. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by DE, but the following minor area needs to be addressed:

- to ensure that all of the remaining staff, coaches and volunteers who have not yet received child protection training do so as soon as possible.

2.2.3 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives satisfactory attention to developing aspects of healthy eating and physical activity. The areas for improvement identified include: the need to ensure that there are policies and procedures in place for catering for special diets; to consult with governors, parents and pupils in relation to healthy eating provision, and to follow up with appropriate action to improve the quality of the provision.

2.3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Principal has been in post since January 2005. She is committed to the process of continuous school improvement and, together with the SLT she provides clear direction and leadership, for example, in the effective use of quantitative data analysis for the purpose of identifying areas for further development. As the school continues to develop the arrangements for self-evaluation, it will be important to improve the communication between the SLT and middle management for the purpose of whole-school improvement.

The schools' process for development planning has many strengths. Following consultation with pupils, parents and staff, the school has identified a range of appropriate priorities for whole-school development. The school development plan should include a statement of the financial position and projected resources during the period covered by the plan in order to meet fully the statutory requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The main strengths of the school include the:

- positive attitudes, good behaviour and motivated responses of the pupils;
- very good arrangements for pastoral care;
- quality of the teaching which, in most of the lessons observed was good and, in a majority of lessons was very good or better;
- professionalism, and commitment of the staff to the life and work of the school;
- improved standards in public examinations at GCSE level; and
- clear direction and leadership provided by the Principal and SLT, for example, in the effective use of quantitative data analysis for the purpose of identifying areas for further development.

The areas for improvement identified are the need to:

- develop further the arrangements for self-evaluation, including the improvement of communication between the SLT and middle management for the purpose of whole-school improvement; and
- improve the standards in examinations, as identified appropriately by the school.

4. **CONCLUSION**

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

English

The main strengths of the English department include:

- the quality of the pupils' work;
- the professionalism and commitment of all of the teachers;
- the quality of teaching observed, nearly all of which was good or better; the majority of which was very good or better; and
- the collegiality of the department under the guidance of the joint heads of department, and the start made in identifying areas for improvement.

The area for improvement is to:

- develop a more strategic approach to monitoring, evaluating and disseminating the effective work in the department, in order to set targets and raise standards appropriately for a selective school.

Geography

The strengths of the geography department include:

- the hard work and commitment of all of the teachers;
- the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning;
- the use of investigative fieldwork to enrich learning experiences and develop further geographical and cross-curricular skills; and
- the good beginning made to planning to guide development within the geography department.

The area for improvement is:

- the need to monitor, evaluate and develop the effectiveness of teaching strategies in order to increase standards especially at GCSE.

Mathematics

The main strengths of the mathematics department include:

- the good standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE Mathematics;

- the quality of the teaching observed, most of which was very good, and the good levels of individual support given to the pupils during lessons;
- the effective use of ICT in the teaching and learning of mathematics;
- the good progress being made in reviewing, and developing further, effective schemes of work; and
- the very good leadership provided by the recently appointed head of department.

The area for improvement is to:

- improve further the levels of attainment in GCE A Level Mathematics, as identified appropriately by the department.

APPENDIX 2

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Wellington College v. Date of Inspection: W/C 06.10.08
 ii. School Reference Number: 141-0270 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status:

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Year 8 Intake	110	113	112	110	109
Total enrolment	775	775	774	772	765

1.3 Attendance

Year 2007/08	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2007/08	NI Average 2006/07
% Attendance	96.9	94.2	95.5	96.1	95	95.7	94.2	95	95

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 50 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.67
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 15.3

Year 2008/09	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	64	56	72	66	65	41	35	399
Enrolment: Girls	45	56	48	50	53	57	57	366
Enrolment: Total	109	112	120	116	118	98	92	765
PTR	17	17.5	18.8	15.1	15.8	12	12.4	

- 1.5 Staying On Rate (2007/08) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	85.8	NI Av Year 13	91.7
Year 14	82.8	NI Av Year 14	83.7

1.6 Leavers Destinations

2006/07	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	32		96	
Another School	25%	22.6	0%	1.3
Employment	3%	5	9%	5.1
Full-time Further Education	44%	54.4	4%	8.4
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	78%	81.7
Full-time Training	22%	11.7	4%	1.2
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	1.9	0%	0.9
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	6%	4.5	4%	1.3

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Wellington College

SCHOOL YEAR: 2008/2009

GCSE	2006	2007	2008
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	100	98.3	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	82.8	90.8	88.6
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	92.2	95.8	96.5
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2006	2007	2008
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	64.7	57.7	50.5
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 3 A2 levels	98	91.8	94.6

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE and GCE A level subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2008, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A*-C	Account/Finance		Art and Design Business Studies Classical Civilisation Double Award Science 1 st Subject English English Literature French Geography Home Economics Information Technology Mathematics Media Film and TV Studies Music Religious Studies Spanish	Additional Mathematics Economics History Sport/PE Studies	

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCE A level A-C			Art and Design Business Studies French Further Mathematics Geography History Home Economics Media Film and TV Studies Politics Religious Studies Sport/PE Studies	Computer Studies/ Computing English Literature Mathematics	Biology Chemistry Design and Technology Information Technology Music Physics Spanish

Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

Table 2

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A*-C	Art and Design English Mathematics Music	Accounting/Finance Additional Mathematics Business Studies Double Award Science 1 st Subject Economics English Literature Geography History Home Economics Information Technology Media Film and TV Studies Religious Studies Spanish Sport/PE Studies	Classical Civilisation French		

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCE A level A-C		Art and Design Business Studies English Literature French Further Mathematics Geography History Mathematics Media Film and TV Studies Music Politics Religious Studies Spanish	Biology Chemistry Design and Technology History of Art and Design Home Economics Information Technology Physics Sport/PE Studies	Computer Studies/Computing	

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