

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

INSPECTION REPORT

INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162A OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002

Name of school:	Wellgrove
DCSF number:	302/6117
FOCUS number:	410
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mike Thirkell Supporting Inspectors: Cecile Corfield Tony Hubbard Lay Inspector: Mike Thomas
Dates of inspection:	11 th – 13 th May, 2010

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Section A: Introduction and summary

Section B: Compliance with regulations for registration

Section C: The quality of organisation and management

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Wellgrove	
Address of the school:	4 Well Grove, Whetstone, North London, N20 9EQ	
Telephone number:	0208 4468855	
Fax number:	0208 4469289	
Email Address:	wellgrove.admin@focus-school.com	
Proprietor:	Wellgrove Education	
Name of Chief Executive Officer:	Michael Parsons	
Name of Head Teacher:	Wayne Jones	
DCSF number:	302/6117	
FOCUS number:	410	
Type of school:	Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust	
Age range of pupils and students:	11 - 18	
Gender of pupils:	Male and female	
Total number on roll: (Full time)	Boys: 43	Girls: 41
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 11	Girls: 14
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:		
	Boys: 0	Girls: 1
Annual fees:	N/A	
Type of inspection:	Section 162A of the Education Act 2002	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector:	Mike Thirkell
	Supporting Inspectors:	Cecile Corfield Tony Hubbard
	Lay Inspector:	Michael Thomas
Dates of inspection:	11 th – 13 th May, 2010	

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and the Focus Learning Trust and agreed with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector who looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the Focus Learning Trust. His findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

Information about the school:

Wellgrove School was established on its present site in 2004, in a suburban road in Whetstone, North London. The school, which is non-selective, is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust and registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) as a school of Special Religious Character. It serves young people from the areas of Barnet, Southend, Chelmsford, Hertford, Cheshunt and outlying villages. It currently provides places for 84 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18, of whom twenty-five are in the sixth form. One student has a statement of special educational needs and a further twenty-two are identified by the school as having various degrees of learning difficulty. A further 10 boys and girls are identified as being particularly able or gifted and talented, including one pupil who is in Year 7 who is taught one year above his chronological age.

The school's prospectus describes the objectives of its trustees as being to provide pupils with a Christian-based, secure and stimulating learning environment; *'to support students to emerge as self-disciplined young adults, able to apply themselves diligently and to embark upon their chosen vocations with a broad base of knowledge, training and skills'*. Its specific aims are: *'to provide students with a well balanced and fulfilling education; to bring out the potential of each student'*; and *'to promote respect for authority, other persons and property, and the ability to get along with others'*.

Summary of main findings:

Wellgrove School is a successful school which provides its pupils with a high quality of education. It has the unanimous support of parents and all pupils say that they are pleased to be at the school. Teaching is rarely less than good and a high proportion is of outstanding quality. The school successfully meets its aims by providing a balanced education through a suitably wide range of curriculum subjects available to all pupils of compulsory school age and in the sixth form; by providing good learning opportunities and the necessary support for pupils, including those who have learning difficulties, to make progress relative to their abilities; and by promoting the development of good social skills and positive relationships in the school community at all levels. The progress made by pupils as they move through the school is illustrated by the overall good results they achieve in public

examinations. Teaching and learning are well informed by good and developing systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress. Pupils acknowledge the support that they receive from their teachers and refer to the values and sense of school's community that they experience, supported by the school's small size. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with some outstanding features. The school successfully promotes its special Christian character. Behaviour is for the most part of an outstanding quality. Pupils are very well cared for and systems for assuring safeguarding and health and safety are good. The school meets nearly all the regulations for independent schools, but now needs to complete the refurbishment of the facilities set aside for pupils who may become ill during the school day. Overall, the school has made good progress and built on the strengths highlighted by the last inspection by the School Inspection Service, although the trustees have not yet achieved their goal of finding a new school site.

What the school does well:

- it fosters relationships between teachers and pupils that are generally of a very high standard;
- it provides an attractive learning environment that is respected by pupils;
- it prepares pupils well for their future lives through an effective programme of careers education, opportunities for the development of practical, creative and vocational as well as academic skills and the acquisition of good communication skills; and
- it enables pupils, with the support of the community as a whole, to contribute generously to local and national charities.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- provide suitable facilities for pupils who are ill.

Next: Steps:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might consider the following points for development:

- build on the effective start to developing multi-cultural awareness fully throughout all year groups;
- develop links with the feeder primary school to support transition and the further development of monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress;
- improve the consistency of the provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE).

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad, well balanced and, with its emphasis on preparation for business and the professions, very well suited to the nature and aims of the school as well as the needs of the families and pupils it serves. From entry in Year 7, to the end of Year 11, all pupils study all the main elements of the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative elements of learning. They continue to experience most of these into the sixth form, so that they leave the school as very well rounded individuals, well prepared for their future family and professional lives. Because many pupils travel long distances to school, opportunity for activities at lunchtime or after school are limited. However, the school skilfully makes room for wider activities, through, for example, an activity week, and the provision for drama, instrumental tuition and ensembles, such as the brass band. Physical education (PE) and games are taken by all pupils.

All pupils follow all the subjects for the National Curriculum throughout Key Stage 3, together with Bible Studies and choir, both of which are continued through to the end of Year 13. Although information communication technology (ICT) is not directly taught at this stage, the teaching within subjects and the curriculum in Key Stages 4 and 5 ensure that all pupils become capable users of computers for a wide range of educational and professional purposes. Their experience now includes appropriately planned PSHE throughout the school delivered by form tutors, a need identified by the last report. PSHE meets the requirements, although the delivery of this programme is of uneven quality.

The same curriculum is continued into Key Stage 4, where all pupils continue with French to GCSE and the only element of choice has been between resistant materials and textiles and food and nutrition. The school has recognised the need to ensure from September 2010 that the experience of boys and girls is similar. The sixth-form provision is an imaginative blend of the academic and vocational, with a range of five BTEC business related courses, and AS and A2 courses. Although some girls say that they regret the absence of foreign languages at this stage, the overall range is notably good for a school of this size. Moreover, it is enriched by a range of other courses, including a bridging mathematics course, science and art GCSE, business start-up and public speaking.

The planning for subjects is thorough overall. It is guided by suitable schemes and other documentation, including those provided by Focus Learning. The school makes careful provision for the learning needs of individual pupils. It properly observes the requirements of any statements of special needs and carries out regular reviews as required. The special needs co-ordinator maintains good individual education plans (IEPs) for all pupils in need of support. She communicates details of their requirements successfully to teachers, so that pupils' individual learning needs are well supported. The school has begun to identify the gifted and talented pupils, although a planned provision for them is at a relatively early stage of implementation. Management does not monitor some aspects of the schemes of work sufficiently closely and recognises that some important elements,

such as links between subjects and the way in which teachers should cater for pupils' different learning needs, are still not clearly and consistently identified.

The preparation of pupils for their future lives is a strong feature of the school, both through the curriculum itself and its weighting towards preparation for business and professional life for all pupils, and through the guidance provided. Pupils comment very favourably on the guidance they receive from their teachers and on what they learn from the two weeks' work experience they receive, from which they felt they had received instructive feedback. Most had clear ideas about what they would do next and were very well-informed about the worlds of enterprise and law.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. A high proportion of teaching is of outstanding quality and it is rarely less than good. Management uses appropriate strategies for monitoring the quality of teaching and to identify training needs. The generally high quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress relative to their abilities. Teachers generally plan and structure their lessons carefully to ensure the effective use of the time available and a good pace of learning. They demonstrate on the whole very good classroom management skills. Pupils usually respond well to the high expectations set by teachers and only occasionally fail to concentrate in lessons. The generally very high quality of relationships that exist between teachers and their pupils supports the development for the most part of a positive learning atmosphere in classes that supports pupils' intellectual development through enabling opportunity for debate and discussion.

The quality of questioning by teachers is frequently of a high standard and used effectively in specific instances to challenge pupils according to their ability. In a Year 8 geography class, discussions were carefully structured by the teacher to involve all pupils. Challenging questions built effectively on previous learning and exercise books reflected high expectations for the presentation of work. Questioning was well matched to the range of pupils' abilities. Teachers know their pupils well and the generally small size of classes enables overall good individual support. Pupils are keen to emphasise their appreciation of the time that their teachers give to supporting them and where necessary providing extra time to clarify aspects of the work that individual pupils find difficult. Nevertheless, with exceptions, planning for differentiation is not a sufficiently consistent feature of teachers' lessons plans and content of lessons.

Teachers are generally well qualified and experienced in the subjects that they teach. This supports the confident way in which lessons proceed and the challenge and discussions that are a feature of many lessons. For example, in a Year 12 construction class pupils' mature discussions with their teacher introduced them to issues relating to constructing jointing in plumbing. Learning was supported by appropriate resources, whilst building effectively on their previous good levels of knowledge of materials and processes. Throughout the school there are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning, and trips and visits are used appropriately to support learning, for example in geography.

Assessment procedures used are a strong and developing feature of the school. The effective use of assessment within the school is supported by well-informed

management. This has been an area of development since the last inspection. The school is non-selective but pupils are tested early in Year 7 to determine their level of ability and to identify specific learning support that they may need. Subsequent testing, as determined by the school and by Focus Learning, is provided as pupils proceed through the school. This is further enhanced by information about pupils' progress and attainment provided by subject teachers. In consequence the school is building a robust and effective system for monitoring pupils' progress. This is already a helpful tool for feeding back selective information to teachers to support their planning and support for individual pupils, but will become an increasingly valuable tool. The school recognises that further development needs to be undertaken with respect to assessment to support the fully effective use of target setting. It also recognises that liaison with the feeder primary school would support transition between schools and ensure the provision of early focused support for pupils when they arrive in Year 7. The good quality of assessment overall is supported by the small size of class and the opportunities that this creates for teachers to know their pupils well and to have one-to-one discussions with them when necessary. Pupils recognise the value of the support their teachers provide.

Pupils identified by the school as having special learning needs are provided with a good level of support both when withdrawn from the class individually and within the classroom. Special needs support is guided by an appropriately qualified and experienced teacher. The support all pupils receive is guided by the information derived from regular testing at strategic stages. An appropriate IEP is provided for the student with a statement of special educational needs as well as for all other pupils with identified learning needs.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features. Pupils acquire a set of values and beliefs that support the firm Christian foundation of the Brethren community. The school provides all pupils with regular opportunities, particularly in debates and discussions, to develop their self-knowledge and self-confidence, carefully balanced with respect for the views and opinions of others. Teachers listen carefully and value what pupils have to say. Spiritual awareness is promoted through Bible studies. Boys in each year group are responsible for Bible readings before lunch each day. A sense of awe and wonder is evident in art, music and science lessons. For example, science investigations have resulted in pupils responding with exclamations of surprise and wonderment.

The school's provision for moral development is excellent. The staff are good role models of fairness and justice. They promote the pupils' excellent understanding of moral principles that enables them to tell right from wrong. They discuss the moral principles involved in, for example, drugs testing using volunteers, immigration and the plight of street children in India. Good work and behaviour are rewarded with praise and letters for parents. In English, stories are chosen carefully to illustrate particular moral issues. For example, the text from 'Spit Nolan' provides clear examples of empathy and kindness to others. Thoughtful choices of literature and poetry help pupils to develop a clear awareness of the effect their actions have on themselves and others.

The preparation for the pupils' future economic well-being is exceptional, because of the wide range of learning experiences provided and their thorough acquisition of social and academic skills. Suitable opportunities include business studies, office skills, work-place skills and careers advice. All sixth-form pupils attend a team-building day.

Pupils gain knowledge of public institutions and services in Britain mainly through PSHE and citizenship. They have enjoyed visits from speakers from local and national charities. Older pupils visit the Houses of Parliament and experience democracy through voting for the School Council and prefects. The pupils on the School Council undertake their duties conscientiously and have contributed to improving facilities, for example, microwaves, and sports equipment, for the whole school. Most members of the sixth form are actively involved in whole-school activities and provide good examples of responsibility and maturity for younger pupils.

Overall, pupils' social development is exemplary. The pupils are unanimous in stating that they enjoy school and what it has to offer. A sense of community is strong and promotes the pupils' positive attitudes. Behaviour throughout the school is generally excellent. Lessons are generally well planned to provide regular opportunities for pupils to co-operate and collaborate. Pupils care for the school environment. The school is litter free and both public and personal property is respected and valued.

Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Opportunities to find out about their own culture are promoted effectively through history, geography, art, drama and music, but opportunities for the pupils to learn and understand about other cultures are limited to date. However, the school has developed a multi-cultural curriculum plan to which each subject teacher has contributed. This useful document highlights how each subject can contribute effectively to developing the pupils' cultural awareness. Currently, there are some good examples from other cultures in art, music and geography, but overall, this is an area for further development.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is given appropriate attention and is good overall. Procedures relating to safeguarding are securely in place. Policies on matters such as health and safety and child protection have been prepared and staff have had appropriate training. The senior teacher is the designated child protection officer. The questionnaires completed by pupils indicate that the vast majority feel safe in the school and that bullying rarely happens. Pastoral care is given a high priority. The high quality of relationships between staff and pupils contribute significantly to the sense of security and belonging which pupils say they experience. Break and lunch times are supervised effectively and behaviour is generally managed well.

Fire drills and risk assessments are undertaken regularly and appropriate records are kept. The school has an appropriate written First Aid policy and there are

appropriately qualified first aiders present when pupils are in school. Thorough risk assessments are carried out before out-of-school educational visits. The school meets fully the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has a suitable plan to outline how it fulfils its duties.

Healthy living is promoted effectively. Drinking water is freely available throughout the day and fruit is available at break-times. Physical activity is encouraged with good quality PE lessons provided throughout the school. In discussion, pupils said they enjoyed games and PE and were aware that exercise is an important part of healthy living. The value of healthy living is also promoted well in science lessons. Pupils receive teaching on alcohol misuse, anti-smoking and drug awareness.

The pupils are taught to adopt safe practices in day-to-day life both in and out of school. They are made aware of the need for personal hygiene and safety issues when moving around the building and in workshops and laboratories.

Attendance is monitored carefully and registers are completed twice daily. The admission register contains all of the required information.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school is clear about its responsibilities with respect to undertaking the required checks on all staff and other adults who are associated with the school. The school has good systems for maintaining files of all the necessary information and all required details are retained in a register, including in relation to medical checks and references.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The school management has made imaginative use of the site and buildings. Classrooms are of ample size and are suitably equipped. A good specialist workshop is available for product design and work in resistant materials, food technology, ICT and art and design. Some PE and games facilities are provided in the school grounds. The limitations in the size of the school grounds are offset suitably by the use of good local sports facilities and a sports centre. The current library provision is adequate, but its current use is constrained due to its organisation. The school is aware that it does not provide an ideal spur to its use by pupils for independent study and research. The school has sought to improve its provision for pupils who are ill, but the room now used does not meet the requirement for independent schools because it does not contain a wash basin and a nearby toilet has not been designated for use.

The pupils have good space for exercise and recreation both inside the school and outside, where there are tables and chairs to sit in the summer and grassed and hard court areas. In the absence of changing facilities within the school, pupils may use those available in the sports centre. The whole school is thoroughly cleaned, well maintained and is free of litter. The quality and range of display both in

classrooms and in the circulation areas are extremely good and educationally purposeful. They reflect the pupils' work in a variety of subjects, their understanding of environment and health issues and their commitment to a wide range of charitable giving.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do in order to fully meet the requirements?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools' Standards regulations 2003 the school should:

- Provide suitable facilities for pupils who are ill. (Paragraph 5(I)).

The quality of information for parents

The school provides the vast majority of the information required to parents and prospective parents through an effectively designed prospectus. The prospectus contains either the detail of the information required in detail or lists how it can be obtained from the school. Appropriate information is provided on such issues as the school's strategies for dealing with any instances of bullying that might arise and matters to do with child protection and safeguarding pupils' welfare and health and safety. The school far exceeds the range of documents that it is required to provide to parents. Reports to parents are provided strategically at three points in the school year. The reports are helpful in a number of respects and are supported appropriately by opportunities for parents to meet with teachers. Nevertheless, end-of-year reports for subjects often contain too little detail about what a student has achieved and what they must do to improve further. Procedures for communicating with the local authority on matters relating to the single statement are understood and appropriately dealt with and accounts of expenditure provided appropriately.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school has adopted the Focus Learning complaints policy, modified to meet the specific needs of the school. It meets the requirements in all respects.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002. The business organisation and management of the school were inspected by the Lay Inspector, who has written this section of the report.

The quality of the organisation and management of the school

The school is governed by a registered charity, Wellgrove Education. It has a board of ten trustees which includes a good balance of experienced and new trustees. The board meets every four to six weeks and normally all trustees attend and contribute helpfully to decisions. Minutes indicate the board is active in ensuring the school delivers its aims, provides the staff and resources needed for the welfare and education of the pupils, maintains its Christian ethos, and complies with charity and other relevant law and the requirements of its affiliation to Focus Learning Trust.

Organisation is good, the charity is solvent and financial records are in order. The charity also administers the separate Primary school at Littlebury which was not a subject of this inspection.

Management of the school and implementation of board decisions are in the hands of the chief executive officer (CEO) and the headmaster. Members of the senior management team, who also include the deputy head and the head of sixth form, meet weekly, and have good working relationships.

The CEO took up his duties in September 2009. His dedicated and positive approach is appreciated by trustees and carries the confidence of staff and parents.

The present headmaster is retiring at the end of the current term. He has overseen rapid progress to the present high standard of education providing strong and charismatic leadership. The trustees have appointed the deputy head as his successor who is committed to the continuing prosperity of the school and its pupils. She has clear aims to advance the organisation and management including improving communications, developing systems for the measurement and rewarding of progress and promoting suitable links between the secondary and primary schools.

An appropriate three-year development plan is in place and work on the tasks listed is in progress. Recommendations from the last inspection have been largely implemented except it has not yet been possible to locate any alternative whole-school accommodation. An active and strong team of volunteers supports the school at all levels.

Ethos and pastoral care

The Focus ethos and policies are respected and implemented. Pupils are well supported and cared for by trustees, management, form tutors and volunteers. Student appreciation of this was expressed both verbally and by their generally positive attitude to discipline and behaviour. They respond happily to prefect and school council duties.

Suggested next steps:

- consider separation of the duties of the CEO and the Chair of the Board; and

- improve the speed and quality of communications between trustees, staff and volunteers.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust. Further copies of the report are available from the Operations Manager of the Focus Learning Trust, Siskin House, Siskin Drive, Coventry, or from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk