

Queen Elizabeth's School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113883
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	378769
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Jones HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1444
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Turner
Headteacher	Andrew Puttock
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 December 2008
School address	Blandford Road Pamphill Wimborne BH21 4DT
Telephone number	01202 885233
Email address	office@qe.dorset.sch.uk

Age group	13–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Hoather	Additional inspector
Neil Gillespie	Additional inspector
Andrew Bird	Additional inspector
Judith Goodchild	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a total of 47 lessons taught by 47 teachers, of which 5 were joint observations with a member of the senior team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to six lessons where pupils were receiving extra support. Meetings were held with groups of students and two members of the governing body, as well as school staff including senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at key documentation provided by the school including improvement plans, analyses of the attainment and progress of students currently in the school, records related to the behaviour and safety of students and 314 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It is an upper school serving the local rural area and many students are brought to school by bus. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most students are from White British backgrounds and the proportions of students from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language, are very small. The overall proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is just below the national average. The school has chosen to retain its status as a specialist sports college and is a Youth Sport Trust partner school. Current floor standards are met. The school has gained a number of awards including Artsmark gold, bronze level Eco School and has gained International School status.

New school buildings were opened in November 2011 after a long programme of building work. There is a 'Teenage Life Centre' (TLC) on site provided jointly by Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust and Dorset County Council (Education). This provides a range of health care and counselling services that can be easily accessed by all students.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Queen Elizabeth's is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because not all students achieve as well as they could, especially in English and science. Students, parents and carers have a very positive view of the school and would recommend it to others. The large sixth form is also good and many students come from the school's own Year 11 groups, as well as other schools, and make good and improving progress. Students who take the vocational courses make better progress than those studying more academic subjects.
- Students' achievement is good and students make good progress. In 2011, almost two thirds of Year 11 gained five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Students' progress and standards in English are improving but have not yet reached the levels achieved in mathematics.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding where students are excited by their learning, know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Where teachers do not plan with enough precision to meet different learning needs students do not make as much progress. Most teachers give the students regular subject-specific feedback, although some do not make sure students follow up on the advice they are given.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. In their responses to the questionnaires parents and carers, as well as students, were confident that behaviour around the school was good, but almost a third of parents and carers expressed concerns that lessons were disrupted by bad behaviour. Evidence from the inspection did not support this view beyond occasional examples of inattention and chatting.
- The headteacher and senior staff know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use performance management well to support teachers in developing their practice. Subject leaders are not yet all monitoring the quality of education in their areas rigorously. Governors are very supportive and challenging of the school and the senior leadership.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that all leaders, particularly middle leaders, are more consistent and systematic in their monitoring and evaluation of students' achievement and take quick action to secure improvements in teaching and learning.
- Help more students to make outstanding progress particularly in English and science by:
 - matching tasks in lessons more closely to the needs and abilities of all groups of students, especially the more able
 - making sure all teachers are familiar with the outstanding teaching and learning strategies already in use in the school
 - ensuring students follow up on the good written feedback given by teachers to improve the quality of their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with standards that are overall just above those found nationally and they make good progress to reach above average standards at GCSE. Overall standards in English and mathematics are also now above average, but some students with high prior attainment do not progress as rapidly as they should. Standards are not as high in English and science where teaching is not always as consistently strong as in mathematics.

In lessons seen during the inspection students made good progress. This includes those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those from minority ethnic groups. The school provides good individual support for disabled students and those with special educational needs and these students make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the sixth form for the majority of groups of students are at least in line with national levels. Standards in the sixth form are improving, especially in the more popular subjects with larger classes. In the few subjects where standards are not high enough the gaps are closing through a variety of effective intervention and development strategies.

Parents and carers are happy with the progress their children make in the school. Inspection evidence showed that students make the most progress in lessons that are fast paced and demanding; students have to work hard to keep up with the teacher, but they enjoy this challenge. The best learning was seen where teachers gave students every opportunity to think issues through for themselves and engage with a variety of interesting and stimulating activities. Students understood what they were going to learn and at the end of the lessons both the teacher and students were clear about the levels of success. Progress is slower where the pace of the lesson drops and there are limited opportunities for students to be active and involved in their learning as teachers talk too much.

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Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good overall and improving. Parents and carers agreed that their children are well taught at this school. Outstanding lessons, some of which were observed during the inspection, are characterised by a fast pace that engages the pupils, with no opportunities for them to lose interest or drift off task. The best lessons are sharply focused on learning driven by clear, explicit and shared objectives. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are fully involved and participating in the learning activities planned to meet their individual needs. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are excellent with good humour and mutual respect evident. Social and moral development is promoted through well-structured group work and opportunities for pupils to debate their own ideas. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on globalisation, students were actively challenged to discuss and learn from each other. Students say they find teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects very motivating and they appreciate the willingness of staff to give them extra help when they need it. Learning is consolidated through rigorous curriculum planning that ensures continuity, creating strong links between individual lessons and relating learning to previous sessions.

Where the teaching observed by inspectors was no better than satisfactory, learning is over directed by the teachers. As a result, students are not given enough opportunities to ask their own questions and be more directly involved in their learning. Teachers' planning for these lessons does not always cover the needs of pupils in the class with a range of different abilities, or build on the good individualised learning support given to students with special educational needs outside of lessons.

Evidence gathered from a review of some of the pupils' exercise books across a range of subjects showed that students' work is mostly marked frequently and regularly. In the best examples the quality of feedback given to the students regarding the standards they are reaching and how to improve was constructive and informative. Not all teachers made sure that students took enough advantage of this guidance to shape and improve their subsequent written work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students are very supportive and proud of their school. They enjoy being members of this harmonious and friendly school and behave well. The new school buildings have had a good impact on encouraging a positive atmosphere where students can socialise widely during their breaks with minimum supervision.

Where given appropriate opportunities in lessons, students make a good contribution to their own learning and they respond maturely to opportunities to work independently and collaborate well on group tasks. Students are certain that they feel very safe in school and that any issues they might have are dealt with quickly. The inspection found little evidence to support the concerns about behaviour in

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lessons raised by a third of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires. The students who were interviewed indicated that occasionally they did become bored and restless where their lessons were not interesting and engaging. However, they were certain that this happened rarely.

Students enjoy coming to school and attend regularly and on time. Exclusions are rare and the school works hard to support those few students who may struggle with their behaviour. Incidents of bullying are also rare and students say it is not a problem in the school. Students are confident that, where bullying does occur, it is dealt with promptly by staff. Students are very aware of the different forms bullying may take and understand how this may affect them, and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school effectively monitors any concerns regarding students' health and safety and involves parents, carers and external agencies at all levels. The on-site TLC is well used and provides valuable support for students with health and other issues. Sixth form students are good role models for the rest of the school. They lead the strong student voice that exists throughout the school and make an active contribution to many aspects of the school community. For example, Team QE is formed from sixth form students who are trained to represent the school at formal events and carry out this role exceptionally well.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff have focused successfully on the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. Teachers are more knowledgeable about ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning and ensure all students are well supported. Students are now given regular feedback from their different subjects to help them improve their work.

A rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning gives the senior leadership team an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in different curriculum areas. Improved line management structures are giving good support to those areas not performing as well as they should. The performance management of teachers is closely linked to their professional development and this is having a good impact on improving the quality of teaching. Leaders realise that there is greater potential for the most skilled practitioners to share successful strategies with all staff.

The school takes good care of the students. Robust procedures are in place to ensure students' safety and all current safeguarding requirements are met. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are well supported and their needs are known and understood by the school. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school leadership and indicate that communications are good.

Good curriculum planning means that the transition into Year 9 from middle schools works well. A good range of GCSE courses are offered in Key Stage 4 and include work-related options such as business studies. The sixth form offers a wide range of courses, although some classes are quite small. Curriculum planning for lessons also

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capitalises on the school's International School status, as well as strong links with the local Christian community, to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development effectively. School life and the curriculum are strongly influenced by the school's specialist sports college status especially in developing approaches to team working.

The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities in spite of many students being transported to and from school by buses. These activities are attended by many enthusiastic and very competitive students.

The governing body has a very positive relationship with the school and its input is appreciated, especially by the senior leadership team. Governors are effective in holding the school to account and challenging the senior leadership team about students' achievement. The close links and good communication between school staff and governors secure a firm commitment to equal opportunities and ensure that any form of discrimination, should it arise, is tackled promptly. The school is determined that all students will achieve their full potential and this drive, together with a past record of continuous improvement, maintains the school's strong and secure capacity for further improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

27 March 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne BH21 4DT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and being in your lessons. We were impressed with the pride you take in your school. This letter is to tell you what we found.

- Queen Elizabeth's is a good and improving school.
- Your achievement is good and you reach above average standards by the end of Year 11, although you do not achieve as well in English and science as you do in mathematics.
- The sixth form is good. Sixth form students are excellent school leaders and role models for younger students.
- Your teachers mostly plan interesting lessons, but sometimes they are not tailored closely enough to your individual needs.
- You tell us you feel very safe in school and that bullying is not a problem but you know what to do if it does occur.
- You behave very well in lessons and around the school. You enjoy your learning and each other's company and this makes your school a very friendly community.
- There are many opportunities to take interesting courses both in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- The headteacher and staff are committed to making sure you are always well cared for and able to fulfil your potential.

We have asked the school to help you to make as much progress in English and science as you do in mathematics by planning lessons that are suitable for your needs and by making sure you act on the advice and guidance given to you by your teachers. You can help in this by listening to your teachers and following up their advice. We have also asked subject leaders to monitor the work of their departments more closely and make quick improvements to support your learning.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

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