

# Queen Elizabeth Humanities College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137703
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	388266
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Barbour HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	288
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jonathan Lester
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Goodman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/a
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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	6–7 December 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	379327

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 17 different teachers and made shorter visits to 15 other lessons. They held meetings with the academy's leaders and managers, students, members of the governing body and representatives of partner organisations. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and looked at academy self-evaluation; academy policies; minutes of governing body meetings; 31 questionnaires completed by parents and carers; and questionnaires completed by students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate teaching and learning?
- What have been the main factors that have led to the improvement in examination results at the end of Year 11?
- How well does the curriculum prepare all groups of students for their future education, employment or training?
- How consistently good is the feedback that students receive about the quality of their work?

## Information about the school

The Queen Elizabeth Humanities College is a small comprehensive academy serving the market town of Bromyard and surrounding communities and villages. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is about average and few students are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above average.

The school converted to an academy on 1 December 2011. It is a partner in the Education for Bromyard Cooperative Trust along with its six primary partner schools and a number of local organisations. It continues to have specialist status in the humanities.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The Queen Elizabeth Humanities College is a good academy that is rapidly improving. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been in post for two years. Through their highly effective leadership, the curriculum and the quality of teaching have improved, and these factors have led to a rapid rise in the academic standards that students are now achieving. The atmosphere in the academy is described by one student as being like a family, and a place where students feel outstandingly safe. The academy's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents and carers receive frequent reports on their children's progress and they appreciate the varied ways in which the academy keeps in touch with them. Representatives of partner organisations described the academy as having an 'open door', resulting in very close community links. The academy has an inclusive ethos where the contribution of every student is valued. As a result, a culture has developed where stereotypes of all kinds are challenged and the effectiveness with which the academy promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is outstanding.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and with interesting activities. Some teaching is outstanding and in these lessons students take an active and independent role. In many of these lessons, the language that students use is of high quality as the teacher models it well and enables students to frame their discussions using the target vocabulary. Where teaching is good, teachers make lesson objectives clear and have good subject knowledge. Students make good progress but their acquisition of skills to work independently is not developed as well. While teachers use subject-specific vocabulary, their students do not develop the same confident use of it themselves.

The rapid progress of the academy has been accompanied by many changes to the staffing of the academy. In particular, new middle managers took up their roles very recently indeed. Their very newness in post means that they have not yet been able to demonstrate impact. Their induction and development is of key importance to the academy. The specialist status of the academy continues to play a significant role. It has helped raise standards in the humanities subjects by fostering links to other organisations: for example, in drama with a local theatre and in geography with a school in Tanzania.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead an effective senior management team. Their evaluation of the school is accurate. The governing body knows the academy well and provides clear strategic direction. The academy has improved

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significantly since the last inspection of the predecessor school and its capacity of sustained improvement is good.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - enabling students to become active and independent learners in more of their lessons
  - developing students' confident use in their speaking and writing of the language specific to each subject.
  
- Develop the skills and effectiveness of the newly appointed middle management team.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enter the school with average attainment. During their time at the academy they make good progress and by Year 11 their attainment is above average. In 2011, 75% of students achieved five or more passes at grades A\*-C in GCSE (or equivalent courses) including English and mathematics, which is well ahead of the national average. Students demonstrate enthusiasm for learning in their lessons. In a girls' physical education lesson in Year 7, students themselves led the warm up exercises and did so with confidence. They showed great enthusiasm for tag rugby and during the well-structured lesson, their skills developed outstandingly well. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, students worked together well on an experiment in probability and used this to discuss the links between a theoretical and an experimental approach to probability. Students' positive attitudes and good behaviour mean that they respond well to practical opportunities such as these. In some lessons, their activity is more directed, but still their high standards of behaviour and enthusiasm in responding to questions mean that their progress is good. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress as teachers plan well for their needs, and as teaching assistants provide effective support. Once again, many of these students respond particularly well to practical and active learning. The few students from ethnic minority backgrounds also make good progress although statistical analysis is difficult with such small numbers.

Students have strong values, and demonstrate these in active promotion of charities and in their respect for each other. They understand other cultures and religions and are curious about experiencing them. Students have gained usefully from the academy's international links with a school in Tanzania. However, their understanding of the multi-cultural nature of contemporary Britain is limited by lack of contact.

Students have good links with the wider community, who in turn value their contribution. They are active in local sports clubs and the local choral society. Students have a representative on the town council's playing fields committee, and

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they helped out by painting equipment on the field. They have a good voice in the academy through the school council and they assist in the appointment of staff.

Students’ attendance is above average, and they use their skills in literacy and numeracy well. They are punctual and are prepared well for their future in further education, employment or training.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching at the academy has many strengths. Teachers plan well, and take account of the needs of different students. In a Year 8 mathematics class with lower-ability students, the teacher encouraged students to work in pairs to solve problems and to come to the board to demonstrate their methods to the whole class. Students were helped by these opportunities to learn from each other. The questions they worked on were designed well to develop their understanding. In a Year 11 geography lesson students again benefited from working in groups to study erosion, and the teacher also made sure that their analysis was enhanced by the precise use of the correct technical language. In some lessons, although students made good progress, the planning of the lesson only required a more passive participation and students were not encouraged to develop their language in the same way. All teachers, however, made the lesson objectives clear and demonstrated good subject knowledge. Students have a good idea of the level of their work and the areas where they need to improve. A great deal of high quality marking of students’ work was seen, but there is still some inconsistency of practice.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The curriculum meets students’ needs, interests and aptitudes well, although with less choice than is normally available in larger schools. It contains innovative features such as Latin, which is now taught to most students. Students described how their understanding of grammar is growing as a result. The curriculum allows for a variety of ways that students’ attainment can receive accreditation. Some students follow vocational courses with other providers. There is a good selection of extra-curricular opportunities available. Students are well prepared for their future education, employment or training.

Transition from primary to secondary school is managed well and where students have particular needs, early liaison takes place to ensure that it is successful. Staff know students well, and take early action if problems arise to ensure students’ well-being. This action is supported by high quality links to other agencies. Attendance is above average, and has improved since the school was last inspected. Students’ progress is regularly and carefully monitored. The new mixed-aged tutor groups are at an early stage of development and are not as yet reaping their full potential benefits.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Teachers, support staff and governors all share a strong sense of moral purpose that their students deserve the best possible education, and this leads to the current culture of continuous improvement. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been instrumental in establishing this ethos. The senior leadership team is effective, but the middle managers at the time of the inspection were only two weeks into their roles, and so have not been able to demonstrate an impact.

The leadership of teaching has been successful and the quality of teaching has improved. Teachers are observed regularly and there is a programme of peer coaching and mentoring. Once again, this is a new development but there are early signs that it is having a positive effect. Academy leaders have an accurate view of teaching strengths, weaknesses and development needs from their monitoring.

The governing body is very active and its members are linked to faculties, visit the academy regularly and know the academy’s strengths and weaknesses well. Safeguarding procedures are monitored by the governing body and are good. In

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particular, the good links with external agencies mean that issues affecting individual students can be sorted out quickly and at an early stage.

Links with parents and carers are most successful. Very high numbers attend consultation evenings, and parents and carers have good opportunities to contribute to academy initiatives such as the recent change in the composition of tutor groups. Communication with parents and carers uses a variety of media including text-messaging.

The academy is itself a very cohesive community and the good links with the local community have helped to bring the generations together. The local police, local councillors and residents commented how this has been appreciated. The academy is highly effective in its promotion of equal opportunities and in tackling discrimination. Gaps in academic attainment between boys and girls are declining rapidly. Academy leaders have taken effective action to support the cultural awareness of the few students of gypsy and/or traveller heritage. Academy leaders have also successfully challenged stereotypes, so that students of both genders take part in many different activities, and celebrate each other’s successes.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

There were a relatively small number of responses to the questionnaire for parents and carers. However, overall the results indicated a high level of support for the academy. There was unanimous agreement, for example, that the academy keeps their children safe. A few written comments were received. Most of these were supportive of the academy but a small number expressed criticism. The inspection team examined these but found that there was no pattern to the small number of



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these critical comments.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Queen Elizabeth Humanities College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 288 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	39	16	52	2	6	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	16	52	15	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	15	48	16	52	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	29	21	68	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	26	22	71	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	5	16	21	68	4	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	23	20	65	3	10	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	32	19	61	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	11	35	18	58	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	23	20	65	3	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	23	21	68	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	9	29	19	61	2	6	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	14	45	16	52	0	0	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**



8 December 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Queen Elizabeth Humanities College, Bromyard, HR7 4QS**

Thank you for your help and for taking time to speak to us during the recent inspection.

We have judged that your academy is good. Standards in public examinations have improved significantly and currently are above the national average. You are making good progress during your time at the academy. Some other aspects of the academy particularly impressed the inspection team, such as the way you all feel safe, the very effective links the academy has with your parents and the way you are all encouraged to take part in a full range of activities. We noted the very friendly feel to the academy and the way you celebrate each other's successes. You are developing good skills for the world of work through your good literacy and numeracy skills, your above average attendance and punctuality, and your good behaviour. Your contribution to the local community is much appreciated.

The teaching you receive is good, and we have suggested to the academy that it can be even better if you are able to become active and independent learners in more of your lessons, and if you are encouraged to speak and write more using the technical language in each subject area.

Your headteacher and his senior colleagues have worked immensely hard to improve the academy over the past few years – and to your benefit. You can help them by maintaining your good behaviour, continuing to work hard and continuing to involve yourselves fully in the life of the academy and the local community.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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