

Queensbridge School

Queensbridge Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8QB

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This outstanding school ensures that students achieve exceptionally well.
- All groups of students make outstanding and rapidly improving progress. By the end of Year 11, attainment is above average and rising year on year.
- Key to this success is the meticulous way leaders check on how well each individual student is achieving, and step in quickly if any are in danger of falling behind.
- Students do particularly well in reading, writing and communication, and many relish reading across a wide range of topics.
- The exciting and very well planned curriculum in Years 7 and 8 makes a considerable contribution to students' strong enjoyment of learning and rapidly developing literacy skills.
- The headteacher demonstrates great determination in his drive to ensure that all students succeed. With strong support from talented senior leaders, he has brought about great gains in students' attainment and progress since the previous inspection by ensuring that teaching is far better.
- Teaching is now consistently good or better, with much that is outstanding. Teachers plan exciting and fast paced lessons, and demand high standards and hard work.
- Senior leaders check regularly and carefully on the quality of teaching, and take great care to link teachers' effectiveness to their pay rises.
- Students respond to their outstanding education with eagerness and enthusiasm. Behaviour is outstanding and they feel extremely safe in school.
- Students' positive relationships with one another and staff generate excellent learning.
- Leaders at all levels are passionate about their roles, and their commitment to improve all aspects of the school's work is inspirational.
- The governors are very well informed and share the ambitions of school leaders to ensure all students achieve the best they can. They carry out their duties exceptionally well.
- The continual drive for improvement is reflected in leaders recognising that more can be done to make sure students consistently respond to the advice teachers give when they mark their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons or parts of lessons, including 12 that were seen together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled students and those who have special educational needs were learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at students' progress in mathematics, English and science, and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, two other governors and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of its work and examples of students' work. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took note of the 85 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to a group of parents and carers invited to comment by the school. Inspectors also analysed 57 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Philip Winch	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Myers	Additional Inspector
Anna Fisher	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The very large majority of students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, and a high proportion are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students that are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is high.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs.
- A very small number of students spend some of their time studying work-related courses at South and City College, Birmingham.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To support students in achieving even higher rates of progress, make sure that all students act on the high-quality feedback they receive when teachers mark their books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students get off to an excellent start in Year 7, and make rapid progress from low starting points. They make particularly impressive gains in their English. Key to this success is the highly imaginative and innovative 'enterprise' curriculum, which provides an excellent transition from primary school and weaves aspects of writing, speaking and listening into all aspects of learning.
- Results in external examinations rose by a considerable margin in 2012, continuing a strong upward trend. Over two-thirds of all students attained five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Taking all subjects together, students' attainment was considerably above average.
- Senior and middle leaders check closely any variations in attainment and progress, and act promptly to address any issues. For example, the school plans well-judged extra support for students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. This support has effectively reduced the attainment gap between these students and others so that it is much smaller than that seen nationally. In 2012, students entitled to free school meals attained, on average, one third of a grade less in English and mathematics than others in the school. This was a much smaller difference than in previous years.
- The achievement of all groups of students, including those whose circumstances makes them vulnerable and those from the wide range of different heritages, is similarly strong. This reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all students should have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- The very high numbers of students who speak English as an additional language rapidly develop their speaking, reading and writing skills. Teachers are careful to distinguish English as an additional language from special educational needs, and their flexible approach allows students to move to higher-level groups when their progress starts to accelerate.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. Teachers and other adults prepare work for these students at just the right level, and the extra help they give to students makes a big difference.
- Across the school, teachers are very aware of the need to develop the reading, writing and speaking skills of students and they plan carefully to use these skills in lessons. Very well considered and highly effective reading support starts in Year 7 for any students who need it. As a result, students read, write and speak with increasing confidence as they move through the school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The work seen by inspectors confirms the overall picture of outstanding and rapidly improving teaching.
- Teachers have very high expectations for what students can achieve. Students respond very well to their challenge and make excellent contributions to their own and each other's learning. They grasp enthusiastically all opportunities to work in pairs and groups, or independently.
- Teachers often stand back and let students get on with their learning, intervening when

necessary but giving the students plenty of chances to find out things for themselves. This practice is very effective. In an excellent Year 11 science lesson, students engaged in role play on controlled and uncontrolled nuclear reactions. They used sophisticated language and actions in their demonstrations and greatly extended their understanding of nuclear physics.

- Teachers and other adults have similarly high expectations of students who are disabled or need extra help. They strive, through high quality support, to help them reach the highest standards.
- Constructive relationships in classrooms and throughout the school support a vibrant and productive learning environment. Students respect each other and the adults, and disruption to learning of any kind is virtually unknown.
- Teachers' lesson planning is exemplary. It is detailed and takes full account of the needs of all students, contributing to the excellent learning and rapid progress of all groups of students.
- Marking is meticulous in many subjects. The written comments on students' work contribute well to the progress they make. Students are not always encouraged, or given the time, to reflect on and respond to these comments, so they are not always as valuable as they could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' excellent behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning because the teachers' energies can go into teaching rather than behaviour management, so they can take a more imaginative approach in their lessons.
- School records show that students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. This was confirmed during the inspection. Students arrived on time to lessons, followed routines naturally and made excellent contributions to their own learning. Students move around the school sensibly and behave responsibly and with respect to others throughout the school day.
- Parents and carers, staff and students are very positive about behaviour. Students say that bullying of any kind and racist incidents are extremely rare, but are dealt with promptly and effectively if any should occur. Students have a very good knowledge and understanding about the different types of bullying, such as cyber or homophobic bullying, and are aware of the importance of understanding different faiths and lifestyles.
- In discussions, students were adamant that they felt safe. They say that they greatly enjoy school and all that it has to offer. This is reflected in their ever-improving attendance, which is above the national average.
- There are many examples of where the school has linked with other agencies and families to improve the lives of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. One student told inspectors that the way in which the school had worked with them to resolve their problems had '...given me the courage to learn'.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads strongly and uncompromisingly. He is highly visible around the school and has been very successful in driving ambition and establishing a shared sense of purpose. He is very well supported by an outstanding senior leadership team, which shares a passion to

achieve the very best for all students. This drive for improvement is evident in all aspects of school life, especially the ongoing increase in students' achievement and the ever-improving quality of teaching.

- The targets the school sets for teachers to improve their work are being used rigorously to reward good performance, and are based on an accurate review of teaching and progress. The excellent systems for monitoring the quality of lessons and the students' progress are followed up with very clear feedback to teachers, coupled with appropriate advice and training. The school uses its excellent practitioners very well to spread good practice through coaching and mentoring of colleagues.
 - Teachers comment very positively about the opportunities they have to develop their skills at all levels. These are closely matched to teachers' specific individual needs, and are reflected in the high quality of teaching and adult support observed in lessons.
 - One of the most striking features of this successful school is its exciting and well thought out curriculum. It ensures that students from all backgrounds enjoy learning and rapidly acquire the basic academic skills they need, particularly in literacy, but also gain many skills in their wider personal development.
 - There is a wide range of courses and subjects on offer, as well as an exceptional number of extra activities in music, the arts and sport. A small number of students take GCSE mathematics early. They follow a well-planned programme that is closely matched to their needs, and achieve as well as if they had taken the examinations later. They make rapid progress.
 - A few students study practical, work-related courses at South and City College, Birmingham. Their progress and well-being are carefully checked by leaders to make sure they achieve as well as their peers.
 - The local authority has rightly judged that this successful school only requires 'light touch' support.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have played a strong role in helping the school to improve students' achievement and teaching since the last inspection. They are very well informed about how well the school is doing and have a complete understanding of different types of school data. They know where the best teaching is in the school and have fully supported the initiatives of school leaders to improve classroom performance, including the changes to the curriculum. Governors have contributed fully to the discussions on how the pupil premium funding should be spent and have kept a careful check on the impact of the extra support and guidance provided for eligible students. They also control the systems for managing staff performance and the way that pay rises are decided. They are well trained and meet all their responsibilities very well, including national requirements for safeguarding students.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103497
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	404879

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	706
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Baines
Headteacher	Tim Boyes
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2011
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