

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

Abbey Place, Faversham, ME13 7BQ

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and governors have a clear and uncompromising vision for the school that promotes the achievement of every student within a caring community. Leaders at all levels are determined that all students will progress exceptionally well and the school continues to improve. They know every student extremely well.
- The school has sustained high levels of attainment. Students excel in their personal development and academic study; all achieve very well.
- The high expectations and excellent subject knowledge of staff underpin the outstanding teaching.
- The headteacher receives strong support from ambitious, dedicated and loyal staff who are committed to maintaining the highest standards.
- The wide range of courses meets the needs of the students very well. A variety of high quality extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities make a positive contribution to the students' strong personal development.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Around the school they are courteous and polite. Students are keen to learn and relish the challenges that their teachers set. Their excellent attitudes to learning contribute strongly to their success.
- Students are happy and feel very safe in school. They are confident that the adults in the school support them extremely well.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Students show respect and concern for the needs of others in their community and beyond. Students are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students achieve highly and talk with passion about the opportunities to develop their wider skills. As a result, students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment.
- Governance is excellent. Governors use their wide-ranging skills to the best advantage of the school. They provide very effective challenge and support for school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 36 lessons or parts of lessons. Ten were observed jointly with a school leader.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, four governors, a representative from the local authority and members of the school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's information on students' progress, monitoring records and the school's self-evaluation summary. Inspectors also examined safeguarding policies, records of checks on the suitability of staff and other adults to carry out their roles in the school, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Students' work was scrutinised in lessons. A separate scrutiny of students' work was also carried out across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour in lessons, while students were moving around the school site and at social times, such as break and lunch.
- Inspectors took account of the 201 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- In addition, inspectors took account of the 57 responses to a questionnaire for members of staff.

Inspection team

Theresa Phillips, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philip Storey

Additional Inspector

Julie Summerfield

Additional Inspector

Steven Poole

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in April 2011. When its predecessor school, also Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is an average sized 11–18 school.
- The school selects from the top 25% of students.
- Approximately one in 20 of the school's population is known to be eligible for the pupil premium which is additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is well below the national average. The numbers of disadvantaged students in Year 11 in 2014 were too small to report on their achievement separately.
- There are no students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme, which supports those students who have not previously reached the expected levels in English and mathematics.
- Most students are of White British heritage. There are a few students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- Very few students are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The school liaises with another local school, The Abbey School, to extend the range of sixth form courses available to students in both schools. As these arrangements are new, too few students attend this partner school to report separately on their attendance and achievement
- The school enters students early for GCSE examinations in some subjects.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school holds Thinking School status, and a number of awards including Investors in People, Investors in Careers and the International School award.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and staff from the school support a number of primary and secondary schools locally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers consistently check all students' understanding during lessons before moving on and provide focused feedback to further raise students' levels of achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, staff and governors show passion and commitment to help every student excel in their academic studies and personal development. They have established an ethos where high-quality teaching and care enable students to achieve exceptionally well.
- The headteacher has shown relentless determination to lead the school through a turbulent period of staff changes and a building programme, while maintaining the highest standards in all aspects of the school's work. There has been clear improvement over time. Staff morale is high, as seen in the very positive responses to staff questionnaires.
- Reorganisation of subject leadership into faculties and the appointment of new leaders of English and mathematics have strengthened leadership in the school. They have shared good practice and, as a result, the achievement of students is rising.
- Leaders at all levels analyse thoroughly information about students' attainment and progress. When underachievement is identified, pastoral and subject leaders take rapid action to tackle the problem and check carefully that actions taken help to improve the students' learning. Regular reporting to parents ensures they are kept informed of their children's progress and concerns are shared and addressed.
- Leaders do not always check closely enough the impact of teaching on students' progress. When students are found to be in danger of falling behind, extra tuition or other forms of support are provided and, as a result, most students subsequently improve their rate of progress. Not all school leaders routinely measure the success of teaching on how well students progress during lessons.
- The curriculum meets students' needs extremely well by offering a wide choice of subjects to study for GCSE and A level. The introduction of an extended Key Stage 4 over three years instead of two led to improvements in GCSE grades. Students take a half-GCSE citizenship at the end of year 9 and during year 11 they follow a programme of enrichment which prepares them well for further study and life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors monitor the use and impact of pupil premium funding exceptionally well so that there is no difference in the performance of disadvantaged students and others in the school.
- The school is an exceptionally harmonious community. There is a strong commitment by leaders at all levels to promote equality of opportunity and ensure there is no discrimination. As a result, students display high levels of respect and support for each other during lessons and around the school. Students have many opportunities to develop leadership skills through taking on responsibilities. Sixth form students provide help and support for younger ones, which is well received.
- Students' understanding of the fundamental British values of tolerance and respect are very strong because these values are reinforced through assemblies, form time and the curriculum. The school ethos about individuals respecting the needs of others underpins students' excellent spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Careers advice is thorough and very effective. Students have access to an independent adviser. Year 11 students sample their potential choice of sixth form courses and meet with senior leaders who check that the combination of subjects will help students' entry to leading universities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective and meet all statutory requirements. The school is a very safe environment. Any student at risk of harm is quickly identified and supported well.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to the online survey said they would recommend the school and agreed that the school was safe and well led.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make a highly effective contribution to the overall leadership of the school. They are aware of the school's strengths and also areas which could be further improved. They are ambitious and use their detailed knowledge of the school and professional expertise to rigorously challenge school leaders. They attend training to ensure their own skills are fully up to date.
 - Governors are confident analysing information about the school's performance relative to other schools nationally and to similar schools locally. They have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of teaching in the school through information about students' progress, reports from leaders and visits. As a result, governors make informed decisions about teachers' pay progression and teachers do not move up the scale if their performance targets have not been met.
 - Governors are committed to promoting the personal development of students in addition to enabling them to achieve well. They are aspirational for all students and have adjusted the admission criteria to increase the number of disadvantaged students joining the school from September 2015. As part of their commitment to the wider community, governors encourage the headteacher and staff to support

other local schools.

- Governors manage the finances of the school very well. They examine particularly well the use and impact of additional government funding for disadvantaged students.
- Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding and child protection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Students show a strong thirst for learning, concentrate well in lessons and work with great enthusiasm. Staff and students develop positive relationships based on trust and respect which helps students to make outstanding progress.
- Outside lessons, students also conduct themselves in an exemplary way as they move between lessons and socialise at breaks and lunchtimes. They are well mannered, unreservedly proud of their school and wear their uniform correctly. There is practically no litter because students appreciate and value their environment.
- There are very few incidents of bullying and racism. Disruption to learning is extremely rare and students fully understand the consequences of their behaviour. There is a strong rewards culture which supports positive behaviour, particularly among younger students. Rates of exclusion are well below the national average.
- Students are punctual. Attendance is above average and improving.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students say they feel extremely safe and the very large majority of parents responding to the online survey agreed.
- Students know about different types of bullying, how to keep safe and who to talk to if they have any concerns. A high priority is given to informing all members of the school community about online safety and, as a result, governors, staff and students were very well aware about the potential dangers of social media.
- The school ensures that all students are able to access sporting and other extra-curricular activities which help them to gain confidence and build self-esteem. In addition, a wide-ranging programme of personal, social and health education, good quality religious education and citizenship lessons and exchange visits with students from overseas all help to ensure that students are well prepared for life beyond school.
- All adults working in the school and sixth form students who mentor younger ones have had appropriate safeguarding training. When concerns about students' welfare arise, there are strong systems to respond effectively.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers' expert knowledge and passion for their subject, together with students' desire to learn leads to high achievement. Teachers have consistently high expectations of their students who respond to the challenges set. There is a clear culture of scholastic excellence throughout the school.
- Strong relationships between teachers and students inspire high levels of trust and confidence so that students are engaged and absorbed in their learning. Students from all year groups work very well together to solve problems and are happy to challenge each other's thinking and offer constructive advice.
- Teachers promote deep learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science during the three year GCSE courses. In several science lessons, teachers insisted that students used precise terminology when describing scientific events to deepen their understanding.
- In a very few lessons, teachers do not always check students' learning sufficiently. Where this is the case, questioning is too rushed and students' learning is superficial. The expectations held by teachers that students should learn independently means that a few students are not given enough help during lessons, which slows their progress. Similarly, some written feedback does not always explain what students need to do to improve their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers stretch the most able students by skilful questioning. In a minority of lessons teachers do not plan activities which build on students' prior knowledge and understanding. As a result, on a few occasions most able students sometimes repeat work they already know and some other students have misconceptions which are not addressed.

- There is a strong emphasis in developing literacy skills across the school. Students read widely and their well-stocked library encourages them to conduct research to enrich their understanding.
- Homework is used effectively to practise key skills in each subject, as well as to develop deeper thinking.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students join the school with levels of attainment that are well above the national average. They make excellent progress in all of their subjects so that by the end of Year 11 levels of attainment are exceptionally high. For the last two years nearly half of GCSE grades awarded have been at A* or A. Rates of progress in English and mathematics are well above national averages. Based on the school's reliable data, achievement is set to rise still further this year. Three quarters of students in Year 11 are on course to achieve grades C or better in all English Baccalaureate subjects, including English, mathematics, science, languages and humanities, which is three times the national average for 2014.
- Approximately one-tenth of students join the school with Key Stage 2 results that, although in line with the national average for their age group, are below those of other students at the school. In 2014, these students made particularly strong progress and all achieved an A* to C grade in English and mathematics. Three quarters made more than expected progress in these subjects.
- The very small number of disadvantaged students achieve exceptionally well. Their rates of progress are similar to those for all other students in the school and much higher than other students nationally. As a result, there is no discernible difference in the progress in English and mathematics between these students and others in the school. The very effective targeting of pupil premium money, for example by providing a homework club and access to online learning programmes, has contributed significantly to this success.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress that is generally as good as other students in the school. Individual needs are supported very well.
- During lessons, the most able students achieve highly. They regularly show detailed knowledge and understanding of the most challenging concepts.
- Students take their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10 in a number of subjects including humanities, additional modern foreign languages, design and technology, art and design, performing arts and physical education. Students study an enrichment course in Year 11, as well as focusing on fewer GCSE subjects. This early entry policy has led to an overall increase in GCSE grades and the proportion of students achieving A* or A grades in subjects taken early remains significantly above national levels.
- Students are encouraged to read widely and this reading is often supplemented by homework tasks. Students' skills in reading, writing, oracy and mathematics are developed and promoted very well across all subject areas. This was seen in students' work in class, and in books examined during an extensive work scrutiny.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Inspired and well supported by knowledgeable and committed teachers, students make excellent progress and achieve high levels of attainment. As a result of teaching that encourages students to work independently and with each other, they are also exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The sixth form is a strength of the school, with outstanding leadership and management. The needs of students are very well met through the broad range of subjects offered, the extensive opportunities to develop personal skills and the close care and support provided. Students talk with passion about the opportunities they have to develop confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills and they feel fully prepared for their next stage. Students appreciate the guidance provided by their mentors.
- About one fifth of students have joined the sixth form from other schools and they settle quickly. Over 90% of students stay for two years and complete their courses. Students receive very good impartial careers advice and all students progress on to university, employment or training. Most students proceed to university and the proportion gaining entry to a top performing university has risen to one third.
- Progress in academic qualifications is significantly higher than national levels, leading to a 99% pass rate at A level and an increase in the percentage of A* and A grades to 33% in 2014. This is well above national levels.
- There is much outstanding teaching. Teachers with considerable subject expertise have the highest expectations of their students and usually provide students with detailed feedback to help them improve

their learning. Students are very well motivated and work with purpose during lessons and private study.

- Leaders of the sixth form carefully check the progress of students. When they identify groups or individuals who are in danger of falling behind leaders act decisively to address concerns.
- The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding. Sixth form students make a significant contribution to school life by setting a very good example and acting as mentors to younger students.
- The sixth form meets the current standards for 16 to 19 study programmes.

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	136570
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	449683

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	926
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hazel Colyer
Headteacher	David Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01795533132
Fax number	01795538474
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