

Queensbury School

Wood End Road, Erdington, Birmingham B24 8BL

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not monitored the work of some staff closely enough to ensure that they are fulfilling their responsibilities. As a result, some aspects of the school's work have declined since the last inspection.
- Governors have not routinely challenged the work of school leaders or held them closely enough to account.
- Revised systems for keeping children safe are effective but not yet fully embedded.
- The school's system for collecting assessment information does not allow all leaders to track progress easily or fully to inform action to improve outcomes for groups and individuals.
- School leaders have not fully communicated their priorities within a coherent plan.
- Teaching and outcomes in mathematics are not as strong as those in English.
- Attendance is below the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good throughout the school and this leads to good progress for individuals and groups of students.
- Disadvantaged pupils make particularly strong progress because pupil premium funding is used well to support them.
- The 16 to 19 provision in the school is good and prepares learners well for life after school.
- The curriculum is well designed to allow pupils to gain a range of qualifications, promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Performance management and staff training are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - enhancing the accountability systems in the school so that the work of all staff is closely monitored and prompt actions are taken when required
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders to close account
 - embedding the current systems to keep children safe
 - pulling together action plans which have resulted from external and internal evaluations into one coherent plan to address the school's priorities
 - developing the system for tracking progress so that all leaders can use it to inform action to improve outcomes for individuals and groups.
- Take effective action to improve attendance.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by providing training and support for the new subject leader and other staff.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved further to bring about the developments needed in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because systems to check that staff were fulfilling their responsibilities were not used regularly or thoroughly. Consequently, safeguarding procedures have needed a major overhaul during this academic year.
- Senior leaders collect a large amount of information about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Although this information is given to subject leaders, they are not using it fully. It does not show the small steps some pupils make nor does it easily show the progress that groups of pupils are making.
- School leaders have taken action as a result of self-evaluation and external reviews of the school's work. While their responses to these findings focus upon addressing issues raised, the current school development plan does not reflect the action that needs to be taken to improve the school. As a result, priorities are unclear.
- In the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, well supported by the assistant headteachers, subject leaders and staff, has taken action to improve the school. Changes that were taking place have been built on and other areas have been developed. For example, systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching have been developed to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment have remained good.
- Performance management is used well to improve teaching. Staff are set challenging targets linked to the quality of teaching, outcomes and the teachers' standards. Training and development are also encouraged and staff have had opportunities to improve their practice. Progression through the pay scales is closely linked to the quality of teaching and outcomes.
- Subject leaders know the strengths and areas for development in their areas, and they are taking action to make further improvements. Less experienced leaders, for example the head of mathematics, are supported by other subject leaders and senior leaders in order to make improvements in their areas.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the needs of the pupils. There is an emphasis on developing reading and writing skills, but promoting mathematical skills has been less of a focus. A range of subjects are offered including English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology (ICT), humanities and the arts, and many pupils complete accredited qualifications, including GCSEs, in these subjects. Pupils make good progress and, as they have been prepared for life outside the classroom, they move on to meaningful activities once they leave the school.
- School leaders monitor and evaluate off-site provision effectively. They receive information about how well pupils are progressing and they work with providers to promote safety and well-being.
- Learning is supported by a wealth of additional activities. Pupils take part in sport and drama, and they are given opportunities to make and create using technology. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of British values underpin the curriculum as staff deliver activities which help pupils to prepare for their lives in modern Britain. Employability skills are developed effectively.
- School leaders use additional funding well. For example, the pupil premium has been used to purchase additional resources and staffing to help eligible pupils make improved progress. The use of this funding has been so successful that disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress than other pupils in the school.
- Most parents are very supportive of the school and school leaders have developed effective systems for communicating with them. Regular meetings are held with parents and they are given useful information about the progress their children are making. However, the targets communicated on these summaries are of variable quality so it is not always clear to parents what pupils need to do to improve. Also, school leaders have not secured the full support of all parents in order to improve attendance.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school. For example, they commissioned a safeguarding audit which has helped to improve provision and commissioned the Birmingham Education Partnership to conduct a review of the school. This review led to school leaders adapting their actions in order to improve aspects of the school's work. The nature of further support is now being discussed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is extremely experienced and, together with other governors, has attended relevant training. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and other leaders. Their meetings cover all the appropriate areas and they receive information about the quality of teaching, outcomes, the use of additional funding and safeguarding. However, they rarely challenge what they are given so senior leaders are not held to close account.

- Governors have ensured that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used well and that arrangements for managing the performance of staff lead to improved teaching. However, they have not made sure that all the relevant information is on the school's website and not all governors have the appropriate background to oversee the areas of the school's work which they are assigned to monitor.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are now effective as senior leaders have been rigorous in improving their approach to this area of the school's work. A new safeguarding lead took up post last term and he has ensured that well-organised, written records are stored securely and that risk assessments are in place. His work is also closely monitored by senior leaders. Staff have been well trained on how to keep children safe and they have received appropriate information about safeguarding. They know what to do if they have concerns about a young person and make prompt referrals, when necessary, to the safeguarding lead. These are now followed up systematically and immediate action takes place when required.
- The school site is secure. Everyone follows agreed procedures for checking visitors, and school staff take part in the arrival and departure routines of pupils. This ensures that pupils are safe when arriving at or leaving school.
- All pupils, parents and staff who made their views known to inspectors said that pupils were safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching across the school is typically good so pupils in all key stages make good progress in lessons and over time. This has led to good outcomes in a range of subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils. Work is usually planned to engage them and meet the needs of the most able, those who have English as an additional language and those who find learning most difficult. Disadvantaged pupils learn well throughout the school and make more rapid progress than their classmates.
- Most teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and how to get the best out of their pupils. A range of resources are used, including age-appropriate but accessible reading materials, and staff set homework to help pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The teaching of English is particularly strong in Key Stages 3 and 4. This is supported by staff taking opportunities to develop literacy and improve reading in a range of subjects. However, the teaching of mathematics is not as effective as that of English. Mathematical skills are not typically well developed in other subjects.
- Books are marked in line with the school marking policy and pupils respond positively to teachers' comments in order to improve their work.
- Pupils are assessed at the beginning and end of topics so subject teachers have a good understanding of what pupils know, what they need to learn and the progress that they make. This allows staff to plan lessons which lead to individuals and groups of pupils making good progress.
- School leaders collect a large amount of information about pupil progress. However, the system currently in place does not allow subject leaders to have an overview of the small steps which some pupils make and it does not easily show the progress of groups within subject areas. As school leaders are aware of this, they are beginning to take action to ensure that the system is developed to fully meet the needs of the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Work in this area declined after the last inspection and procedures to ensure the welfare of pupils were not sufficiently robust. This has now been rectified but new policies and procedures are still becoming embedded.
- Leaders now check that risk assessments relating to the needs of individual pupils, as well as activities and trips, are completed and shared with all the relevant staff. This did not happen in the past.
- Staff continue to work closely with other agencies and parents to deal with any problems and ensure pupils' well-being through a shared approach.
- All parents who expressed an opinion told inspectors that their children were safe in school. Pupils also said that they felt safe. They are taught to stay safe when using the internet and staff help pupils to understand the consequences of doing something wrong or dangerous. Outside organisations, such as the police and

the fire service, deliver sessions to groups of pupils to raise their awareness of issues and individual pupils are given targeted support to help them stay safe.

- Pupils have an understanding of bullying and are confident that staff will deal with any unkindness as it occurs. Prejudice is not tolerated; equality is actively promoted through strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the advocacy of fundamental British values.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive; their books are well presented and they are keen to learn. However, when teaching does not fully engage them, a few pupils lose interest and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils do not attend regularly and, despite systems to follow-up absence and reward good attendance, it is below the national average.
- Exclusions have declined slightly over the last two years and the behaviour seen during the inspection was good. However, pupils told inspectors that this was not always the case and that some instances of poor behaviour happen in the classroom and during social time.
- School records indicate that inappropriate behaviour does occur. That said, a large majority of the parents who made their views known to inspectors and most staff believe that behaviour is well managed. Staff have been given training to help pupils to improve their behaviour and this means that the majority of pupils conduct themselves well.
- The behaviour, attendance and welfare of learners who attend college courses are carefully monitored by staff. As these courses are chosen to help learners develop their independence and improve their life skills, they make a significant contribution to their personal development.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils make good progress, often from low starting points, as a result of good teaching. High proportions of pupils meet or exceed their realistic targets in a range of subjects.
- The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school make accelerated progress, so their outcomes have exceeded their classmates for the last two years. Additional support for speech and language has made a significant contribution to this.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 complete a range of accredited courses, many at GCSE level. Pupils have continued to achieve well in ICT.
- Pupils are encouraged to read and are taught to use the sounds that letters make to work out words (phonics). They are also given opportunities to develop their writing skills in a number of subject areas. As a result, and as English is taught well, pupils make rapid progress in this subject. However, as there is less emphasis on developing numeracy, progress in mathematics is not so swift.
- Information provided by the school, supported by work seen in books and in lessons, indicates that all groups of pupils currently in the school are making good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the post-16 provision. However, the system for tracking progress does not easily show this and school leaders are aware that it needs to be developed further.
- The support that pupils receive for their academic and personal development, supported by the effective transition arrangements, ensures that learners are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Post-16 provision is well led and managed. It focuses on developing life skills and encouraging independence through a range of activities.
- The assistant headteacher with responsibility for 16 to 19 learners monitors all aspects of the provision and takes prompt action to make improvements when required. She works with subject leaders to ensure that teaching is effective.
- Teaching is good as it interests the young people and has a relevance to life outside school. This, along with careful tracking, allows learners to make good progress from their starting points.

- Learners follow courses in literacy, numeracy, ICT, physical education, the arts, and personal and social development which includes careers, social skills, sex and relationships education, staying safe and independent living. All of these courses help individuals prepare for adult life and some are accredited.
- All learners study English and mathematics. They develop their functional skills in English and study appropriate courses in mathematics. In common with the rest of the school, pupils make better progress in English than in mathematics but 16 to 19 learners make most progress in developing their life skills.
- Learners take part in many activities which develop their skills. For example, they purchase their own lunch away from the school and they are taught to use cash machines safely. Some help with gardening at a residential home for older people and others have collected contributions for a food bank at a local supermarket. In addition to developing their life skills, activities such as these help to promote the fundamental British values of respect, tolerance and individual liberty.
- Almost all learners participate in appropriate work experience. Most take part in college placements which develop their skills and allow them to experience learning in a different environment. Learners are well supported on these courses but they are encouraged to become more independent over time. By following these courses, learners develop confidence and this allows the vast majority of young people to progress onto meaningful programmes of study once they leave the school. Additionally, almost all sustain their places on the courses that they have chosen.
- Learners receive effective careers advice and guidance. This means that almost all complete their programmes of study and the vast majority move onto education, training or employment when they leave the school.
- Post-16 learners behave well and some of them act as mentors to younger pupils. They are taught to stay safe and they have opportunities to take part in sporting and dramatic activities. However, as a result of issues with transport, punctuality and attendance have been identified as areas which need to improve.

School details

Unique reference number	103616
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10003796

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Penny Wagg
Headteacher	Veronica Jenkins
Telephone number	0121 373 5731
Website	www.queensburysch.com
Email address	enquiry@queensbury.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January–1 February 2013

Information about this school

- Queensbury School is larger than the average-sized special school.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Their main issues include moderate learning difficulties; autistic spectrum disorder; speech, language and communication needs; and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- More than half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a quarter have English as an additional language. Both of these proportions are much higher than the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is well above average.
- Just over three quarters of pupils are boys.
- Post-16 learners attend alternative provision at Birmingham Metropolitan College, South & City College Birmingham and NOVA training.
- The headteacher was absent during the inspection and the school was led by the deputy headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 parts of lessons. All of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Members of the inspection team met with pupils and heard a small number of pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to some pupils informally.
- A meeting was held with two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector had telephone conversations with the governor with responsibility for safeguarding and the chief executive officer of the Birmingham Education Partnership.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. The headteacher, who is currently absent from school, met with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspection team also considered the responses of a range of staff in the 35 questionnaire returns.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress, the school's development planning, and documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rowena Green	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector

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