

Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School

High Street, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 5RR

Inspection dates	21–22 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
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Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher, senior leaders and governors has led to improvements, since the previous inspection, in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors are making a good contribution to the school's continuous improvement since the appointment of the new headteacher.
- Teaching is good, with almost all teachers adept at asking challenging questions and having high expectations of all their pupils. As a result the progress of different groups, including disadvantaged pupils, is improving across the school.
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good and well supported by the school's caring ethos.
- Previous gaps in progress between different groups, including disadvantaged pupils, are closing rapidly.
- The pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and well mannered.
- The pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. There are strong working relationships between pupils and teachers and this supports their learning well.
- School leadership ensures that sixth-form learners are taught well and make good progress. The learners receive high-quality information, advice and guidance to inform their choices about future decisions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always follow the school's marking policy consistently enough to make sure pupils know how to improve their work.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in deciding which activities they would like to do in lessons to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Sixth form leaders and some post-16 subject leaders have not yet developed the capacity to improve standards across a range of subjects in the sixth form.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and, thereby, outcomes for pupils by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning in lessons so that they can deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - key policies, for example the school's marking policy, are implemented consistently by teachers.
 - the capacity to improve standards in the sixth form is strengthened, so that substantial progress can be made in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since her appointment in September 2015, the headteacher quickly set about tackling strengths and weaknesses across the school. Through the careful appointment of key members of staff, the headteacher and members of the governing body have strengthened the senior and middle leadership teams.
- The school's self-evaluation processes are thorough and honest. Forensic analysis of school information has enabled the leadership team to ensure that staff are well informed. By setting teachers and pupils challenging targets, school leadership have tackled previous inconsistencies in teaching and learning so that the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils is now more consistent across the school.
- Appraisal systems have been tightened and now have a sharper focus on improving teachers' expertise and raising standards of achievement. As a result the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved.
- Staff and pupils are motivated by the new direction in the school. Leadership across the school were keen to communicate that significant guidance and support has been provided since the beginning of the academic year. For example, one quote from a survey of teachers said 'Working at Queen Elizabeth's this year has helped me to develop my leadership skills and given me opportunities to lead that had not happened previously'.
- The views of parents are positive, with a significant majority of those who responded to the online Parent View survey saying that they would recommend the school to other parents.
- Good use of regular progress meetings with teachers to discuss lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, analysis of information and surveys of the views of pupils ensures that any dips in progress are addressed quickly. In some instances, however, leaders do not hold their colleagues to account with sufficient rigour. This means that in some areas the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes are not as strong as they could be.
- The school's policy on giving feedback to pupils about their work is not consistently followed. When teachers do not make precisely clear what pupils need to do to improve as outlined in the school's marking policy, progress is limited.
- The content and tone of the curriculum is academic and provides pupils with a good grounding in basic skills, alongside the development of enquiry and practical-based skills. School leadership is keen that every pupil is enabled to progress successfully onto the next stage of their education and their chosen career. There is a very thorough careers education, information, advice and guidance programme throughout the school. The vast majority of pupils progress into the sixth form and the curriculum prepares them well for the rigour of post-16 study.
- Although pupils were able to mention some memorable moments, such as sixth-form performances and attendance at the theatre to support English language GCSE, they said that they do not get to enjoy a rich variety of after-school activities or residential experiences compared to friends in other schools.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding (additional funding for pupils who did not reach the expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6) well. Current information indicates that there is significant variation in Year 7 attainment. However, this variation is eliminated by the time they reach Year 9.
- The school promotes British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have the opportunity to gain an understanding and knowledge of others with different beliefs and cultures. For example, a thoughtful discussion about what it is to be a Jewish or Hindu citizen exemplified for pupils the diversity of life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding is used carefully to ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged pupils. The funding is used in a variety of ways that show leaders' and governors' determination to tackle variation in the performance of different groups of pupils identified by the previous inspection.
- Leaders check the quality of alternative provision carefully. They check that the provision is registered with the Department for Education, monitor pupils' attendance rates and visit alternative partners regularly to check safety and measure the progress that pupils make.
- The school draws on support from the local authority and beyond. School leadership makes good use of local authority networks and other schools which provide good support and guidance about issues relating to leadership and teaching.

■ The governance of the school

- The governors know the strengths and areas for development in their school well. They make effective use of governor training to improve the way that they support and challenge the school. Governors are proud of the improvements made in the school since September 2015, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They say that teachers are now well used to being observed by other staff and leaders in the school.
 - Governors state that performance management and systems for appraisal are now more rigorous. They oversee the school's procedures for setting targets for teachers and the headteacher and know that pay awards are linked to good-quality teaching. They are fully aware that promoted staff with interim roles of responsibility have been identified for potential future leadership positions.
 - Governors have an accurate view of how well the school is doing compared to other schools locally and nationally. They check that pupil premium has had the intended impact on standards and that it is helping to close the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others. Governors have recognised that improvements have been implemented following the appointment of the new head.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records show that the school makes regular checks on the school site and on visitors to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff are trained in all relevant policies and procedures and the school provides a very safe and supportive learning environment. This includes the latest guidelines to identify possible concerns, such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Parents are content that their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching learning and assessment are good overall. In the vast majority of lessons, there are strong relationships between pupils and adults. Staff use their specialist subject knowledge to good effect to plan and teach interesting and engaging lessons. They question pupils incisively to deepen their thinking.
- Leadership of teaching is effective in securing consistent approaches across classes, particularly in relation to the performance of disadvantaged pupils, over the past year. Teachers now make good use of information about pupils' progress to track how well they are doing. In the most successful lessons, teachers plan a good variety of inspiring activities that keep pupils highly engaged throughout.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved, because leaders have carefully guided teachers about improving the performance of middle-ability pupils. Most teachers are more confident to adapt their plans in light of pupils' responses and swiftly provide individual support for those who struggle.
- Teaching in English, humanities and drama is effective and supports pupils' good progress. Strong systems are in place to support teachers' assessment of pupils' work and appropriate support is given to any pupils who lag behind. For example, in English books and folders, inspectors saw pupils redrafting work two or three times in response to effective feedback from teachers, which meant their work improved significantly.
- Most teachers are visibly enthusiastic about their subject and provide a wide variety of challenging tasks that capture pupils' interest and stretch capable pupils. In these lessons, the most-able pupils deepen their understanding through difficult and demanding tasks. However, sometimes the support that other pupils are given does not encourage them sufficiently to 'have a go' and to think for themselves and they are not provided sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own or other pupils' work.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their oral skills, for instance, when working in pairs and groups and when making presentations. The school makes sure that class teachers are aware of pupils' reading capability and this enables them to match work appropriately to their ability. As a result pupils develop good reading and writing skills, particularly when they research suggested topics or their own interests.
- Homework is embedded in subject schemes of work and is set and marked regularly across a range of subjects. Across the school, additional adults make a valuable contribution to pupils' achievement, particularly to the learning and progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good, including for pupils who attend alternative provision.

- The school cares a great deal about pupils' achievement and personal development and therefore working relationships between staff and pupils are strong. A significant majority of parents responding to Parent View agreed that their children are looked after at school and that their children are safe and happy there.
- Pupils are resilient learners and extremely eager to help each other. This shows strong social and moral development when they work together. Pupils develop into confident and articulate young women.
- Pupils know what constitutes bullying, and what does not. They say that instances of bullying are rare and mostly take place among the younger pupils, as school records show. Older pupils say that staff take effective action to deal with any problems that occur.
- Form tutors are led by a highly committed and skilled team of heads of year. Discussions in assemblies, registration time, visitors to the school and workshops on a wide range of topics, including radicalisation, female genital mutilation and online safety, help pupils across the school to develop a strong awareness of what actions they can take in order to keep themselves safe from harm.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour in lessons. They use a variety of approaches to engage pupils and the pupils respond with positive attitudes.
- In a very few cases, when teaching is not inspiring, a small number of pupils cause some low-level disruption and this slows their progress in lessons. On these occasions, pupils respond quickly to reminders from staff about the behaviour that is expected.
- Attendance rates are above national averages. Exclusions are below average. Detentions and isolation have been used effectively when standards occasionally fall below staff expectations. Recent school records show that numbers attending both of these types of sanction have decreased over time.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils join the academy in Year 7 with above-average standards in English and mathematics. Headline figures for pupil attainment in Year 11 and sixth form have been traditionally high. However, in previous years the progress of specific groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, was not good enough. Since the previous inspection progress of disadvantaged pupils rose in 2014, but dipped again in 2015.
- Overall progress for pupils' best eight subjects is significantly above average. There was notably strong performance in English, humanities and modern foreign languages. Weaker performance was in science.
- By securing improvements in the quality of teaching, new leadership has successfully driven up rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils throughout the school across a range of subjects.
- Current school information shows that Year 7 disadvantaged pupils are making less progress in mathematics, with a wide variation in achievement by different abilities in English. Year 8 progress of higher-ability disadvantaged pupils is low in some subjects. School leadership are fully aware of this information and taking effective action to address these variations. Progress of all pupil groups evens out across Years 9 to 11, indicating effective impact of school monitoring and support.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, as well as those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. This is because they all benefit from well-targeted support which helps them learn well.
- Most-able pupils achieve their potential and make good progress in most subjects. The overall attainment and rates of progress of the most-able pupils in 2015 were above similar groups nationally.
- Good outcomes at the end of Year 11 enable pupils to progress successfully to a range of post-16 courses. The vast majority chose to do this in the sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Senior school leadership are using regular assessment information to check sixth-form achievement and provide good support and guidance to learners. They have successfully challenged underperformance and learners say that support this year is helping them to improve their grades.
- Secure systems are in place for senior school leaders to challenge and direct sixth-form leadership and post-16 subject leaders. This ensures that they regularly monitor learner achievement to identify

anomalies with follow-up support provided in a timely and appropriate manner. As a result current learner achievement is rising rapidly and subject leaders are developing their capacity to improve standards further.

- The emphasis on improving the quality of teaching across the whole school has had a positive impact on teaching and progress in the sixth form. In addition, the introduction of the 'Personal learning checklist' has allowed learners to better develop their own organisational and learning skills. In discussion with inspectors learners said that they would like more detailed guidance about how to improve their grades across different subjects.
- Attainment in the sixth form is strong in some subject areas, such as English, technology and humanities, but not as strong in science and mathematics. This has been recognised by senior leadership and they have taken action quickly to address these inequalities. In addition, the decreasing trend from 2014 to 2015 across a number of subjects has been tackled, as evidenced by improving current outcomes. The 2015 Year 12 learners are currently making expected faster progress in Year 13. The progress made by current Year 12 learners is good. Current school tracking data shows that they are making comparatively better progress than last year's Year 12 during the same period.
- Learners' personal development and welfare are good. This is particularly evident in the transition into the sixth form. Learners say that they are well prepared both before and after entry into the sixth form. Their confidence and commitment as learners have grown rapidly throughout their time in the sixth form. As a result, learners say that they are finding their learning experiences quite positive and are supported well to meet the increased demands of post-16 qualifications. They enjoy the work experience opportunities organised with the school. Almost all learners stay on into Year 13 and the small numbers who leave gain employment.
- The sixth form meets the 16–19 interim minimum standards specified by the Department for Education. The small number of learners who entered the sixth form without grade C in GCSE English or mathematics are provided with opportunities to improve their grade. In 2015 more learners improved their grade in English than in mathematics, and evidence for current learners indicates that success will be more evenly spread across these subjects in the future.
- The sixth-form learners behave well, take their roles of responsibility seriously and are involved in the whole school community. They enjoy working across the school with Year 7 pupils to support their learning and running dance clubs. They engage regularly in debate club, the ecology council, Duke of Edinburgh's Award and science learners work on development projects.
- The proportion of learners who see their courses through to completion is high and the learners receive good information, advice and guidance about appropriate courses and about careers options, either at university or in employment or apprenticeships. All learners either move onto further or higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	137131
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10010075

This inspection 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	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1137
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Chamberlain
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Violet Walker
Telephone number	020 8499 2984
Website	www.qegschool.org.uk
Email address	office@qegschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average girls' secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. Almost half of the pupils attending school are White British, with the next biggest group being from other White backgrounds. The rest of the school is very diverse, with no other group being of a significant size.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability or have an education, health and care plan is below national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is in line with national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of appointments to leadership positions, including a new headteacher in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils. Each inspector carried out lesson observations and learning walks jointly with the headteacher and six members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors held five discussion meetings with pupils from across the school, including sixth formers. They talked to pupils in lessons as well as informally around the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately by inspectors.
- Inspectors considered 119 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as responses to inspection questionnaires completed by 37 pupils and 77 members of staff.
- A meeting was held with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were held with school leaders responsible for the curriculum, pastoral care, a range of subjects, heads of year, sixth form and provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority who has been supporting the school.
- Inspectors took notes of displays and project work completed by pupils around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's reviews of its own performance, checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Desmond Dunne, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Christofides	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemarie McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Dame Joan McVittie	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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