

Queen Elizabeth High School

Ashfields, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4QS

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They demonstrate the capacity to drive further improvements at the school.
- The school's culture of pastoral care and safeguarding is exemplary. Pupils benefit from the high levels of support and care that they receive. Parents comment extremely positively on this aspect of the school's provision.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 11 have improved sharply since the last inspection. Pupils make progress similar to other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils nationally because leaders effectively target additional support.
- Pupils are considerate and polite. They are highly respectful of each other.
- Good teaching engages pupils. Pupils enjoy learning, and positive relationships exist between teachers and their pupils. These relationships contribute to the positive working environment.
- Current systems to encourage and reward pupils are highly motivational and effective.
- The curriculum is well planned, inclusive and meets pupils' needs and aspirations. Pupils study a broad range of subjects that ensure they are very well prepared for the next steps of their education.
- Leaders are aware of differences in standards between subjects and variations in progress rates for some pupils, particularly the most able. Leaders have effectively reduced most of these differences, but not all.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has improved, but only recently.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate improvements in most able pupils' achievement by making sure they are challenged more effectively.
- Further utilise the skills of middle leaders to tackle the remaining variation in subject performance.
- Ensure that the positive impact of recent work to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is sustained.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have successfully established a culture that includes and values every pupil within the school community. Staff passionately support leaders' vision for the school. They believe that pupils can achieve the best possible outcomes and provide the support needed to encourage them to do so. Leaders are well supported by staff, who work hard to deliver improvements at the school.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that can be improved further. They use this to inform improvement planning. Their approach has successfully secured improvements in teaching, outcomes, and personal development. Senior leaders demonstrate the capacity to secure further improvements in the school's overall effectiveness. They have developed the skills of middle leaders well and these leaders are now ready to take on a greater role in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders collect regularly accurate and valid information about pupils' performance. They use this information successfully to inform strategies that ensure pupils make progress. Leaders are knowledgeable about, and share with staff, information about recent changes to examinations. Pupils are very well prepared for the rigours of new qualifications.
- Leaders regularly review the school's broad and balanced curriculum to make sure it meets pupils' needs, interests and aspirations. A wide range of subjects and appropriate qualifications are available at key stage 4. Some pupils study high-quality vocational qualifications in order to develop valuable skills through applied learning. Leaders also remain committed to providing pathways that enable pupils to study subjects that can lead to the English Baccalaureate. An increasing proportion of pupils are studying for these qualifications.
- Leaders monitor comprehensively the quality of teaching and learning at the school. They use a variety of information to make sure their judgements are accurate. Detailed records containing sound evidence are used well to inform the strategic development of teaching. Leaders' interventions to support and improve teaching are successful. Teachers value highly the regular training that is provided to develop the impact of their teaching. Training increasingly makes use of the best practice and expertise that exists within the school. This aspect of leadership has made a large contribution to recent improvements in pupils' outcomes in many subjects.
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports, performing arts and contribution to charity work. Links with the local community continue to strengthen, providing a range of additional activities. These opportunities successfully contribute to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- Leaders evaluate extremely thoroughly the impact of pupil premium funding. Their analysis provides highly detailed information about how well different strategies address the barriers disadvantaged pupils face. Leaders' responsiveness to this information ensures that pupils' needs are addressed effectively. Strong improvements in disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are testament to the effectiveness of this aspect of

the school's work.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive suitable and highly effective support to meet their learning needs. The school's special educational needs coordinator ensures that funding is used well and a consistent and holistic approach is developed to support pupils. Leaders regularly review the effectiveness of provision to ensure that additional funding is used to best effect. Leaders' actions have resulted in an inclusive culture that pervades the school leading to successful outcomes for these pupils.
- Leaders make good use of Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding to ensure that pupils who have low skills in literacy and numeracy when they start the school are given real support. These pupils make accelerated rates of progress and catch up with their peers.
- Leaders and governors welcome the robust external support and challenge provided by two national leaders of education (NLEs) who work with the school. The NLEs work alongside governors to successfully evaluate and validate the impact of leaders' actions. The NLEs also provide high-quality coaching for leaders, which has resulted in improvements in leadership capacity at all levels. The school has developed an open and outward-facing culture, developing fruitful networks with other schools to share and develop practice.

Governance of the school

- Governors have played a crucial part in the school's improvement since the previous inspection report. The governing body has developed tremendously, through participation in extra training, the provision of external support and the recruitment of additional members. While governors are highly supportive, they regularly challenge leaders through asking pertinent questions to support improvements at the school. For example, they ensure that the additional funding the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Members of the governing body hold key areas of responsibility. Governors regularly visit the school and meet with leaders. They understand their specific areas of responsibility well and keep other governors well informed.
- Governors have recently evaluated the work of the evidence review committee which has specifically monitored leaders' progress in response to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They have put in place a revised committee structure which has the capacity to respond appropriately to the recent improvements in the school's overall effectiveness and provide the necessary challenge to sustain further improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the systems in place to safeguard pupils are robust and appropriate. They successfully sustain a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Steps are in place to ensure that adults who work at the school are suitable to do so.
- Staff are well trained in their responsibilities to safeguard pupils and talk confidently about how they would identify concerns and they know how to report their concerns. Leaders know that training is effective because they check how well staff know their responsibilities.
- Effective relationships exist with a wide range of external agencies. These are used appropriately and in a timely manner to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure that suitable action is taken by other professionals to support pupils, when required. They check carefully the outcomes of any referrals made, and demonstrate a resoluteness to ensure that any actions taken are in pupils' best interests.
- Governors have regular oversight of the school's work to ensure that pupils are safe. They check existing processes are followed appropriately and that the most up-to-date legislation and guidance is followed.
- Pupils state that they feel safe at school. Parents agree that pupils are safe and well cared for when at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Highly positive relationships exist between pupils and their teachers. These relationships create a studious learning environment. Pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. Staff take advantage of the positive learning culture by providing opportunities for pupils to collaborate and work together, for example through class discussions.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to challenge and support pupils. Often, teachers use their questions to extend pupils' answers, create a depth of understanding and tackle misconceptions. These opportunities develop pupils' learning well. For example, in science, teachers use what some pupils already know about the life cycle of stars to introduce the topic to the class. In history, questions are directed carefully to pupils completing different tasks to incorporate a full range of into the class discussion.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop their resilience and confidence. For example, in physical education, pupils use their pre-existing knowledge and experiences to approach new learning. They are then directed to other sources of information before teachers answer their questions directly. As a result, pupils take responsibility for their own learning and are becoming successful, independent learners.
- Pupils value the high-quality dialogue they receive from their teachers and use this advice to improve their work. Teachers make sure that pupils have time to take their comments into account to improve their work.
- Additional adults are used effectively in lessons to target pupils identified for additional support. They use questions and additional resources to support learning and make sure the pupils they work with are able to learn alongside their peers.

- Leaders have developed the school's approach to homework well. Pupils value and enjoy the independent study tasks they complete, and see how these support their learning. Electronic communication of tasks and their assessment allows meaningful dialogue between pupils and their teachers. Homework is regularly submitted in a timely fashion. Many parents agree that the homework tasks pupils receive are appropriate.
- Teachers carry out regular assessments of how well pupils are doing during the lesson. They generally use this information to target their support and inform the direction of the lesson. However, sometimes when pupils are less engaged staff are too tolerant of this behaviour.
- Most teachers regularly plan learning activities that provide varying levels of challenge and support for pupils. They know their pupils well so make sure pupils complete tasks that are appropriate to their starting points. In some lessons, work is not pitched at the right level, or teachers allocate too much time to complete a task. This results in pupils making less progress than they might in certain subjects. This particularly impacts on the progress of more-able pupils because they are not being moved on when they are ready to do so.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal qualities make a very strong contribution to their academic achievement and personal development. Very strong positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. This creates effective conditions for learning and contributes to the high-quality pastoral support that benefits pupils. Staff and parents comment that the care and attention pupils receive is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils are extremely respectful and tolerant of each other. They know that abusive or discriminatory language is unacceptable and say that it is very rarely used. Bullying is uncommon. Should bullying occur, pupils have very high levels of confidence in adults at the school to address it promptly and successfully. The school successfully challenges stereotypes and encourages pupils to value diversity.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are fully involved in the development of the school, and regularly seek their involvement when planning changes. Recently, pupils have contributed to the development of the school's popular and motivational rewards system.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned and comprehensive programme of careers information, advice and guidance. Independent and impartial careers advice is provided by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils receive effective additional support to secure suitable places when they leave school. The school's careers provision successfully ensures that a very high proportion of pupils successfully move onto sixth form, college or training after Year 11.
- The small number of pupils who attend Longlands Care Farm for part of their education behave well and are safe. Staff from the school regularly visit when pupils are on

placement, and school receives frequent information about their attendance and behaviour. As a result, leaders know how well these pupils are doing and take all reasonable steps to safeguard them when they are being educated away from the school site.

- Pupils' personal, social and health education is developed and fundamental British values are promoted well through the school's very positive culture and ethos. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. However, in some lessons, teachers do not develop these aspects effectively enough for pupils to identify confidently where they are promoted through their curriculum. Leaders already have plans in place to address this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the school site sensibly and safely, resulting in a calm and orderly environment. Social times are well supervised, which contributes to pupils feeling safe and secure at school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniform correctly and smartly. They demonstrate their respect for the school environment by keeping it clean and tidy, and by looking after it well. Pupils take pride in their work, demonstrated by their neat and tidy books. Pupils would recommend their school to others.
- Pupils are motivated by the school's house points system and talk about how their conduct and work are rewarded. The accumulation of house points, leading to rewards, incentivises pupils to sustain their behaviour and achievement.
- Staff consistently reinforce expectations for conduct. As a result, pupils know the consequences of not behaving well. Rates of exclusion are below national levels and this sanction is used very sparingly and only as a last resort. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils excluded is higher than other pupils, but overall numbers are low. The effectiveness of exclusions are monitored closely when pupils return to school.
- Overall rates of attendance at the school are similar to the national average. Leaders regularly track the attendance of different groups of pupils. Until recently, attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have been too low. However, additional recent support for these pupils has proved effective. The effects of this additional support have yet to be sustained.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils have increased sharply since the previous inspection. They are now consistently similar to those achieved nationally for all pupils across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. An increasing proportion of pupils achieve good GCSE grades in English and mathematics. Leaders' detailed analysis of how well current pupils are doing suggests further improvements in outcomes in the future.
- Where outcomes in some subjects have been slower to improve, leaders have successfully provided additional support. For example, there have been strong improvements in pupils' attainment in history and physical education this year. Leaders'

analysis of current pupils' performance suggests these improvements are being sustained.

- In 2016 and 2017, disadvantaged pupils made better progress overall than other pupils nationally by the end of Year 11. Their rates of progress were also slightly higher than those of other pupils at the school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving good GCSE grades in English and mathematics improved sharply in 2017. Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are consistently making positive rates of progress across a wide range of subjects and year groups.
- Recently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made progress at a rate that compares favourably to other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good rates of progress as a result of the effective and sharply focused support they receive.
- The small number of pupils who complete part of their education away from the school are achieving well. They make good progress towards qualifications that prepare them well for the next steps in their education or training.
- More-able pupils are making less progress in a range of subject than other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Rates of progress of these pupils are increasing, but this improvement has not been as rapid as for other groups of pupils at the school.
- Although overall rates of progress have improved, some differences remain between the outcomes for pupils in different subjects. Leaders have identified this, and are addressing the variations appropriately. Leaders' analysis of school assessment information identifies that these differences are diminishing. However, the variation resulted in a decline in the proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate this year.

School details

Unique reference number	137703
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10030974

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	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Mr Tony Burt
Headteacher	Mr Martin Farmer
Telephone number	01885 482 230
Website	www.QEHS.co.uk
Email address	mfarmer@queenelizabeth.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information in its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Until recently, the school was called Queen Elizabeth Humanities College.
- The school is smaller than an average secondary school.
- Most pupils enter the school with levels of prior attainment which are broadly in line with the national average. However, in some year groups average prior attainment is below the national.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at different points of the school year is higher than the national average.

- One out of every five pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This proportion is lower than the national average.
- Many of the pupils are of White British background and the school has a lower-than-average intake of pupils of minority ethnic heritage. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There is an above-average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A below-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health or care plan.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Longlands Care Farm, Whitbourne, for part of the week.
- The school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11, in 2016. This information is not yet available for the 2017 cohort because progress information for Year 11 has not yet been validated.
- Leaders and governors receive external support from two national leaders of education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and reviewed pupils' work in 23 lessons. Lessons covered a wide range of subjects and year groups. They carried out some observations jointly with members of the school's leadership team. Observations of other aspects of the school's work were also made, including form time.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, including those with responsibility for safeguarding, members of the governing body and two external consultants who have been working with the school.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons, between lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors evaluated 50 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and through additional correspondence received during the inspection. Inspectors took into account the views of members of staff through three formal meetings, other discussions and 31 responses to an inspection questionnaire.
- Pupils met formally with inspectors on two separate occasions. Inspectors also conducted many informal discussions with pupils during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of documentation, including school policies, self-evaluation and action plan documents and information about attendance, behaviour, outcomes and teaching.

Inspection team

Rob Hackfath, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Sukhbir Farar	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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