

# Inspection of The Queen Elizabeth's High School, Gainsborough

Morton Terrace, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2ST

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	<b>Outstanding</b>

This school was last inspected five years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until 2021 the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel proud to attend this school. Many said that it was a privilege to do so. They appreciate the extra opportunities they receive to learn, develop new talents and build their character. They enjoy belonging to a 'house' and thrive on house competitions and the leadership roles they are given. They appreciate the encouragement they receive from staff and wear their awards and house badges with pride.

Pupils think that the new school rules are clear and fair. They like the recent changes and enjoy being part of a year group as well as a house. Pupils behave well and show respect to others. They are extremely courteous. However, their behaviour declines, and they switch off when the curriculum is poorly implemented.

Pupils feel safe around school and are well supported by staff. They trust that when bullying happens it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils know that many of their teachers have high expectations of them. Some pupils feel they can achieve much more than they do in some of the subjects that they study. While some of their subjects are well taught, this is not the case for all of them.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum is broad and offers pupils a range of academic experiences. Many pupils achieve highly but some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. In some subjects, pupils gain a rich depth of knowledge. For example, in English, teachers plan a curriculum that builds on what pupils know. They ensure pupils can practise and apply new knowledge. They ensure that important knowledge sticks. In other subjects, the curriculum is not as coherently planned or implemented. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Sometimes, pupils do not move on to learn new knowledge quickly enough.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. In subjects that are well planned, teachers break down the learning into small chunks so that all pupils learn and remember more. They promote discussion and debate and challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils speak enthusiastically about those teachers, many new to the school, who spark their passion to learn. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They do not use assessment wisely in order to check that what has been taught has been learned.

The support for pupils with SEND is improving. Leaders understand these pupils' needs well. However, the curriculum is still not ambitious enough for some of these pupils.

Many pupils feel that their education is enriched by experiences that develop them personally, and they are grateful for them. Pupils can travel to a variety of countries, including to the school's link school in Tanzania, and to China, Cambodia and Iceland. They can get involved in creating music and theatre. There are lots of opportunities to take part in sport. Many pupils achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The school makes sure that pupils are equipped to make good choices once they leave the school. They are helped to understand what they need to do to succeed in the careers to which they aspire. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through their personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons. They are taught about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. However, although well planned and sequenced, the delivery of the PSHE curriculum is inconsistently implemented in tutor period, so some pupils do not have a good experience of PSHE.

The curriculum in the sixth form allows students to study courses that meet their interests and aspirations. Teachers are ambitious for all students to succeed, including those with SEND. Even so, there are inconsistencies in the quality, design and implementation of the sixth-form curriculum within some subjects. Students have positive attitudes towards their studies and attendance is good. They use technical terminology fluently and naturally when answering questions from their teachers. Students are full of praise for the support they receive.

New leadership has brought about much-needed change. Aspects of the school that needed to improve have been quickly identified. Actions have been taken. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate the time they are now having to improve their areas of responsibility. There is a sense of optimism. Staff said that they felt that previously the school had been 'stagnant'. They had found this frustrating. They now believe that the school is improving at pace. Many are grateful for this change.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are known extremely well by their teachers. Pupils know where to receive help should they need it. Staff report all concerns, and these are followed up quickly. Leaders work with outside agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils and their families.

Leaders' oversight of the single central record and associated documents has been poor. This has been very recently rectified.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some senior leaders, including governors, do not have a sharp enough grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They do not fully understand which aspects of the curriculum are well planned and delivered, and which are not. They believe aspects of the school are better than they are. The curriculum in some subjects is not improving in the way, and at the pace, that it should. Leaders need to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and that leaders at all levels are held equally to account for the quality of education in the subjects they lead.
- Faculty leaders do not receive the time or the training to strategically lead the subjects that they oversee. The inconsistencies in curriculum intent, implementation and impact mean that not all pupils achieve as well as they could. Senior leaders must urgently ensure that faculty leaders receive the support needed to lead in order that the inconsistencies in the quality of education are addressed.
- The curriculum is not consistently well implemented. It is not ambitious enough to ensure that all pupils, including extremely able pupils with SEND, achieve their very best. This is particularly evident in key stages 3 and 4. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is equally ambitious and that all staff support pupils to achieve their potential across the full range of subjects that they study.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120655
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10202706
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1243
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Dr Julian White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rick Eastham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.qehs.lincs.sch.uk">www.qehs.lincs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2021.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the head of the sixth form. I spoke to a representative of the local authority via Teams.
- I spoke with the chair and vice-chair of governors and two members of the governing body.
- We undertook deep dives in English, humanities, science and modern foreign languages. These deep dives consisted of meeting with faculty and curriculum leaders, visiting lessons, including in the sixth form, reviewing pupils' work and meeting with teachers and pupils. We also visited other lessons and spoke with teachers, pupils and support staff. We met with the lead for PSHE. We visited the sixth form and spoke with sixth-form students.
- I met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), the deputy DSL and the attendance officer. I scrutinised a range of documents related to safeguarding, the school's single record and the school's system for monitoring safeguarding concerns.
- We spoke with the leaders responsible for promoting reading within school and heard pupils read.
- I visited lessons with the assistant special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) to observe the work of pupils with SEND. I spoke with the SENCo via Teams.
- We spoke with early career teachers and members of the 'Impact on Learning Team'.
- We observed the behaviour of pupils during social times and lunchtime and spoke with pupils informally. We visited mentor time and attended an assembly. An inspector visited the lunchtime STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) club.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, curriculum plans and information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- We considered the 181 responses to Parent View and the 63 free-text comments. There were no responses to the surveys for pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Vondra Mays	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Monk	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Wicken	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Thornalley	Ofsted Inspector

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