

Inspection of an outstanding school: Queenborough School and Nursery

Edward Road, Queenborough, Kent ME11 5DF

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils exude pride in their school. They strive to meet the high expectations that surround them. This shows in every aspect of school life, from the way pupils behave in lessons to how they walk down the corridor. School is a happy and harmonious place. Pupils and staff appreciate the many smiles and cheery greetings that abound. Pupils describe how the friendly atmosphere cheers them up, even on days where they may be feeling sad. Positive attitudes and behaviours are important here. For example, pupils describe how they pick one important word as a class to focus on for the year, such as 'kindness'.

Teachers ensure that these positive actions receive recognition and reward in the same way as academic success. This helps to ensure that negative behaviour such as bullying is very rare. Pupils feel safe. This helps them to thrive.

Staff take time to get to know pupils well. Relationships across the school are warm and relaxed. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons and around school. Their contributions are encouraged and valued. Learning is a shared venture.

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

Leaders are highly effective. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the process of academisation they have continued to ensure that the school provides a high-quality education for pupils. Staff feel valued. Leaders make sure that teachers' workload is manageable. Staff and governors have found joining the trust to be beneficial. It has helped to provide enhanced support and training.

Pupils are expected to do well, and they do. Leaders have relentless ambition for pupils. Only the best will do. With that in mind, they have revised some of the curriculum plans in subjects other than English and mathematics. Decisions about what should be taught

and when are strong. Teachers have started to use the new curriculum documents. This is helping pupils to deepen their understanding in subjects such as history. However, there is more to do to implement the plans fully and to check that this helps pupils to remember their learning and understand how to work like historians.

Plans for teaching mathematics are very well developed and fully implemented across the school. Pupils build their knowledge quickly and are well supported by the routine way in which lessons are approached. They relish how quickly they can recall their number facts such as times tables. Right from the start in early years, children explore numbers regularly.

Staff are highly skilled. They help pupils to learn a range of calculation methods and to use these to solve problems. Teachers assess what pupils can do effectively and use this to give pupils the support they need to build knowledge. Pupils are excited by mathematics. They want to learn and share strategies. For example, a pupil took on the role of teacher to explain how to turn improper fractions into a mixed number.

Leaders make sure that learning to read is a priority. Children in the early years learn their phonics quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together to support children and teach them the skills they need to learn to blend sounds into words. Books are carefully chosen so that pupils practise and quickly master those skills. This helps them to enjoy a range of exciting books as they move up through the school. Leaders ensure that everyone has plenty of interesting books to choose from. Pupils' love of stories is nurtured through trips to the theatre or the recent work with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Staff expertly use books and drama to help pupils learn across the curriculum or to explore aspects of diversity and equality.

Those pupils who start to fall behind in their reading are quickly identified through careful assessment and given the help they need to catch up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers know their pupils with SEND well. They give them the help and encouragement they need to be successful, whether this is a little extra guidance or some adapted work.

Pupils are motivated and responsible learners. They want to learn. They work hard and help each other to succeed. On their very first day at nursery, some children glowed with pride as they moved between groups showing how to play instruments. They were quickly introduced to a culture where learning is important and everyone tries their best. This attitude strengthens further as pupils move up through the school. Pupils model respect. They are keen to learn about themselves and the wider world.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to understand safeguarding risks. Staff know how to log concerns. These concerns are regularly reviewed to identify needs or patterns. All necessary recruitment checks are in place to help keep pupils safe.

Leaders work closely with other agencies when necessary. They seek appropriate advice to keep pupils safe. Policies provide clear frameworks for guidance and action. Leaders prioritise getting pupils the help they need to be safe.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online, through regular curriculum work and assemblies. Pupils know how to express any worries they have.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Implementation of the school's revised curriculum plans in some subjects has started but is not yet fully embedded. At the moment, pupils do not always remember and build on knowledge fully. Leaders should ensure that the new plans are fully implemented and that the impact of the plans on building pupils' knowledge is assessed.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2016.

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

Unique reference number	147749
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10211949
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Clarke
Headteacher	Barbara Conroy
Website	www.queenborough.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Queenborough School and Nursery converted to become an academy school in February 2020. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the EKC Schools Trust, along with three other schools.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met regularly with senior leaders. Meetings were also held with other school leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors. The inspector also met with a representative from the trust.
- The inspector conducted deep dives into reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to some pupils reading.

- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspector spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for parents, pupils and staff and considered two emails from parents.
- Groups of staff met with the inspector to share their views about the school, including on workload and well-being. The inspector completed a tour of the school with pupils and spoke to them in classes and around the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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