

Inspection of a good school: Queensbury Academy

Langdale Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 3BU

Inspection dates:

30 November to 1 December 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils here are hopeful. Most pupils say that their teachers now have higher expectations around behaviour. The majority of pupils behave well. They show respect towards adults and visitors. Pupils are often calm in lessons and around their school. At times, some pupils' behaviour is less positive. Pupils know that most adults deal with this well, although some adults do not. Parents and carers agree.

Pupils are safe because their teachers care about their well-being. Pupils can share concerns with an adult. Bullying is rare. Should bullying happen, pupils agree that teachers deal with it quickly.

Pupils learn well in some subjects. They gain knowledge quickly and apply it independently, especially in the sixth form. In other subjects, pupils learn more slowly because they do not acquire some important knowledge and they misunderstand ideas.

Pupils enjoy a range of clubs and extracurricular activities. They develop their sporting prowess and take part in competitions. Pupils play chess and hone their performance skills in the school play. Most pupils are open-minded and welcome those who are different from themselves. Parents have mixed views about the school. Some are happy with the quality of education their children receive. Others are less positive.

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

Leaders acknowledge that the curriculum is in the process of refinement. In some areas of the curriculum, leaders ensure that teachers know the precise knowledge pupils need. Teachers provide pupils with chances to practise their prior learning. This helps them to remember knowledge well. Older pupils and sixth-form students demonstrate more

complex knowledge and understanding. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning and identify mistakes. They provide pupils with the precise support to help them improve.

Where the curriculum is weaker, leaders have not equipped teachers with the precise subject knowledge they need. As a result of this, pupils do not at times learn the knowledge they require. What pupils learn is not closely linked to what they have learned before. Teachers do not systematically identify gaps in knowledge. This means that pupils continue to make the same mistakes and do not build knowledge well over time.

Leaders have established robust systems to identify correctly those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, leaders do not provide teachers with precise strategies to help pupils with SEND. As a result of this, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they might.

Leaders have recently introduced a rigorous system of managing pupil behaviour. They provide specific support for pupils whose behaviour is more challenging. This support helps pupils to understand the impact of their actions. As a result of this, most pupils say that behaviour is improving. The majority of teachers ensure that they deal with less positive behaviours consistently and follow the school's policies. Some do not. Leaders are aware of this.

Most pupils are kind and thoughtful. They interact positively with each other. They support their local community by raising money for charities. This helps them to empathise with those who are less fortunate. Leaders have constructed a new personal, social and health education curriculum. As a result of this, pupils know how to foster healthy relationships as they mature. They understand the risks of less healthy lifestyles. This prepares them well for the future. Pupils learn about different faiths and the broad nature of sexuality. Most pupils therefore are compassionate and accepting of difference. There is a minority of pupils whose views are less kind.

Some pupils represent the views of others on the school council. This helps to deepen their understanding of democracy. Sixth-form students support younger pupils with their learning. There are opportunities for students and older pupils to take part in work experience. This enables them to acquire important life skills. Pupils receive high-quality advice about future professions and next steps. The school's careers provision meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Leaders, the trust and the governing body know that provision has declined since the previous inspection. At times, the trust has not consistently provided leaders with the precise support they needed. Some teachers feel that past actions of the trust and leaders led to an unnecessary increase in workload. Most now feel that leaders are more supportive. Leaders, the trust and the governors now have a thorough understanding of how the school needs to improve. They have the capacity to ensure that this happens.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training so that all staff fully understand how to keep pupils safe. There are robust systems in place for staff to report concerns. Leaders' responses are swift, which ensures that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders make timely referrals to a variety of agencies when necessary. They regularly liaise with those responsible for alternative provision. Pupils fully understand the dangers of using the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe outside school.

Leaders make rigorous checks on all new staff. This ensures that they are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers are not consistently applying policies around the management of pupil behaviours. As a result of this, some more negative pupil behaviours are not dealt with appropriately and continue longer than they should. Leaders must provide training to ensure that teachers fully understand and apply behaviour systems so that pupils' behaviour improves.
- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have not outlined the precise knowledge they want pupils to gain. As a result of this, pupils do not acquire some important learning that they need in order to progress. Leaders need to ensure that they have selected the knowledge they want pupils to learn. They should provide teachers with training so that they understand how to implement the curriculum as leaders intend.
- Leaders do not provide teachers with the appropriate guidance and support to adapt the curriculum well for pupils with SEND. As a result of this, pupils with SEND do not acquire knowledge as quickly as they might. Leaders need to provide teachers and other adults with the training they need to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve their best.

Background

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

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.

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	138571
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10255167
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,223
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jay Bhutani
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Palmer (Interim Headteacher)
Website	www.queensburyacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school is a member of the Anthem Schools Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the interim chief executive officer, the chair of trustees, trustees, the interim headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, history, languages and mathematics. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons,

meetings with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised other curriculum documentation.

- Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also scrutinised safeguarding records and spoke with pupils and with staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 54 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were 71 responses to Ofsted's teacher survey. There were 132 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered 132 free-text comments from parents.

Inspection team

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