

Inspection of a good school: Queen Elizabeth High School

Ashfields, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4QS

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 January 2023

Outcome

Queen Elizabeth High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are valued and well cared for. They enjoy coming to school. They are happy and feel safe. Bullying is rare. Pupils are very confident that staff will deal with any concerns raised.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They are respectful towards staff and towards each other. They listen carefully to their teachers and try hard to complete their work.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. The curriculum has been carefully developed to meet pupils' needs and interests. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They often provide interesting activities for their pupils. However, there is still work to do to make sure all teachers explain new information clearly and give pupils useful feedback on their work.

Staff are ambitious for pupils' wider development. Pupils value the broad offer of clubs, activities and external visits. Pupils also benefit from a well-structured careers programme that includes a work experience opportunity for every pupil.

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

The curriculum is well planned. Subject leaders have made rational and sensible choices about content and order which enables them to build learning over time. Despite the small size of the school, pupils in key stage 4 can study a wide range of subjects. This includes vocational pathways in, for example, land-based studies or construction. These are highly valued by pupils. Leaders continue to explore ways to increase the number of pupils who chose to study a language in key stage 4.

In many lessons, teaching is engaging and enthusiastic. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to motivate students. Teachers build effective links between previous and current learning. However, new subject matter is not always presented clearly and teachers do not always select the best resources to help pupils understand new ideas.

The school has a clear policy on how pupils should receive feedback on their work. However, leaders do not rigorously monitor how policies are implemented. As a result, pupils do not always know where they have made mistakes and how to improve.

In the last year, the school faced a number of very challenging circumstances that had an impact on external examination results in 2022. Pupils did not reach the standards the school expected them to. Current Year 11 performance is now being tracked more closely. Pupils at risk of underachieving receive additional support and intervention.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers successfully adapt resources to support pupils with SEND. Specialist teaching assistants effectively help pupils to access the full curriculum.

Pupils try hard in lessons and take pride in their achievements. They enthusiastically celebrate the success of their peers in assembly. Pupils believe that behaviour in school is managed fairly. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are polite and respectful. Their movement around school is orderly and calm.

Leaders have developed a structured programme to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Weekly lessons provide valuable opportunities to reinforce the school's 'ready, respectful, resilient, and safe' ethos. Pupils' wider development is further enhanced by trips and external speakers. For example, a Year 9 trip to the Birmingham Christmas market helped pupils understand more about the cultural diversity of the West Midlands.

All pupils in key stage 3 take part in a reading programme. Weaker readers have additional help to improve their reading. Pupils have some opportunities to read aloud, particularly in English lessons. However, there is not a consistent approach to developing reading across the school.

Trustees are experienced and very committed to the school. They value the place the school holds in the community and are particularly proud of the care the school provides. They understand and support the steps the school is taking to improve pupils' progress. Staff appreciate how leaders carefully consider their workload. They feel valued and respected.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very clear that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. Staff and pupils receive regular information and training about safeguarding risks. Training programmes are constantly updated to ensure that relevant local information is included. Pupils could give examples of recent topics they have covered, including cyber-bullying, knife crime and domestic abuse.

The school carefully tracks information about pupils who are at risk of harm. Leaders make timely referrals where necessary. They are tenacious in seeking support for pupils and have developed strong relationships with external agencies.

Leaders keep careful records of any safeguarding concerns. They ensure that safe recruitment processes are followed when appointing staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in the way that teachers deliver the planned curriculum across and within subjects. In particular, there is variation in how well teachers present new subject matter and provide clear, direct feedback that helps pupils address misconceptions. Consequently, pupils do not consistently learn as well as they should. Senior leaders should continue their work in helping teachers to understand and deliver the school's teaching and learning approach.
- Subject leaders do not consistently monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning policies. As a result, they do not put in place the timely changes that would ensure that the planned strategies have the intended impact on pupils. Leaders need to review their strategic approach to monitoring and review.
- Leaders have not yet developed a strategic approach to improving reading across the school. As a result, not all pupils have the confidence and fluency that will enhance their access to the full curriculum offer. Leaders need to continue their work to develop and implement a school-wide strategic approach to reading.

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 October 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	137703
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10241768
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	381
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mac Henderson
Headteacher	Martin Farmer
Website	www.qehs.co/
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Three Counties Academy Trust.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision at one unregistered provider.
- The school 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.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, the headteacher, and senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum and visited a sample of lessons. Inspectors met with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff working in pastoral roles. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their wider development and other aspects of school life.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's single central record. They scrutinised other documentation, including leaders' records of staff training.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Deborah James, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Russell Hinton

Ofsted Inspector

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