

Inspection of Queen Mary's Grammar School

Sutton Road, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 2PG

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Queen Mary's Grammar School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Queen Mary's Grammar School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very enthusiastic about attending the school. 'It's the best decision I ever made,' sums up the views of those students who joined in Year 12. All pupils who responded to inspectors agreed they feel safe. This is because leaders address any issues, including any potential bullying, promptly and effectively.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will do very well indeed. Pupils achieve exceptional standards. A very large majority go on to study at university, especially in mathematics and the sciences. Progress is very strong for all groups of pupils, including those facing specific barriers and challenges. The school addresses trust-wide priorities of transformation, social mobility and social justice extremely well. For example, the Mandarin excellence programme enables some pupils to achieve full fluency in the language before they leave school.

Behaviour of pupils is exemplary around school. Pupils show a high degree of respect for each other. Older students can develop their leadership skills in the sixth form, for example leading in the cadet force or teaching lessons in primary schools on personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). The school's 'change your mind' course promotes pupils' mental health and well-being and has received international recognition.

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious programme of study. It successfully combines academic rigour with a very strong commitment to diversity and inclusion in the curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve very well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders set out their plans for what they want pupils to learn in a very well sequenced order. This helps pupils to build on what they have previously learned to deepen their knowledge and understanding. In English, for example, leaders plan the curriculum coherently to support progression from Year 7 into the sixth form. Teachers carefully select texts that will inspire a love of reading and expand pupils' experience of a diverse range of authors. Pupils, including those who find reading more difficult, develop the knowledge and skills they need to be confident, fluent readers.

In mathematics, for example, leaders sequence learning highly effectively so that pupils remember previous learning. Consequently, they are well prepared for next steps or the next phase in their learning, including A levels and university. This is the same in other subjects, including art and design, biology, computing and geography. Leaders take great care to provide courses that are contemporary and relevant to pupils in a modern, diverse society.

Teachers check closely what pupils have learned before moving on in lessons. They pick up quickly on any misconceptions. Teachers, including those at the early stages of their careers, are highly knowledgeable in their subjects.

Teachers' expectations for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are consistently very high across subjects. The school has achieved its ambitions to significantly increase the proportion of disadvantaged pupils on roll and, at the same time, maintain the highest possible standards for all pupils. Specialist staff in the school and the trust's multi-disciplinary team ensure there are no delays in identifying additional needs and that pupils receive any extra help they need promptly. Teachers are adept at making adjustments to the curriculum that allow pupils with SEND to access the same work as other pupils and achieve very well. Pupils with SEND receive high-quality support in lessons and through the welfare hub.

Enrichment opportunities for pupils are exceptional. Queen Mary is a 'top 100 cricket school' with very high participation in a range of sporting activities. The school makes full use of its own field centre in Wales. There are numerous trips and cultural events, including a workshop for Ramadan and an Easter concert where over 150 pupils participated. There are planned activities for pupils to flourish through public speaking events and the 'Queen's players' drama club. Courses come alive for pupils following trips, such as to the art galleries in Barcelona. The school is successful in its aim to promote diversity and equality. Pupils appreciate this. They said there is 'equity for everyone'. Pupils in school are well informed about careers advice and guidance. Students leaving the sixth form can increasingly take up apprenticeships as an alternative to traditional university courses.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptional. Lessons are virtually free of low-level disruptive behaviour. There have been significant improvements for those small numbers who have previously struggled with managing their behaviour. Students in the sixth form are confident and resilient learners. They are highly motivated to do well. Girls are well integrated into school life when they join the sixth form.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are very mindful of the workload and well-being of staff. This is greatly appreciated by staff. Governors and trustees are highly experienced and provide considerable support and challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are assiduous at identifying pupils at risk. They do whatever it takes to secure the help these pupils need as quickly as possible. Referrals are made in a very timely manner and followed up persistently where external support is required. Systems are in place to ensure that staff are recruited safely. Staff and governors are well trained to fulfil their duties. Arrangements for responding to complaints and allegations are also managed very well.

There is an extensive curriculum programme to raise pupils' awareness of safeguarding issues, backed up by special assemblies. For example, pupils are taught about risks such as online grooming and knife crime.

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	136773
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10242469
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,316
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	478
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Davis
Headmaster	Richard Langton
Website	www.qmgs.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in 2012. Initially it was a stand-alone academy and then became part of The Mercian Trust.
- The current headmaster was appointed to the role on 1 January 2018.
- The current chair of the local governing body was appointed in February 2020.
- The number of pupils has almost doubled in size in the last 10 years.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and other leaders and members of staff, including executive leaders of the multi academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of boys, as well as girls and boys in the sixth form.
- Inspectors met five members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice chair, either face to face or online, and four trustees, including the chair of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service and the online questionnaire, as well as the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design, computing, geography and science (biology). They also looked at work in a number of other subjects, including in the sixth form. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also attended pupils' reading lessons in Year 8.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Todd	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector

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