

Inspection of Queensbury School

Wood End Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B24 8BL

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

These are exciting times at Queensbury School. Caring staff, an ambitious curriculum and new buildings are all driving improvements for pupils. Leaders aim to help pupils 'unleash their limitless potential'. Staff, parents, carers and pupils are united in making this vision a reality.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and some pupils have additional needs that have made learning difficult in the past, such as autistic spectrum conditions, cognition and learning needs, or social, emotional and mental health needs. Whatever the needs, staff work hard with parents to overcome barriers in order to get the best outcomes for pupils.

Caring relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel safe and secure. When pupils face difficult times, staff work hard to understand why and put the right support in place. Consequently, behaviour is generally positive in classes and around the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that if it happens, they have confidence in staff to deal with it. Leaders investigate all incidents of bullying and act when needed.

Careers education and lessons in financial management and personal safety are just some ways used to develop pupils' awareness of what they need to thrive after Queensbury.

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

The executive headteacher, supported by an inspirational leadership team, has brought excitement and enthusiasm to Queensbury School. Leaders, governors and trustees are dedicated to making further improvements. Staff feel supported and rightly feel that the school is well led and managed through strong moral leadership.

Leaders have established high expectations for what should be taught in all lessons. Subject leaders work skillfully with teachers to translate this vision into sequences of lessons that meet pupils' needs. Most teachers use these lessons well to build pupils' knowledge over time. For example, in art and science, knowledgeable and passionate teachers enthusiastically develop pupils' understanding of atomic structure, chemical formulas, and artists like Lichtenstein or Picasso. Maths is equally as strong. Teachers skilfully use a range of physical and visual aids to build pupils' understanding of complicated and abstract terms.

Pupils arrive at the school with a wide range of SEND. These include various speech, language and communication needs. Signing or pictures are often used to support pupils' understanding of information. However, some staff use too many words at once or do not support communication well enough. This overloads the pupil's ability to understand, making learning harder.

Leaders have established suitable systems for checking how much pupils learn in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully monitor what pupils have learned and understood. This means that when pupils have not learned or understood lessons, the right support can be put in place to help them catch up quickly, for example intervention sessions for reading or after-school clubs.

Across all classes, reading is prioritised with daily phonic sessions for those who are not yet confident readers. For those who can read, online reading packages provide opportunities to develop their interests and love of books. Staff training has taken place regularly, which means that several are now experts in teaching reading.

Provision in the sixth form is a real strength of the school. The focus is on building the right knowledge and skills for when students leave Queensbury. This helps them to prepare for the next stages of employment, training or education. Students move on to college and an increasing number move into the workplace through traineeships or apprenticeships. Students are encouraged to use an independent study day to volunteer at the school or charity shops, or to work on their courses. Leaders carefully monitor what students do and where they are, to ensure that students are safe and benefit from this opportunity.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, some pupils' attendance has dropped, and they are not attending school as much as they should. This has affected how much they are getting from the provision and support within the school. When needed, leaders work with authority attendance services to act when pupils' attendance is not improving. However, there remain some pupils whose attendance is not improving quickly enough.

Careers education is an essential part of the curriculum for older pupils. A strong careers team has set the ambition high for preparing pupils for the world of work. A partnership with the multi-academy trust's own college provides exciting and powerful real-life work-related traineeships for Year 14s. Students are positive about the experiences this brings.

Encouraging pupils to be independent and responsible members of the Birmingham community is a top priority. Life skills lessons teach them how to cook and stay safe on the roads, among other things. Celebrations, including the King's Coronation or multi-faith days, develop cultural awareness. While positive about their school, some pupils feel that there should be more opportunities to develop their own interests and hobbies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Frequent training and regular updates remind staff of their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff take these seriously and, when needed, act swiftly to raise concerns about a child. The safeguarding team and the family engagement officer work closely with families to ensure that all is being done to keep pupils safe.

School and community lessons teach pupils to stay safe and develop protective behaviours. Lessons in relationships, health and sex education teach pupils about personal safety and making the right decisions. Community access visits teach them about being safe in the wider community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not consistently adapt the curriculum implementation to individual pupils' receptive and processing skills. This affects how much information pupils can learn and remember in lessons, which negatively impacts how well they are prepared for the following lessons. Leaders need to ensure that all staff appropriately adapt how the curriculum is implemented according to the receptive and processing level of the pupils, so the pupils can learn more and remember more over time.
- Some pupils do not attend school frequently enough. Attendance dropped due to the pandemic, but persistent absence has remained high and has not fully recovered. Leaders need to continue to raise the level of attendance of some pupils at the school so that they can access and make the most of the learning that will help them prepare for the ambitious next steps that the school intends for them.
- The provision for pupils to develop personal interests and hobbies outside the curriculum is not yet refined, communicated, or based on what pupils want. This has meant that engagement in the current extra-curricular offer has been low, and some pupils believe that the opportunities they want are not currently offered. Leaders need to ensure that the offer to develop personal interests and hobbies outside the curriculum considers the interests of all pupils and is well communicated with the whole community.

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	146858
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10267837
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special 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	272
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael York
Executive Headteacher	Christopher Wilson
Website	www.queensburysch.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in September 2020 and joined the Education Impact Academy Trust.
- The previous interim headteacher became the permanent executive headteacher in September 2020.
- Two associate heads of school were appointed in January 2020 and September 2020 and have taken responsibility for key stage 3 and key stage 5.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school partners with the multi-academy trust's own further education and skills college to jointly provide traineeships for year 14s.
- 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.

- Since September 2020, there has been a significant amount of building work at the school to refurbish the current provision and provide additional capacity. From September 2023, the sixth form will move to a nearby location that is being refurbished.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 school leaders, and their actions to support pupils to return to school.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education, science and the arts. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors asked pupils, staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised the employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. They also found out about health and safety procedures and routines.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, transport escorts, drivers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust (MAT) and the local authority. A remote conversation was also held with members of the local governing body and the trustees of the MAT.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Heather Phillips	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023