

Inspection of Queenborough School and Nursery

Edward Road, Queenborough, Kent ME11 5DF

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The Queenborough values of 'Belong, Expect, Achieve, Thrive' reverberate strongly throughout this highly ambitious and exceptional school. They are deeply embedded in the school's culture and lived up to by pupils. Pupils love school, feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy learning. They are extremely proud of their school, their achievements and those of others. There is a demonstrable sense of community and belonging.

Leaders have very high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development. Staff share leaders' determination to empower pupils to succeed in a very positive and caring environment. All pupils thrive academically and socially due to the excellent standard of education they receive.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are kind and considerate and always help each other out. Pupils agree that, as one said, 'Everyone is accepted; it doesn't matter who you are or where you're from.' Bullying is not tolerated and is extremely rare. Adults deal with any unkindness swiftly.

One parent expressed the views of many by commenting, 'There is always a friendly welcome in the mornings to give the children a positive start to their school day, and a friendly goodbye at the gates at the end of the day, helping the children feel safe and happy.'

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

The headteacher is relentless in his drive to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to broaden their experiences beyond their immediate environment and culture. As a result, leaders have designed a rich and ambitious curriculum, which has pupils' needs at its heart. Leaders have precisely set out the essential skills and knowledge that pupils should learn in all subjects.

Teachers build on pupils' knowledge and skills exceptionally well. They quickly determine the correct support needed to fill any gaps in children's knowledge when they start in Nursery or Reception. There is a resolute and highly successful focus on children's speech and language development. This ensures they are ready to continue learning in Year 1. Very well-resourced classrooms and inspiring outdoor areas encourage the development of early reading and number skills successfully.

The curriculum is as ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as it is for others. Leaders are quick to identify pupils' needs. Teachers skilfully provide appropriate adaptations, resources and support so that these pupils learn alongside others and achieve highly. Subject leaders are extremely skilled and knowledgeable, and they ensure that teachers have strong subject knowledge. Staff checks on pupils' understanding are highly effective. They use this information skilfully to adapt teaching so that nobody falls behind.

Pupils in all year groups achieve extremely well. Standards achieved by current pupils are very high and stronger than the previous year. This is very evident in pupils' work in all key stages and in conversations with older pupils about what they know and remember.

Leaders are determined that every pupil will be able to read by the time they leave. As soon as children start in the early years, children are encouraged to enjoy stories, rhymes and songs. Phonics is taught very effectively through a consistent approach and a confidently delivered, well-structured programme. Children quickly learn letters and new sounds and enjoy learning. Books are very well matched to the sounds pupils know. This helps them to develop confidence, fluency and expression. Staff quickly identify pupils who are struggling to learn to read and provide highly effective support so they can catch up. Adults read aloud regularly in all classes and introduce pupils to a wide range of high-quality texts. Pupils develop as confident and fluent readers, with skills to access the wider curriculum fully.

Pupils' excellent behaviour ensures that there are high levels of concentration throughout the school. This ensures that pupils are ready to learn and listen carefully to teachers' explanations and instructions. Leaders' well-considered approach to improving pupils' attendance is paying off. Fewer pupils are now absent or persistently absent compared to last year.

The personal development curriculum promotes pupils' well-being and develops their characters exceptionally well. Pupils get involved in the local community and learn about citizenship and responsibility. They take part in a rich range of extra-curricular activities, including a wide choice of after-school clubs and visits. Leaders help them to make an excellent contribution to the school community in a variety of ways. Leaders have worked successfully to improve attendance. Pupils' excellent personal skills, as well as their academic achievements, mean that they are exceedingly well prepared for the future.

Staff, including those new to their careers, feel highly valued and supported. They know that leaders consider their well-being and workload and that there is a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork. Staff value the opportunities they receive to develop, excel and become effective leaders. Trustees, governors, leaders and staff share the vision to make a positive difference to pupils' lives and raise aspirations. There is no complacency but a steely determination to build on current successes and secure further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Policies and procedures are highly effective and robust. Leaders and staff know the pupils and their families very well and are aware of the additional challenges that some pupils face. Staff receive high-quality training and know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders take swift

and appropriate action, including involving external agencies, where appropriate, to ensure that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the local area. They are confident to talk to trusted adults in school if they have a concern.

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	147749
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256303
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	475
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Razey
Headteacher	Jason Howard
Website	www.queenborough.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 January 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Queenborough School and Nursery is part of a multi-academy trust called EKC Schools Trust.
- The headteacher took up his role in September 2022 after previously being the head of school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There is a Nursery for children aged three- and four-years old, which is managed by the school.
- In October 2022, Queenborough Babies and Toddlers was opened on the school site. Although managed by school leaders, it is a separate provision and will be inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair and the chief executive officer of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in other subjects and observed some pupils reading to teaching assistants.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with leaders, staff and pupils. They looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records. Throughout the inspection, inspectors considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's evaluation of its effectiveness.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school during playtimes and lunchtimes. They talked to pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and what behaviour is like.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff, pupils and parents. They also spoke to some parents at the beginning of the school day, had a telephone conversation with a parent and received a letter from a parent.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Clarke	Ofsted Inspector

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