

Inspection of a good school: Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

The Green Road, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1EP

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Scott Garrity. This school is part of QEGSMAT, a multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anne Martin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Hall. There is also a director of education, Dominic Hudson, who is responsible for this school and two other schools.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are positive about the education they receive here. They know that staff want the very best for them. Pupils know that their teachers want them to demonstrate the school's vision of, 'we care, therefore, we question, we explore, we give and as a result, we succeed'.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe in and beyond school. Most pupils say that when bullying happens, staff take it seriously. Staff act quickly to resolve any issues. However, not all pupils feel confident to report issues of bullying.

The majority of pupils behave well and get on together. The atmosphere in most lessons is purposeful. A vast majority of pupils respect each other and their teachers. There is a small minority of pupils who do not. As a result, this can impact on other pupils' positive experiences of school.

Pupils describe extra activities as the 'best things' about the school. The wide variety of clubs and activities means that there is something for everyone. Teachers join in too: for example, the Race for Life event involved many young people and members of the community. This not only encourages participation, but also shows the school's commitment to engaging with the community.

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

The school has put in place a curriculum that sets out the knowledge that pupils should

learn in each subject. Pupils' knowledge and skills are carefully built over time. They study a range of subjects that reflect the local area they live in. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils settle quickly into their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They ask questions that help pupils to develop their understanding. Some teachers use previous experiences to bring learning to life. For example, in business studies, a teacher referenced a previous job of making profit and vibrantly shared, 'The bottom line is to make profit and nothing else.'

Recall activities at the start of lessons help pupils to remember what they have learned before. Pupils link this knowledge to their current learning. Teachers provide useful feedback. Pupils use this to reflect on what they have done well and how they can continue to improve. As a result, many pupils and students produce high-quality work across the curriculum. Pupils understand how assessments help them know and remember more of what is taught.

Many teachers promptly identify pupils' misconceptions and correct these. They use their knowledge of pupils to decide the next steps for learning. The majority of pupils say that 'teachers challenge you'. Pupils and staff have positive relationships.

There is an effective approach to support all pupils to become better readers. The English department and school librarian work in partnership to ensure that reading has a high priority and pupils develop a love for reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as other pupils. Some achieve well. However, the support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Some staff do not adapt or modify the curriculum well enough so that these pupils can achieve as well as their peers. The school provides a 'step-up' transition group for some Year 7 pupils with SEND. This ensures that these pupils are fully integrated into school life. Pupils in this group speak highly of the support they receive.

Students in the sixth form are challenged to achieve their full potential. The work produced by these students is of a high quality. This reflects how their knowledge and skills have built up over time. Students say that they are well supported with their studies. They feel confident about their next steps in education, employment or training. One student summed up the views of many by saying, 'Teachers have high expectations of you, but they also care. They know us and what we can achieve.' The number of students moving on to university, including Oxbridge, as well as high-level apprenticeships, is increasing.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. Instances of low-level disruption are challenged appropriately by staff. Pupils say that behaviour is generally 'okay' across the school. Sometimes, behaviour is 'less okay' when pupils are not with their regular teacher. Pupils and students in the sixth form say that behaviour is not as good in the younger year groups. The school is working to improve standards of behaviour in key stage 3.

Leaders are considerate of the workload and well-being of staff. Staff say that they feel valued and appreciated. Staff retention is strong. One member of staff summed up the

views of many by commenting that the school, 'is a great place to work [and] I look forward to coming to work every day'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND. However, the support these pupils receive is inconsistent. There is variability in how well teachers adapt the curriculum for some pupils with SEND. When learning activities are not precisely tailored to meet these pupils' needs, they can be left with gaps in their knowledge. The school must ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to help these pupils achieve well.
- Some pupils do not feel that they can report bullying or poor behaviour. They feel it will not always be dealt with effectively. This means that some pupils do not routinely report their concerns. The school should ensure that pupils feel confident to report bullying concerns and that all concerns are successfully addressed.
- The school's new policy for managing behaviour is making a positive difference. However, there are small pockets of poor behaviour, particularly in key stage 3, that impact on pupils' experience. The school should ensure that staff are consistent in their application of the behaviour policy.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136972
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10298469
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,360
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	252
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Hall
CEO of trust	Anne Martin
Headteacher	Scott Garrity
Website	www.queenelizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Queen Elizabeth’s Grammar School is part of QEGSMAT, a multi-academy trust.
- The school has increased the size of the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. This is to create secondment opportunities for staff to develop their leadership skills.
- The schools use two unregistered alternative providers.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased since the school’s previous inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the director of education and other senior leaders, including the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors did deep dives in five subjects: English, geography, mathematics, art, and business and economics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and considered pupils' work. They spoke with pupils, students and teachers and other adults supporting learning.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- The lead inspector met with pupils in single-sex groups.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with representatives of the alternative providers used by the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with the designated safeguarding leads and staff and pupils. Inspectors reviewed all relevant documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff survey and the school's pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings and the scheme of delegation. They considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, and about school suspensions and the wider curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and trustees from the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Sally Wicken, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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