

Inspection of The Quest Academy

Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8HD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

The head of school of this school is Thomas Beecham. This school is part of The Collegiate Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Soumick Dey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Hogan. There is also an executive headteacher Andy Crofts, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school strives to support pupils through its 'LEARN' values. These include being aspirational, resilient and nice to others. Pupils know these values and are taught about how they are important to their lives, both in school and more widely.

The school has built an ambitious curriculum. It expects all pupils to build up and remember knowledge, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the classroom, this ambitious curriculum is not realised well enough for pupils in Years 7 to 11. This means that, in these year groups, pupils do not achieve highly across subjects.

In the sixth form, students experience a well-taught curriculum. They work hard and are well supported to achieve the school's ambitious goals for their achievements.

Overall, pupils understand and follow the rules and expectations for behaviour. Pupils very rarely disrupt the learning of others in lessons. However, in a few instances, teaching does not encourage pupils to expect the most of themselves in their learning, leading to some pupils opting out of tasks set in class. This holds pupils back from achieving highly.

Leaders think carefully about the enrichment opportunities that the school provides. They have ensured that pupils experience a rotation of activities that include some things that they would not otherwise take part in. These include, for example, cycling, gardening and theatre club. Leaders also make educational trips available each half term. These are planned to promote pupils' cultural development and understanding of wider society.

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

Leaders have designed a rich curriculum for all pupils, including students in the sixth form. It is based on the national curriculum and exceeds it for many curriculum areas. However, often, the curriculum that pupils experience in class does not match the school's aims. Teaching does not consistently make sure that pupils understand and remember curriculum content well. Sometimes, teaching does not expect enough of pupils, despite the aims for pupils' learning being clearly defined. This means that pupils do not achieve highly and, at times, switch off from their learning. This is reflected in pupils' 2023 GCSE outcomes, where pupils' attainment and progress were low overall.

In contrast, sixth-form students learn the curriculum well. Teachers have expert knowledge of their subject and present information clearly. Students are set demanding tasks that are effective in developing and consolidating their knowledge and skills. Teaching incorporates a purposeful focus on making sure that students' use of subject-specific words is accurate. Teachers assess students' understanding, for example, by using questioning to identify and respond to misconceptions. In Years 7 to 11, approaches to checking for misconceptions are not as developed. For

example, while some teaching includes well-chosen questions to find out about pupils' understanding of concepts, this is not consistently the case. The school prioritises the training and development of staff, but this work is not sufficiently focused on developing staff expertise in teaching the curriculum.

Leaders aim to encourage pupils to develop their reading throughout their time at the school. However, currently, this is not being done in a systematic way. For instance, as part of the English curriculum, pupils receive additional whole-class reading sessions. For some pupils, these sessions are not effective in helping them to get better at reading. This is because the books that they are reading are not suitable to build up their fluency and confidence.

The quality of support for pupils with SEND is variable. Pupils' additional needs are understood and they have clear learning plans which are reviewed with parents and carers, teachers and pupils. However, in lessons, these plans are not used consistently well to support pupils to access and be successful in their learning.

The school's high expectations for behaviour are typically understood by pupils. Pupils who need additional support spoke positively about how the school has helped them to improve their conduct and attitudes. Leaders and staff ensure that any issues with behaviour are dealt with effectively. Nevertheless, there are occasions, where pupils' behaviour, including their use of language, falls short of the school's expectations.

Ensuring that pupils attend regularly is a key priority following the pandemic. Because of leaders' understanding of the reasons why pupils may be absent from school, the school's actions are well targeted and are securing clear improvements.

Leaders have thought carefully about how they develop pupils' understanding of society, and in turn prepare pupils to respond to the opportunities and challenges that they may face. The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils learn about themes related to relationships, consent and keeping safe. The school has suitable arrangements to provide pupils with timely careers advice and guidance. Pupils generally feel well supported with making decisions about their next steps.

The governing body's oversight of the school is not informed by a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities. This has diluted the effectiveness of its work to hold the school to account and ensure that priorities for improvement are addressed consistently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teaching, mostly in Years 7 to 11, does not have sufficiently high aspirations for all pupils' achievement. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should address this through training for staff to help them to implement the ambitious curriculum.
- In some teaching, not enough emphasis is placed on checking pupils' understanding and how well they can remember knowledge over time. This means that some of pupils' misconceptions are not tackled, which in turn hinders them progressing through the curriculum. The school should address this by providing staff with training and guidance on how to assess pupils' learning and use these assessments to support all pupils to build up their knowledge step by step.
- On occasion, the school's approach to promoting high standards of behaviour is not being applied with rigour. This means that, while pupils' behaviour is positive overall, there are instances where their conduct does not match what the school expects of them. This can include their use of language when talking to their peers. The school should make sure that its high expectations for behaviour are fully embedded, including tackling any use of inappropriate language between pupils.

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	136203
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10293269
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	973
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Hogan
CEO	Soumick Dey
Headteacher	Andy Crofts (Executive headteacher) Thomas Beecham (Head of school)
Website	http://thequestacademy.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders use one registered alternative provision.
- The head of school was appointed to the role since the last inspection.
- The school is part of The Collegiate Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders. Discussions were also held with representatives of the trust and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, music and physical education. The inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning, and met with subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 inspectors spoke to pupils during lesson visits. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The inspection team also spoke to staff about behaviour and about their workload in the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Luke Stubbles, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Olivia Page	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Conway	His Majesty's Inspector

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