

# Inspection of Queensbury Academy

Langdale Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 3BU

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Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Helen Palmer. This school is part of Anthem Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mohsen Ojja, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jay Bhutani.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Many pupils enjoy school and make good friends. There is a wide variety of enrichment opportunities that develop pupils' confidence and talents. This was brought to life through the popular Societies' Day. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their leadership skills, for example through the student council or junior leadership team. Others love to stay healthy through sports such as table tennis or football. Pupils value the positive relationships they have with the adults who care for them.

In many areas, particularly in the sixth form, students benefit from the school's high expectations of what they should accomplish. They are supported to achieve well and are, rightly, proud of the high-quality work they produce. However, outside of the sixth form, the school's expectations of what pupils should achieve are more variable. Pupils enjoy it when they receive work that challenges them to excel. However, too often, adults' expectations of what they can achieve are too low. When this happens, pupils do not do as well as they should.

Pupils behave well in social time. They are polite and friendly to each other and to adults. They show consideration towards their peers and respect each other's differences. Pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved over time. However, there is more to be done. Sometimes pupils are involved in off-task behaviour. On other occasions, adults do not support pupils to complete work to a high standard. This impacts how well pupils achieve.

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

The school is experiencing a period of greater stability after significant staff turnover. To improve the quality of education, the school has recently introduced a 'scholar's curriculum'. This breaks down what pupils learn into small parts for teachers, parents and carers, and pupils. These are outlined in the school's chosen 'scholar's guide'. This is in the early stages of development.

Some teachers use the guide effectively to help them to deliver the curriculum. They have a secure knowledge of how to present subject content clearly. They use techniques such as questioning to check pupils' understanding. Teachers then adapt their teaching, when needed, and give clear feedback to pupils to help them secure their understanding. Where this is the case, it helps pupils to achieve well.

However, this is not always the case. Sometimes teachers do not deliver the curriculum well enough. They do not always match work to pupils' different starting points. They deliver subject content without checking pupils' understanding. This means teachers do not have a sufficiently precise idea how well pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are doing. As a result, pupils do not always receive appropriate help in a timely manner and they fall behind. Other pupils do not benefit from sufficiently high levels of challenge. They do not find the work fulfilling or achieve highly.

In the sixth form, there have been recent changes to entry requirements. Students are now on courses that are more appropriate for them. There is a high degree of consistency in how well teachers deliver the curriculum. Students, including those with SEND, benefit from regular feedback and a high level of personalised support. This means that they achieve well.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Key staff are trained to support pupils with their phonics if they are at the earliest stages of learning to read. Many pupils receive appropriate help to become fluent readers.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. However, outside of the sixth form, these are not consistently met. While behaviour has improved over time, in some lessons, particularly those being taught by temporary staff, some pupils do not behave well enough. In lessons that build well on pupils' prior learning, pupils display more motivation and higher levels of resilience. However, in other lessons this is not the case. Too often teachers do not take appropriate action when pupils lack pride in their work, or when work is not completed to a high enough standard.

Pupils value their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. They learn about religions and spirituality. They have a good understanding of how to look after their physical and mental health. They learn about important topics such as staying safe and gambling awareness. Pupils, including in the sixth form, appreciate the careers guidance they receive. They have a secure understanding of the range of employment and educational options open to them. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Trustees and leaders have a good understanding of the school and where further improvements are needed. A lot of their work is at an early stage, and they recognise there is more to do to ensure that pupils benefit from a high-quality education. While many parents support the school, others would like to see more rapid improvements. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

## **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 does not use assessment effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding and use this information to inform their teaching. This means pupils are not being consistently supported to build on their prior skills or knowledge. The trust needs to ensure that assessment is used effectively to support pupils' learning and prevent them from underachieving.

- The school has not made sure that the curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND are not developing their knowledge, skills and abilities well enough. The trust should support all staff to understand the needs of pupils with SEND, and adapt the curriculum to meet their needs, so they achieve well.
- The school has not consistently secured good behaviour from pupils. While work has been done to improve behaviour, there remains too much variability in how well pupils behave, including their attitudes to learning. Too often pupils lack motivation and do not complete work to a high enough standard. The trust must ensure that staff are consistent in ensuring high standards of conduct throughout the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138571
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10295054
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,195
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jay Bhutani
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Mohsen Ojja
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Palmer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.queensburyacademy.com">www.queensburyacademy.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	30 November and 1 December 2022

## Information about this school

- 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.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school currently uses three unregistered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with trust staff, including the trust director of education. They also met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and senior staff, including those with responsibility for pupils with SEND and responsibility for the sixth form.
- The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of trustees.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to school improvement and governance, behaviour and attendance, alternative provision, the PSHE curriculum, pupils with SEND and the school's reading strategy. They also held meetings with staff with responsibilities in these areas.
- Inspectors reviewed Ofsted's staff survey, parent survey and pupil survey. They also spoke to groups of pupils, including single-sex groups.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, English, art and design, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.

## Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alan Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Tom Sparks	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Pritchard	Ofsted Inspector
Jennifer Brassington	Ofsted Inspector

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