

Queensbridge School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103497
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	301291
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Gwendoline Coates HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	634
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Bains
Headteacher	Tim Boyes
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2004
School address	Queensbridge Road Moseley Birmingham B13 8QB
Telephone number	01214 645566
Fax number	01216 835588

Age group	11-16
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Queensbridge School is a much smaller than average secondary school, where boys significantly outnumber girls. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above average. The largest group of pupils in terms of ethnicity are Pakistani, followed by White British, Black British Caribbean and Asian British Bangladeshi. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English (49%) is well above average, and increasing. Of this group, approximately 13% are newly arrived in the UK; between them, they speak 17 languages. At 26%, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well above average.

The school has specialist status in visual and performing arts

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Queensbridge is a good school with some outstanding features. It has made considerable and rapid strides to improve its provision since its last inspection. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership that is setting the school a very clear path to further improvement. He is supported by a very strong leadership team who are ensuring that policies and procedures are carefully introduced and fully embedded to ensure maximum impact on pupils' achievement.

The school's partnerships with others to promote learners' well-being are excellent and this is evident in the close working relationship with the on-site special school and church as well as its work with local colleges, the local Leading Edge and 14-19 consortium, and further afield, in its global partnerships with six schools in India.

A focus on 'back to basics' has ensured that the school has now established a firm foundation for future improvement. Its strong leadership, extremely effective self-evaluations and rigorous monitoring and evaluations systems mean that the school has outstanding capacity to implement further change and make further significant improvement.

Good leadership of the school has ensured the successful implementation of strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. This in turn has created a learning environment in which pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. These improvements, together with good teaching and effective pastoral care, have created a school where although standards are broadly average, pupils' achievement is now good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and are supported by the good care, guidance and support that they receive. Of particular note are pupils' cultural development and their awareness of, and respect for, diversity. These features are evident in the positive contribution they make, both within the school and within the wider community.

Teaching and learning are good overall and assessment is carried out very regularly. However, the assessment data collected to track and review the progress of pupils is not yet used consistently by all teachers to ensure that work matches all pupils' individual needs. Curriculum provision is good overall. The innovative skills-based curriculum in Years 7 and 8 and the wide-ranging provision at Key Stage 4 are proving highly effective in developing knowledge, understanding and skills that will contribute much to pupils' future economic well-being. However, opportunities for younger pupils to make use of, and study, information and communication technology (ICT) are limited.

The school's specialist status in the visual and performing arts is a real strength. It has a massive impact on all subject areas and on pupils' enjoyment. Pupils speak persuasively of how it influences their choices and preferences. It also makes a significant contribution to the community and its partner organisations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve consistency in the use of pupil tracking data to ensure that all pupils are set appropriately challenging levels of work in all lessons.
- Improve the provision for ICT, particularly for younger pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall because of the considerable effort to ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points. In this racially and socio-economically mixed school, pupils enter with standards that vary but are generally below average. The standards they attain in Year 9 are broadly average and have improved significantly since 2005. The gap between the standards achieved by Year 9 pupils in the school and the national average has been narrowing year by year since 2004. In Year 11, pupils are also attaining average standards, but from a start that was often exceptionally low, this represents outstanding progress. In 2007, 61% of the pupils attained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C - a massive improvement on the 2004 figure of 30%.

Pupils' good overall progress from Year 7 to Year 11 is a testament to the school's strong focus on improving behaviour, attendance, teaching and learning and the curriculum at Key Stage 4. The satisfactory progress that pupils make between Year 7 and Year 9 is now being addressed by a new, innovative and effective curriculum.

All groups of pupils are making progress at least at the expected level, and most are now doing well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language all make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils eat healthily and join in the sport and dance activities available to them. Their good attitudes to learning and good behaviour allow all pupils to feel safe and to enjoy school. Improving pupils' behaviour has been a key focus for the school. The success of this was demonstrated in the lessons observed, where behaviour was sometimes exemplary, and in the improvements in attendance and punctuality. On the few occasions when bullying does occur, it is quickly dealt with.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good spiritual development was demonstrated in a Year 9 religious education lesson where pupils talked freely about their beliefs, and in the respect and willingness to reflect demonstrated during assemblies. Pupils are polite and friendly; relationships are outstanding throughout the school and pupils have a strong sense of belonging. The absence of any reported racial incidents in the school over the last three years reflects the outstanding cultural awareness of its pupils. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities to take on responsibilities. They contribute to the wider community through work experience, performance art links and charity fundraising, such as the performances put on by pupils to raise funds following global disasters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching observed was generally good and, in some instances, outstanding. For example, within some Year 7 and 8 lessons, highly inclusive and active learning approaches were used that resulted in pupils making excellent progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge which contributes to their effective teaching. In the majority of lessons, a calm and

orderly working environment is created with positive expectations of behaviour. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and include a variety of activities that pupils enjoy. When planning learning activities, teachers take into account the needs of the minority group of girls in each class and pupils for whom English is not their first language. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported both within and beyond the formal classroom. However, the detailed assessment data collected on pupils' progress is not yet used consistently by all teachers to ensure that work matches all pupils' individual needs. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect through teachers' skilful questioning and, in some lessons, are encouraged to assess how well they have done through effective review sessions at the end of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

At Key Stage 3, in Years 7 and 8 there is an innovative and highly effective skills based curriculum. However, opportunities for ICT are at present restricted. As a result of the school's specialist visual and performing arts status, drama permeates the curriculum and all pupils in Year 9 begin to study two arts-based GCSEs, which they find very interesting and motivating. The Key Stage 4 provision is broad and balanced to meet the learning needs of all pupils and includes traditional academic GCSE subjects and a range of vocational courses that are delivered in the school and off site. Whole-school enrichment days are used to deliver the personal, social and health education programme at Key Stage 4 and make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils participate actively in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are based mainly on sport and on the school's visual and performing arts specialism.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has good systems to support children in care. Child protection procedures are fully in place and all staff have received appropriate training. The school's approach to health and safety is good and all necessary risk assessments are in place. Pupils are well supported from the moment they join the school, as a result of the recently revised pastoral structure that involves well-trained non-teaching staff as Heads of Year and Learning Leaders. This structure provides improved monitoring, more effective support and guidance for all pupils and improved contact opportunities for parents. All pupils are set challenging targets based on accurate data and these are shared regularly with parents and pupils. Systems are, however, relatively new and are not yet used consistently by all teachers. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support in class and parents are fully involved in review processes. The school 'goes the extra mile' to provide support to every pupil and his or her family.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by a very strong leadership team and middle managers with drive and determination, has worked hard to bring about significant change in pupils' behaviour, attendance, punctuality and attainment and progress. Very strong curriculum leadership, evident in the brave championing of curriculum innovation at Key Stage 3 and the extending range of opportunities at Key Stage 4, is leading to improved learning opportunities for all pupils. The school recognises that improved provision for ICT is a priority. Highly effective and robust monitoring systems in relation to both pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning

are in place. The latter have contributed significantly to the improvements in teaching and learning. Challenging targets are used very effectively at both subject and whole-school level to raise standards, and this is particularly evident at Key Stage 4.

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. The school is very clear about its strengths and weaknesses. All staff are aware of the school's priorities and are absolutely focused on raising pupils' achievement and meeting their individual and very wide-ranging needs. Equality of opportunity and the celebration of diversity are outstanding. It is a testament to the very strong leadership of the headteacher that this is now a strength of the school, recognised by both pupils and parents. As one parent comments, 'God bless Mr Boyes for... believing all children can achieve, no matter what their race, colour or background is'. Resources are well used and good value for money is provided. The governing body provides good support as a 'critical friend' and a challenging partner in moving the school forward. All safeguarding procedures are met.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Queensbridge School, Birmingham, B13 8QB

We judged Queensbridge to be a good school with some outstanding features, and one that you and your parents can be rightly proud of. We were impressed by the good progress you all make in your learning and, in particular, the outstanding progress that you make in Years 10 and 11, with 61% of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. We judged behaviour in the school to be good and this, together with improved attendance and punctuality, is contributing to the good progress that you are all making.

You have excellent relationships with each other and with your teachers and we were particularly impressed with the tolerance and respect you have for each other's cultures and beliefs. Girls: although you are in a minority, we didn't feel that you were losing out at all – in fact, we felt that your teachers were actively planning how best to take account of your needs in their lessons.

The success of your school has a great deal to do with the excellent and inspirational leadership provided by your headteacher, Mr Boyes. We think that you and your parents are very aware of this. But you must also recognise that he is supported by a very good leadership team, dedicated heads of department, good teachers and a very effective pastoral support team, all of whom work together to ensure that you receive a good education at Queensbridge.

Although Queensbridge is a good school, we feel that you can help to make it even better, by always behaving well in lessons and around the school, attending regularly and punctually and working as hard as you can to meet, and even exceed, the targets you are set. To help you in this, we have asked Mr Boyes and the staff to improve how well you are all set appropriately challenging levels of work in all lessons. We have also asked that steps are taken to improve the provision for ICT, particularly for younger pupils.

I wish you every success in your future. Best wishes.

Gwen Coates HMI Lead inspector

Queensbridge School

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Grade: 2

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Good leadership of the school has ensured the successful implementation of strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. This in turn has created a learning environment in which pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. These improvements, together with good teaching and effective pastoral care, have created a school where although standards are broadly average, pupils' achievement is now good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and are supported by the good care, guidance and support that they receive. Of particular note are pupils' cultural development and their awareness of, and respect for, diversity. These features are evident in the positive contribution they make, both within the school and within the wider community.

Teaching and learning are good overall and assessment is carried out very regularly. However, the assessment data collected to track and review the progress of pupils is not yet used consistently by all teachers to ensure that work matches all pupils' individual needs. Curriculum provision is good overall. The innovative skills-based curriculum in Years 7 and 8 and the wide-ranging provision at Key Stage 4 are proving highly effective in developing knowledge, understanding and skills that will contribute much to pupils' future economic well-being. However, opportunities for younger pupils to make use of, and study, information and communication technology (ICT) are limited.

The school's specialist status in the visual and performing arts is a real strength. It has a massive impact on all subject areas and on pupils' enjoyment. Pupils speak persuasively of how it influences their choices and preferences. It also makes a significant contribution to the community and its partner organisations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve consistency in the use of pupil tracking data to ensure that all pupils are set appropriately challenging levels of work in all lessons.
- Improve the provision for ICT, particularly for younger pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall because of the considerable effort to ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points.

In this racially and socio-economically mixed school, pupils enter with standards that vary but are generally below average. The standards they attain in Year 9 are broadly average and have improved significantly since 2005. The gap between the standards achieved by Year 9 pupils in the school and the national average has been narrowing year by year since 2004. In Year 11, pupils are also attaining average standards, but from a start that was often exceptionally low, this represents outstanding progress. In 2007, 61% of the pupils attained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C - a massive improvement on the 2004 figure of 30%.

Pupils' good overall progress from Year 7 to Year 11 is a testament to the school's strong focus on improving behaviour, attendance, teaching and learning and the curriculum at Key Stage 4. The satisfactory progress that pupils make between Year 7 and Year 9 is now being addressed by a new, innovative and effective curriculum.

All groups of pupils are making progress at least at the expected level, and most are now doing well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language all make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils eat healthily and join in the sport and dance activities available to them. Their good attitudes to learning and good behaviour allow all pupils to feel safe and to enjoy school. Improving pupils' behaviour has been a key focus for the school. The success of this was demonstrated in the lessons observed, where behaviour was sometimes exemplary, and in the improvements in attendance and punctuality. On the few occasions when bullying does occur, it is quickly dealt with.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good spiritual development was demonstrated in a Year 9 religious education lesson where pupils talked freely about their beliefs, and in the respect and willingness to reflect demonstrated during assemblies. Pupils are polite and friendly; relationships are outstanding throughout the school and pupils have a strong sense of belonging. The absence of any reported racial incidents in the school over the last three years reflects the outstanding cultural awareness of its pupils. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities to take on responsibilities. They contribute to the wider community through work experience, performance art links and charity fundraising, such as the performances put on by pupils to raise funds following global disasters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching observed was generally good and, in some instances, outstanding. For example, within some Year 7 and 8 lessons, highly inclusive and active learning approaches were used that resulted in pupils making excellent progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge which contributes to their effective teaching. In the majority of lessons, a calm and orderly working environment is created with positive expectations of behaviour. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and include a variety of activities that pupils enjoy. When planning learning activities, teachers take into account the needs of the minority group of girls in each class and pupils for whom English is not their first language. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported both within and beyond the formal classroom. However, the detailed assessment data collected on pupils' progress is not yet used consistently by all teachers to ensure that work matches all pupils' individual needs. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect through teachers' skilful questioning and, in some lessons, are encouraged to assess how well they have done through effective review sessions at the end of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

At Key Stage 3, in Years 7 and 8 there is an innovative and highly effective skills based curriculum. However, opportunities for ICT are at present restricted. As a result of the school's specialist visual and performing arts status, drama permeates the curriculum and all pupils in Year 9 begin to study two arts-based GCSEs, which they find very interesting and motivating. The Key Stage 4 provision is broad and balanced to meet the learning needs of all pupils and includes traditional academic GCSE subjects and a range of vocational courses that are delivered in the school and off site. Whole-school enrichment days are used to deliver the personal, social and health education programme at Key Stage 4 and make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils participate actively in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are based mainly on sport and on the school's visual and performing arts specialism.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has good systems to support children in care. Child protection procedures are fully in place and all staff have received appropriate training. The school's approach to health and safety is good and all necessary risk assessments are in place. Pupils are well supported from the moment they join the school, as a result of the recently revised pastoral structure that involves well-trained non-teaching staff as Heads of Year and Learning Leaders. This structure provides improved monitoring, more effective support and guidance for all pupils and improved contact opportunities for parents. All pupils are set challenging targets based on accurate data and these are shared regularly with parents and pupils. Systems are, however, relatively new and are not yet used consistently by all teachers. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support in class and parents are fully involved in review

processes. The school 'goes the extra mile' to provide support to every pupil and his or her family.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by a very strong leadership team and middle managers with drive and determination, has worked hard to bring about significant change in pupils' behaviour, attendance, punctuality and attainment and progress. Very strong curriculum leadership, evident in the brave championing of curriculum innovation at Key Stage 3 and the extending range of opportunities at Key Stage 4, is leading to improved learning opportunities for all pupils. The school recognises that improved provision for ICT is a priority. Highly effective and robust monitoring systems in relation to both pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning are in place. The latter have contributed significantly to the improvements in teaching and learning. Challenging targets are used very effectively at both subject and whole-school level to raise standards, and this is particularly evident at Key Stage 4.

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. The school is very clear about its strengths and weaknesses. All staff are aware of the school's priorities and are absolutely focused on raising pupils' achievement and meeting their individual and very wide-ranging needs. Equality of opportunity and the celebration of diversity are outstanding. It is a testament to the very strong leadership of the headteacher that this is now a strength of the school, recognised by both pupils and parents. As one parent comments, 'God bless Mr Boyes for... believing all children can achieve, no matter what their race, colour or background is'. Resources are well used and good value for money is provided. The governing body provides good support as a 'critical friend' and a challenging partner in moving the school forward. All safeguarding procedures are met.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



30 September 2007

Dear Students

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The success of your school has a great deal to do with the excellent and inspirational leadership provided by your headteacher, Mr Boyes. We think that you and your parents are very aware of this. But you must also recognise that he is supported by a very good leadership team, dedicated heads of department, good teachers and a very effective pastoral support team, all of whom work together to ensure that you receive a good education at Queensbridge.

Although Queensbridge is a good school, we feel that you can help to make it even better, by always behaving well in lessons and around the school, attending regularly and punctually and working as hard as you can to meet, and even exceed, the targets you are set. To help you in this, we have asked Mr Boyes and the staff to improve how well you are all set appropriately challenging levels of work in all lessons. We have also asked that steps are taken to improve the provision for ICT, particularly for younger pupils.

I wish you every success in your future. Best wishes.

Gwen Coates HMI
Lead inspector