

Inspection of a good school: Queens' School

Aldenham Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23 2TY

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Outcome

Queens' School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Senior leaders are eager for Queens' pupils to do well. They challenge them to 'Dare to be great.' Many pupils are keen to take up the challenges on offer. Beyond examination subjects, pupils join in a wealth of different clubs and special-interest groups.

Sixth-form students organise Friday debates. These raise interesting questions about current social, moral cultural and political issues. Pupils from all year groups can join in. The annual inter-house music competition and drama productions are very popular events. The 'dare to know' programme gives pupils a useful insight into the world of work. Pupils' success in sports is a significant strength of the school. They know it is 'OK to be different' and learn to how to become responsible citizens.

The school is a friendly place and most pupils get on well together. They trust staff to sort things out if they have a problem and say that bullying is rare. Pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school. A few pupils do not always behave as well as they should. Leaders know there is more work to do to make sure that everyone meets the high standards of behaviour that they expect.

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

The quality of education that Queens' School provides remains good. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well and most of them do.

Across subjects, teachers know what they are going to teach and when. In English, plans are very well-ordered. English teachers have thought hard about the knowledge and skills that pupils need. They know it is important to introduce younger pupils to a wide range of literature. Pupils have opportunities to listen to music and look at different works of art. This helps them to compare the links between literature and other creative subjects.

Across the school, teachers are checking their plans to make sure they teach their subjects in the best way they can. This is so that pupils can remember more of what they

learn over time. Work to improve planning in many subjects, including in modern languages, mathematics, science and geography, is at different stages. It is not as advanced as it is in English. The business studies team is new. They have just started to make the changes needed. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides effective support for vulnerable pupils. Staff have better access to information and more training to help them work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). While this is helping subject teachers to begin to improve their planning, it is not being used well enough at this stage.

At key stage 3, pupils follow a wide and varied programme. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of opportunities beyond their examination subjects. They are encouraged to read widely and often. Most pupils achieve well by the end of key stage 4. Disadvantaged pupils and some vulnerable pupils do not do as well as others by the end of Year 11. New Year 10 subject pathways focus on meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities. Too few pupils study a foreign language GCSE. Leaders' actions show that more pupils are interested in, and studying, languages this year. The number of pupils studying GCSE geography and/or history has also increased.

Although most pupils behave well, a few pupils do not behave as well as they should. Raised expectations and changes to the behaviour policy are making a difference. Leaders have more to do to make sure staff are consistent in applying the policy.

Sixth-form students are confident young people. They are good role models for younger pupils. Some become reading mentors, lead societies, or take on other student leadership responsibilities. Many students stay on to complete their courses and achieve well. Careers information, advice and guidance has improved. Most students go on to further study, employment and/or training when they leave school. In the past, students have not done as well in business studies or social sciences as in other subjects. This situation is improving. New courses aim to fill a gap for students who want an alternative route to A level.

Leaders and governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of their school. They are mindful of staff workload. New systems to gather information about how well pupils are doing aim to reduce this.

The school's curriculum is not yet planned and sequenced well enough in some areas. Governors and leaders, at all levels, understand the changes needed. Appropriate staff training is underway. The school is set well on its journey towards further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the things to do if they think that a pupil might be in danger of harm. The school's safeguarding team are well trained to check on any concerns reported to them. They understand that positive mental health and keeping pupils safe are high priorities. Strong links with the police and children's services ensure that pupils get extra help if they need it. An onsite nurse provides valuable support in school.

Leaders make all the required checks to ensure that staff working at the school are suitable. Governors check to see if leaders' safeguarding practice is effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum in a few subjects, for example in business studies, modern foreign languages, mathematics and geography, is not as well sequenced as it is in English. The plans do not always help pupils to build securely on what they already know. Leaders need to ensure that the quality of planning across subjects matches that seen in English.
- Over time, vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, have not done as well as other pupils in the school. Leaders and governors should ensure that the curriculum changes underway have the intended effect in securing higher achievement for these pupils. In doing so, they should also check that staff understand how to use the information that the SENCo provides, along with other assessment information, effectively. This is so that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are supported to do as well as they can.
- In a few lessons, and occasionally around the school, some pupils do not behave as well as they should. Leaders need to make sure that all staff have the skills and confidence they need to apply the revised behaviour policy consistently. Governors should continue to check that the strategies in place are working.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Queens' School to be good on 20 April 2012.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	136877
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10088725
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	1,678
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	323
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Julie Raybould
Headteacher	Jonathan Morrell
Website	http://www.queens.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2015

Information about this school

- Queens' school converted to an academy in July 2011.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative education provision at Chessbrook Education Centre, Watford.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across a variety of subjects. We looked in detail at English, mathematics, business studies, science and modern foreign languages. We spoke with subject leaders, teachers and pupils about their work and about other aspects of life in the school.
- Inspectors also met with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. We looked at a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; development plans; and pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding records.

- Inspectors looked at the 284 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, 280 free-text responses, 67 responses to the questionnaire to school staff and 113 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

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