

Inspection of Queen's Park High School

Queens Park Road, Handbridge, Chester, Cheshire CH4 7AE

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Tom Kearns. The school is part of The Learning Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Darran Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Heath.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy the calm and considerate culture at Queen's Park High School. They appreciate the positive relationships that they have with staff. This helps them to feel safe.

Staff have high expectations for what pupils should achieve. In the main, pupils are supported well to realise these expectations. Pupils typically achieve well.

Pupils usually treat each other with kindness and respect. Through their conduct, they demonstrate sensible attitudes and age-appropriate maturity. Occasionally, the experiences of some pupils are interrupted by the poorer behaviour of a small number of pupils. Staff manage such incidents with fairness and consistency.

Pupils appreciate what staff do to get to know them. This helps them to feel included in the wider life of the school. For example, many sixth form students participate in the National Citizenship Scheme and the school's 'Community Spirit Programme'. This helps them to develop their awareness of leadership and citizenship. Many younger pupils appreciate the opportunities that they get to broaden their interests or to make a positive contribution to their locality, through clubs, competitions or the varied opportunities to raise money for charities.

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

The school, including members of the local governing body (LGB) and the trust, accurately understand what the school does well and where it could improve. The school has taken effective action to sustain and enhance the education and wider opportunities that pupils have received in recent years.

Pupils benefit from a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum that supports their academic and vocational interests. Pupils are well prepared to embark on positive and meaningful next steps in education, employment or training.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use it effectively to introduce and explain subject content. Often, teachers provide pupils with suitably demanding activities to use and apply the knowledge that they are learning. Most pupils tackle these tasks with confidence. This helps them to remember the content that they have been taught. In a minority of places, some teachers do not provide pupils with work that is well-matched to their starting points. This means that a minority of pupils, including some of those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they could.

Teachers' checks on learning help to identify what pupils can or cannot do. Mostly, these checks help teachers to accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This ensures that teachers make appropriate decisions about what pupils should learn next. However, some teachers do not use information from these checks as well as they could. In these places, teachers miss opportunities to help pupils, including some of those who are disadvantaged, to address gaps in their knowledge.

The school ensures accurate identification of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers provide effective support so that these pupils overcome barriers to learning and achieve well.

The school proactively identifies pupils who have significant gaps in their reading knowledge. These pupils benefit from appropriately targeted support. This helps them to strengthen their knowledge of phonics and develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills.

The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well. This is also true for students in the sixth form, due to the school's high aspirations for all pupils, including those with lower-than-average starting points. Although the 2024, published outcomes indicated that students' attainment at the end of Year 13 was lower than the national average, current students in the sixth form are developing their knowledge effectively from their starting points.

Pupils usually demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons. This helps them learn well and without distraction. The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance. It ensures a timely response to pupils' absence. The school's collaborative work with parents, carers and wider agencies has secured steady improvements to pupils' rates of attendance over recent years. Consequently, most pupils attend regularly. That said, a minority of pupils still struggle to attend school as often as they could.

The school provides comprehensive and age-appropriate opportunities for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. Suitably trained staff help pupils to learn about their responsibilities as a citizen, healthy relationships and how to look after their health. Pupils benefit from the school's careers education programme. This is carefully linked to wide range of other opportunities that prepare pupils for the choices that they will make in their education or future careers.

The school, including trust leaders and members of the LGB are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They work well together to fulfil their statutory duties. They ensure that a culture of aspiration, collaboration and support is experienced by staff. The school's proactive consideration of staff's workload and well-being ensures that staff feel well equipped to undertake their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not make effective enough use of their checks on pupils' learning to identify what knowledge pupils have gained. As a result, some teachers are

not fully informed about what pupils are ready to learn next. The school should ensure that teachers check what knowledge pupils have learned and identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- At times, teachers do not select learning activities that are well matched to pupils starting points. This means that some pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work that they are given. The school should ensure that teachers select and use activities in lessons that are appropriately ambitious for pupils.
- A minority of pupils, including some of those who disadvantaged, are persistently absent from school. These pupils miss out on the education that they need to progress through the curriculum as well as they should. The school should refine and enhance its arrangements to support and challenge those pupils who are persistently absent from 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

Unique reference number	143817
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348357
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	783
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	127
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Heath
CEO of the trust	Darran Jones
Headteacher	Tom Kearns
Website	www.qphs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Queen's Park High School is part of The Learning Trust, a local multi-academy trust.
- The school currently makes use of two registered and one unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislations, 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. 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 and senior leaders. They met with representatives of the academy trust, members of the LGB and local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. 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.
- Inspectors also visited lessons in some other vocational 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.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support for pupils who have additional needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including the comments received by Ofsted's free-text facility.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Nixon	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Slater	Ofsted Inspector

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