

Inspection of Queen's Park High School

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

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils. Older pupils told us that teaching and behaviour have improved over the last few years. Pupils learn and achieve more than in the past.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. The atmosphere in the school is calm and welcoming. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Pupils generally behave well during social times. Most pupils work hard and try their best. Pupils and sixth-form students appreciate the support they receive from staff. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for the younger pupils.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. The majority of pupils confirm that bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils said that adults deal with it quickly. Pupils who join the school at different times of the school year are made to feel welcome and settle in quickly.

Pupils take part in many activities, which helps to develop their confidence and resilience. These include an annual drama production, a variety of music groups and a robotics club. Pupils have won competitions in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities and participate in regional and national rowing competitions.

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

The headteacher and governors are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils learn a broad and rich curriculum. The proportion of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is rising because more pupils are choosing to study foreign languages. Most teachers have good knowledge about the subjects that they teach. They use assessment effectively to check what pupils know and can do. Most pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects at the end of key stage 4.

Leaders have made sure that all curriculum subjects are planned well in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils learn topics in the right order. This helps them to build on their previous knowledge. The plans for some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and computer studies, have been recently introduced and are not delivered consistently well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the same opportunities as everyone else. Most pupils with SEND are supported effectively and are beginning to make more progress through the school's curriculum as a result.

Behaviour is good. Teachers feel that they are supported well when dealing with misbehaviour. The number of pupils excluded from the school increased last year due to leaders' raised expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.

Leaders and staff work hard to make sure that all pupils attend school regularly. The attendance of pupils is improving and is in line with the national average. However, some disadvantaged pupils attend school less often than others and this stops them from achieving as well as they should.

Leaders want pupils to become well-rounded individuals who understand the wider world. Pupils show respect and tolerance for others. They learn how to stay fit and live healthily. Pupils and students in the sixth form are given a wide choice of activities, including sports, trips and overseas visits. They have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through being members of the student leadership team and enjoy raising money for charity. Year 10 pupils and Year 12 students go on work experience. This helps to develop their employability skills. Pupils and students receive helpful careers advice and guidance that prepares them well for their next steps. Most Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students move on to education, employment or further training.

In recent years, students in the sixth form have not achieved as well as they should. In response to this, leaders have broadened the range of subjects that they offer to better reflect students' needs and interests within the context of a small sixth form. Leaders have provided staff with training to improve their subject knowledge. Teachers know what to teach and when. Subject curriculums have more demanding content. The actions of leaders are starting to help students learn more than in the past. However, leaders know that the planned curriculums for all subject areas need to be delivered consistently well.

All staff feel proud to work at the school. Staff say that the school is well led and managed. They feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being carefully. Trustees and governors know the school well and fulfil their duties.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. One parent commented, 'It is a very nurturing environment and all pupils are made to feel included.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are safe to work in the school. All staff receive regular training and updates in safeguarding. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse. Leaders work well with external agencies to protect the pupils most at risk of harm. Records show that concerns are acted on quickly. Leaders are aware of the risks pupils face in the local area and ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Staff and parents believe that pupils are safe at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is planned well in all subjects. However, the content of the curriculum in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and computer studies are not implemented consistently well. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is taught equally well across all subject areas.
- Most pupils attend the school regularly. However, some disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent from school. This means that they miss out on their learning, which affects their progress through the planned curriculum. Leaders must take action to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly.
- Students do not achieve as well as they should in the sixth form. Leaders need to ensure that the well-planned curriculum is implemented effectively across all subjects so that students' progress improves.

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 the school and 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	143817
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10121925
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	530
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	69
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Euan Imrie
Headteacher	Lyndsay Watterson
Website	www.qphs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in April 2017. It is part of the Learning Trust Multi Academy Trust. A new chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust was appointed in September 2019.
- The structure of the senior leadership team changed this academic year. An assistant headteacher has been appointed as senior assistant headteacher.
- The number of pupils who join the school in Year 7 is rising. In addition, an increasing number of pupils enter the school at different times in the school year. 25 pupils transferred from other schools and overseas during the last academic year.
- The school currently uses alternative provision at Wirral WRAP to contribute to the education of a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and groups of subject leaders, teachers and support staff. We met with four members of the local governing body and the trust's education improvement officer. We spoke with the chair of the governing body who is also a trustee on the telephone. We also spoke with an external consultant and a representative of an alternative provider on the telephone. We held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- We reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and attendance and behaviour records. We also reviewed minutes of governing body meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding we looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed the school's record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. We met with the designated safeguarding leader. We also spoke to pupils about safeguarding and considered parents' views.
- We analysed 138 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 138 text responses from parents, 44 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 152 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- We started the inspection by focusing on art, modern foreign languages, mathematics and science. We visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and had discussions with teachers and a small group of pupils. On the second day of the inspection, we visited lessons in other subjects.

Inspection team

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