

Inspection of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith

Ullswater Road, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7EG

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are happy to attend school each day. This is reflected in their high rates of attendance. Pupils explained to inspectors that they value the trusting and respectful relationships they have with staff. This helps pupils to feel safe in school. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum to ensure that pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can live up to the aspirations that leaders have for them. For the most part, pupils rise to these expectations, try their best and achieve well. When pupils and students leave the school, they are prepared well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. During lessons, pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and follow instructions diligently. Pupils value the support that they receive from staff. For instance, they told inspectors that staff would 'go out of their way' to provide extra help if they find questions tricky.

At lunchtimes, the school is a hive of activity as many pupils join in with a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs. For example, they enjoy taking part in lunchtime activities such as rugby, badminton, food microbiology, electrics and circuits, and dance club. Pupils are excited about performing in 'Shrek', their upcoming school production.

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

Leaders have designed an appropriately aspirational, academic curriculum for pupils, including students in the sixth form. For example, most pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects in key stage 4. Students in the sixth form study a wide range of A-level courses, including economics, environmental science and geology.

Subject leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should know and the order in which curriculum content should be delivered. They have organised learning so that pupils can make links with earlier content and build logically on what they know already. That said, some subject leaders are better equipped than others to support staff to deliver subject curriculums well. This means that, in some subjects, including in the sixth form, some staff do not receive sufficient support to teach some aspects of curriculums with confidence.

Mostly, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They use their expertise to design learning well. Staff provide accurate explanations for pupils, presenting new ideas and concepts with clarity. For the most part, teachers ensure that they emphasise, revisit and consolidate the learning that will be the most useful

to pupils in the future. Pupils' learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. This means that teachers can focus primarily on delivering the curriculum.

On the whole, teachers routinely use assessment strategies to check that pupils' earlier learning is secure. This helps staff to identify and address pupils' misconceptions quickly. As a result, most pupils and students progress well through the curriculum, deepening their understanding of concepts over time.

Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Leaders provide staff with appropriate information about the additional needs of this group of pupils. This means that most teachers are equipped well to adapt how they deliver the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn well.

Pupils, but particularly those in key stage 3, are enthusiastic readers. For example, inspectors observed pupils queuing out of the library door, keen to change the books that they had enjoyed. Leaders assess pupils' reading knowledge regularly. This ensures that those pupils who find reading difficult receive appropriate support from staff to catch up with their peers. Staff encourage pupils, including students in the sixth form, to read widely.

Leaders have ensured that there is a suitable programme to support pupils' and students' wider development. For example, pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of careers advice and guidance. Students in the sixth form are keen to raise money for local charities and a range of other good causes. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions that are different to their own. They know about the importance of tolerance and respect for those who are different to themselves.

In recent months, the leadership of the school has been strengthened considerably. Those responsible for governance provide an appropriate level of challenge to leaders. Members of the trust board have the knowledge and skills to hold leaders to account fully for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Many staff commented positively on the changes made in recent months. For example, staff explained how some of these changes had helped to prioritise their well-being and better manage their workload. Staff also commented on the recent improvements in pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are aware of the risks that pupils and students may face. They ensure that staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. This helps staff to remain alert to the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of county lines exploitation or far right extremism.

Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. When needed, leaders make timely referrals to external agencies. Staff work effectively with external partners, such as mental health charities and the local authority, to ensure that vulnerable pupils and students get the help that they need.

Through the citizenship curriculum, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the dangers of drug misuse and vaping. Pupils also learn about the importance of consent and the key features of healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are not equipped well enough to support teachers to design and deliver some aspects of the curriculum with confidence. This means that some teachers, particularly those staff at the earliest stages of their teaching careers, do not receive sufficient support to design learning well. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the expertise necessary to improve teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum.

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](#)' 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	136732
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10226377
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
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	1038
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Maggie Robson
Headteacher	David Marchant
Website	www.qegs.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Penrith, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Leaders currently use one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022. A new chair of trustees was appointed in December 2022. Almost all trustees have been appointed in the current academic year.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors spoke with two representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair. The lead inspector held a conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, art and design, English, history, and physical education. Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculums, visited lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work, spoke with teachers, and spoke with pupils and students about their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work and visited lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with pupils and students from all year groups. Inspectors visited some extra-curricular activities that were taking place at lunchtime. Inspectors also observed pupils' and students' behaviour at social times and observed pupils as they moved around the school site.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, leaders, staff, pupils and students to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school. Inspectors checked on leaders' recruitment checks on new staff and other safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' behaviour and attendance records, leaders' self-evaluation documentation and minutes of meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Kelly Leonard	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Kenyon	Ofsted Inspector

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