

Queen Elizabeth Academy

Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG19 7AP

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders are dedicated to improving the quality of education at the school. However, the impact of their work to date has not been strong enough.
- Pupils have been absent and excluded from school more often than their peers nationally. Their absence and exclusion are now reducing. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are still absent and excluded from school more often than other pupils.
- Pupils' progress has been below the national average. Pupils at key stage 4 still make less progress than they are capable of. Key stage 3 pupils are now making better progress in their studies.
- Previously, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND made weak progress. Leaders' use of the pupil premium and SEND funding is now effective. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are now making better progress.
- The quality of teaching is improving but still varies. Teaching is strong, however, in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always make sure that the work they set matches pupils' abilities closely enough.
- Leaders have planned the curriculum well to help fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Currently, however, pupils have limited opportunities to study geography, music and drama.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have challenged the existing culture of low aspiration which limited pupils' prospects.
- Staff morale is high. School staff at all levels are committed to improving the school further.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have an effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education.
- Pupils are happy at school. They behave well in lessons and during social times. Staff support and care for pupils well. Because of this, pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good.
- The sixth-form provision is good. This is because post-16 teaching is now consistently good. Students progress well in their studies. They go on to well-planned next steps when they leave school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers consistently set activities with the right level of challenge for pupils' abilities.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that pupils can take courses in music, drama and geography.
- Reduce pupils' absence and exclusion, especially for pupils with SEND.

An external review of the school's governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders are deeply committed to their work. Despite this, leadership and management require improvement. This is because leaders' actions have not had a great enough impact on the overall quality of pupils' education. School leaders, however, have the capacity to improve the school further. They have shown this by steadily reducing pupils' high absence rates and by improving the progress of key stage 3 pupils and sixth-form students.
- The principal leads the school with a keen sense of moral purpose. Leaders have created a culture of high aspiration for all pupils. They are determined that pupils will have a wide range of opportunities when they leave school. Leaders make sure all pupils and students have a job or place to study when they leave school. Teachers support leaders' drive to improve pupils' life chances. Staff morale is high because of this shared goal.
- Leaders approach their work with integrity. They have invested in genuine school improvements rather than 'quick fix' solutions that do not last. Leaders have, for example, refused to allow key stage 4 pupils to take easy examination options to make their progress look better than it was. There is a determination to 'do the right thing' for pupils. For example, when a neighbouring school closed, leaders accepted extra pupils, despite the extra pressures and difficulties this caused.
- The local community knows that the school has improved. The school roll is rising. Parents and carers are becoming more involved in the work of the school. Leaders' surveys show that most parents are pleased with the school. In Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, however, a small number of parents said they would not recommend the school.
- Leaders have introduced a well-researched approach to improve teaching. This method, referred to as 'the QEA way', has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers told us that they receive high-quality training and coaching to support their practice. However, a minority of teachers need further support to get the most out of the school's approach to teaching. A high proportion of staff responded to Ofsted's online survey; they fully support the work of leaders to improve teaching.
- School leaders make effective use of additional funding to support some pupils' achievements. Leaders use literacy and numeracy catch-up funding well. Inspectors saw good evidence that this funding was having a strong impact on improving pupils' reading skills. Extra funding for pupils with SEND has helped leaders support the progress of pupils with additional needs.
- SMSC education is an area of strength in the curriculum. The school's Christian ethos enriches pupils' spiritual education. There is regular collective worship. Pupils are respectful during times of public prayer. They learn to understand the traditions of other faiths in religious education classes. Leaders make sure pupils understand the importance of tolerance as part of their education on British values. This helps to prepare pupils well for the opportunities and challenges of life in modern Britain.

- Many pupils enter the school with attainment below the national average. Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum to take this into account. Pupils who need to learn the content that they should have covered at primary school. This means that all pupils have the grounding they need to study the secondary school curriculum.
- Overall, leaders make sure key stage 4 pupils take a broad and balanced range of courses. Pupils study a demanding curriculum. A high proportion of pupils take all the English Baccalaureate subjects. However, pupils in key stage 3 have been unable to take geography, music or drama. Leaders have had difficulty recruiting suitably qualified teachers in geography.
- School leaders provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. These contribute well to pupils' personal development. However, leaders do not check pupils' take up of these activities carefully enough to be sure that pupils of all backgrounds are benefiting fully from what is available.

Governance of the school

- The trustees of the multi-academy trust (MAT) responsible for the school, delegate clear duties to local governors, while meeting their own legal accountabilities. Governors and trustees continually try to develop their practice. The trust and the local governing body have plans in place to further improve the effectiveness of their working relationship.
- Though the school has further to go, MAT support has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and leadership up to this point.
- Governors hold leaders to account for the use of the funds the school receives. They have, for example, fully considered leaders' use of the pupil premium. Leaders' effective use of this funding is improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Local governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know the school's performance information well. This helps them to hold leaders to account for pupils' progress. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they challenge and support leaders. To date, however, this challenge has not been effective in securing all the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a well-developed safeguarding culture. Leaders, governors and teachers fulfil their safeguarding roles capably. Staff use the school's electronic systems for reporting child protection concerns well. Leaders intervene promptly to help pupils. They follow up the referrals they make to external agencies tenaciously. Governors reflect carefully on their safeguarding role. They learn from case reviews and audits.
- The school's safeguarding policies follow the latest government requirements. Staff and governors' safeguarding training is up to date. Leaders' effective recruitment systems help to make sure that only suitable people work at the school.
- Leaders involve parents effectively to make sure pupils are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement because it is not consistently good across all subjects and year groups. Though improving, the impact of teaching varies.
- In a minority of cases, teachers do not set work that challenges higher-ability pupils enough. On the other hand, some less-able pupils struggle to complete teachers' tasks because they find them too difficult.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is very effective. Pupils' progress in these areas is improving because of this. The teaching in science is improving but is less consistently strong than in the other core subjects.
- Some teachers use questions well to develop pupils' understanding. In English, for example, inspectors saw pupils thrive as they responded to the challenge of probing questions on 'Romeo and Juliet'. In some lessons, however, teachers' questioning was more superficial and had limited impact on pupils' understanding.
- Inspectors saw supportive relationships between pupils and teachers which helped pupils learn. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Almost all teachers are fully qualified subject specialists. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Where teachers communicate this knowledge well, it has a strong impact on pupils' learning.
- Many pupils join the school with low reading ages. Teaching develops pupils' reading well. Pupils behind in their reading improve quickly because of teachers' well-targeted support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Many pupils start at the school with low attainment. These pupils often have little confidence in their ability to learn. Through painstaking work, staff build pupils' confidence so that they can become successful learners. Pupils are proud to be members of the school. They wear their uniform smartly.
- Pupils enjoy school. Staff make sure that pupils' emotional and physical well-being are a priority. Leaders invest heavily in pupils' health. For example, every day starts with the offer of a free breakfast so that pupils are well-nourished and able to learn. Leaders' support for pupils' mental health is also effective. A counsellor is available to help pupils in times of stress.
- Staff use assemblies and form time well to instil a clear moral code in pupils. Pupils learn the importance of citizenship and service to the local community through extensive charity work. For example, pupils support the work of local food banks.
- Pupils have learned how to keep themselves safe online and when using social media. Leaders make effective use of support from other agencies to help pupils at risk from

extremist views. However, pupils have a more limited understanding of how to protect themselves from the dangers of extremism than of other risks they face.

- The school promotes leadership skills and democratic values through a range of opportunities. Pupils take part in elections for the Nottinghamshire Youth Parliament, the school council and the roles of head boy and head girl. Through these and other activities, pupils learn to value democracy.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during the inspection. Pupils said they felt safe. Most pupils said bullying was rare and that staff dealt with any problems quickly. A small number of parents reported bullying when they completed Parent View. Other parents, however, spoke about the high quality of the leaders' work to deal with and prevent bullying.
- Staff do not tolerate derogatory language. For example, they always challenge homophobic language. The MAT monitors leaders' work to promote equality. Trustees intervene if there are any concerns about the welfare of staff or pupils who have characteristics protected by law.
- Leaders carefully check the progress, behaviour and welfare of the very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision off-site. These pupils are making better progress in their studies than previously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They follow the school's rules. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and try their best in lessons. Inspectors saw no disruptive behaviour during the inspection. Most pupils told inspectors that behaviour was good in class, although a few key stage 4 pupils said there was occasionally some low-level disruption.
- Pupils are clear about the school's expectations. They are punctual when they arrive in the morning and throughout the day when going to lessons. The school is an orderly place. Pupils move calmly around the school site.
- Leaders have made no permanent exclusions since the school opened. In the past, however, leaders excluded high numbers of pupils on a temporary basis. In part, these exclusions were the result of leaders' work to set high standards for pupils' behaviour. The proportion of pupils excluded from school has now reduced considerably. This reduction is the result of improved behaviour and a high-quality inclusion unit. Over time, leaders have excluded pupils with SEND more often than other pupils.
- Pupils' attendance has improved since the school opened. This is due to well-focused initiatives to reinforce the importance of attending school. Pupils' absence is still above the national average but is now similar to schools with comparable levels of deprivation. The absence of pupils with SEND, however, is still high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's published examination results for key stage 4 in 2018 were poor. However, the published figures were partly misleading. This is because the results included examination outcomes for 38 pupils who had only been on roll a short amount of time, following the closure of another school. Without these results, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 4 was better than it had been in 2017.
- Pupils' outcomes still require improvement. This is because current key stage 4 pupils make less progress and attain less well than pupils nationally. At key stage 3, pupils are now making better progress. Pupils of different abilities make similar rates of progress overall. In Year 10, however, the higher-ability pupils are making less progress than other pupils.
- Pupils with SEND are making appropriate progress, taking into account their complex needs and lower starting points. The differences between disadvantaged pupils' progress and that of other pupils nationally are reducing. Like other pupils at the school, disadvantaged pupils' progress is currently better at key stage 3 than at key stage 4.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make consistently strong progress. Teachers support these pupils well as they learn English and they do well across different subjects.
- Careers education is effective. The school has a comprehensive careers programme. Leaders ensure that pupils get high-quality independent advice and guidance. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in education or employment.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The school's sixth-form provision is good. Post-16 education is now a strength of the school. In the past, sixth-form students took subjects which were poorly matched to their needs. They now study subjects which suit their abilities and interests well. This change has helped improve their outcomes. Almost all students now take A-level courses. The teaching on all courses is consistently effective. Current students are making good progress on both academic and vocational courses.
- Teachers in the sixth form have high expectations. They encourage students to do their best. Students are positive about their experience in the sixth form. They appreciate all that staff do to help them. Students' behaviour, attendance and punctuality are particularly good.
- There are small numbers of post-16 students on the school's roll. These students now learn at the Hucknall Sixth Form Centre where they have a much wider range of curricular and extra-curricular options than they did on the school site. These opportunities support students' academic and personal development well.
- The school has its own head of sixth form, who works closely with the leader of the sixth-form centre to support and advise students. The leadership of the sixth form is effective.

- Last year, some sixth-form students took courses which were not counted in nationally published information. This made the attainment and progress of sixth form students appear low. All of last year's students were able to use the qualifications they achieved to go on to their first choice of university when they left school. All students now study courses included in the nationally published tables.
- Careers advice and guidance are effective. Students learn about the wide range of options available to them when they leave school. Most students complete the courses they start in the sixth form.
- Students are well prepared for the working world. All students have planned work experience in Year 12, which supports their personal development and employment prospects well.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form centre. Leaders care for students well. Staff know the students as individuals and recognise when they need extra care or support.
- The few students who enter the sixth form without reaching grade 4 in English and/or mathematics learn well and make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	144486
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10087333

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	579
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	14
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Rolph
Principal	Helena Brothwell
Telephone number	01623 623559
Website	https://www.queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk/
Email address	info@queenelizabeths-ac.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2016.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from White British backgrounds is above the national average.
- While not designated as a school with a religious character, the school has a formal partnership agreement with the Church of England, Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.

- The school is sponsored by the Diverse Academies Trust. The trust provides a broad range of support to the school. The trustees delegate some functions to the local governing body. Local governors make checks on the day-to-day running of the school, especially teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' progress. Senior executive leaders help manage the relationship between trustees and local governors.
- The post-16 students on the school's roll are educated at the Hucknall Sixth Form Centre. The centre is a collaborative provision involving Queen Elizabeth Academy, Holgate Academy and the National Church of England Academy.
- The school uses Rhubarb Farm and Cast Angling Project, to provide part-time alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school and in a range of subjects. Some lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons to evaluate pupils' progress and behaviour in classrooms.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books, during lessons and at other times during the inspection.
- An inspector visited the Hucknall Sixth Form Centre to observe learning and evaluate the provision.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other leaders, members of the governing body and the senior executive leaders of the MAT.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, the school complaints file, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors looked at the 33 responses to Parent View and the 27 free-text responses from parents. The inspection team also considered the school's own surveys and records of parents' views.
- Pupils did not complete an online survey. However, the inspection team listened to the views of pupils in key stage 3, key stage 4 and the sixth form during meetings in classrooms and around the school. The inspection team also considered pupils' views expressed in the school's own surveys.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 41 members of staff who completed Ofsted questionnaires.

Inspection team

Ellenor Beighton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Thornalley	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Bernadette Green	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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