

# Queen's Park High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111397
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	356904
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	830
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jenny Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Casey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Queen's Park Chester Cheshire CH4 7AE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 30 lessons, taught by 28 teachers. Meetings were held with students, staff, members of the governing body and the artist in residence. They observed the school's work and looked at school improvement planning, student progress monitoring files, specialist status documentation, reports written on behalf of the local authority and students' work. Inspectors also analysed 130 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 67 completed by staff and 95 returned by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of the school's strategies to accelerate the learning, progress and achievement of all groups of students, particularly of boys and of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether questioning and challenging in teaching are good enough to enable all groups of students to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- How rigorously the school monitors and evaluates its performance.
- Whether the school's view that students' personal outcomes are good overall is justified.
- The extent and quality of feedback students receive on their work.

## Information about the school

This smaller-than-average-sized secondary school has held specialist status in the visual arts since 2002. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most students are of White British heritage and there are few at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with that usually seen. Queen's Park High School is an Investor in People, a Young Enterprise Centre of Excellence and holds the Inclusion Quality Mark. It is also an accredited International School and has the Arts Mark (Gold) award. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good and improving school with a good sixth form. The school's specialist status in the visual arts has an impressive impact on all aspects of its life. Moreover, through their work as school councillors and junior sports leaders, students make an outstanding contribution to the school and to the wider community. Students are grateful for the good care, guidance and support they receive from the adults who work with them and comment, 'Every morning, we get a positive vibe and staff make us all feel welcome.' The majority of parents and carers are of the same opinion and add, 'The school supports all children and we are very impressed with the counselling available.'

Students' attainment on entry to Key Stage 3 varies from year to year but is generally below average. With the exception of a dip in 2010, over a four-year period all groups of students have made good progress and achieved well to reach broadly average but improving standards by the end of Year 11. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. There are, however, inconsistencies in challenge and the quality of questioning across the school. The school recognises, also, that the developing role of faculty team leaders and the coaching initiative are of the essence if this improvement is to be maintained.

Students' personal outcomes have improved markedly over the past three years and are now good overall. Students behave well, are aware of what makes a balanced diet and take part in a range of games and sports to keep themselves fit. Attendance is average but the use and analysis of data to improve it further, including the analysis of data relating to different groups of students, need further improvement. The curriculum overall meets the needs, interests and aspirations of students and visual arts loom large in the colourful displays in classrooms and on the corridors. As students say, 'Our school is quite like an art gallery and we are very proud of the sculptures in the outside areas.' Drama and music are also important elements of school life and the school has a deserved reputation for the high quality of its productions.

Detailed faculty reviews and the reports of year learning managers are just two examples of the regular school self-evaluation, in which staff of all levels of experience and responsibility take part. Indeed, the school knows itself well and has a keen awareness of what is needed for further development. Marked improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in teaching, students' academic progress and their personal outcomes, allied to determined leadership from the headteacher, senior staff and the governing body, demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to sustain its improvement and that it provides good value for money.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by:
  - extending the role of faculty team leaders in leading the development of teaching in their areas and embedding the coaching initiative across the school
  - sharing good and exemplary practice in questioning and challenge across all subjects of the curriculum
  - ensuring that lesson planning facilitates activities and approaches which meet the learning needs of all groups even more closely
  - ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves and thus take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Further improve the rate of attendance by:
  - providing relevant staff with data which shows how students' attendance is improving, or otherwise, in the short and medium term
  - analysing school attendance data for different groups of students in order to be able to recognise trends
  - extending the analysis of data on punctuality.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students are generally keen to learn and in most lessons they apply themselves diligently, are engaged in, and enjoy, the activities on offer. When given the opportunity, they work well in pairs and benefit from the extra challenge their peers apply. All groups of students achieve well across the school and the rates of progress they make have accelerated since the previous inspection. As a result of the establishment of effective strategies to accelerate their progress, boys now achieve as well as girls. Similarly, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as a consequence of the close monitoring of their progress and the sensitive support they receive from both teachers and teaching assistants. Students' attainment is broadly average but improving: inspection evidence demonstrates that students in the current Year 11 are on course to reach, and in some cases exceed, their challenging targets. In some subjects, art and photography for example, GCSE results are consistently well above the national average with significant numbers of students reaching the highest grades of A\* and A.

Students behave well in lessons and around school, showing respect and courtesy to their peers, their teachers and teaching assistants and to visitors. They feel safe in school and also have a keen understanding of the dangers of inappropriate internet use. They willingly accept responsibility and make an outstanding contribution to both the life of the school and the local community. Members of the school council are proactive in their work for a range of charities and junior sports leaders make regular visits to primary schools to organise games and physical activities for their younger counterparts. Students have been actively involved in a project with a local youth club and also designed banners for the Minerva festival. Attendance is average but improving over time. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The visual arts specialism makes a positive contribution to students' enjoyment of and fascination with the world about them. Similarly, students display a good appreciation of cultures and religions which are different

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to their own, value the links they have with schools in the Gambia and in China, and the school is a racially harmonious community. Good personal outcomes, accelerating academic progress and rising attainment demonstrate that students are well prepared for life after formal education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Indeed, there are now examples of outstanding practice in both key stages. Teachers know their subjects well, manage students effectively and are generally able to engage their interest. In the best lessons, such as an excellent Year 10 English session seen during the inspection, methods and activities are planned to meet the learning needs of all students closely, challenge is relentless and questioning requires students to think deeply about the subject-matter. The school is now working hard, and with success, to share this exemplary practice across all subjects. Students enjoy finding things out for themselves and taking increased responsibility for their own learning and progress; however, these opportunities are not consistently available across all classes. Assessment is a developing strength. Students receive detailed oral and written feedback on their work and on how to improve it. In addition, they value the requirement in most lessons that they assess their own work and progress and also that of their peers: they enjoy using mark schemes to comment on the

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work of their classmates and to deepen their understanding of what is needed for the highest GCSE grades.

The curriculum is under continuous review because the school is always concerned to ensure that it meets the ever-changing needs and interests of all groups of students. The 'learning for life' programme has now been extended across Key Stage 3 and has a good impact on students' motivation and develops their learning skills well. There is an increasing vocational element within the curriculum and the personal, social and health education programme has a strong impact on students' emotional well-being and on their understanding of the feelings of others. There is a good variety of extra-curricular activities including sport, visits and visitors. Annual cross-curricular enrichment programmes, 'giant heads' and the 'rhino' project for example, are a strong feature and enable students to see the links between the different subjects they are studying. The school's specialism has a significant impact on the curriculum and on students' achievement, for example, the artist in residence works with all year groups and the outstanding displays, including painting, drawing, sculpture and model-making are a testament to students' extensive involvement in the visual arts.

Students are well cared for, guided and supported. Year learning managers, mentors and teaching assistants know their students well and see clearly the inextricable link between the development of students' self-esteem, confidence and emotional well-being and their academic progress. As a result, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others and are able to benefit from everything the school offers them. Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are identified rapidly and their needs are addressed effectively. Induction procedures are good and students are well prepared for entry into their new surroundings. Students make positive comments about the careers advice they receive and also about how they are prepared for entry into the sixth form.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The perceptive headteacher, supported well by a dynamic senior leadership group and talented teams of faculty leaders and year learning managers, ensures there is an accurate awareness of school performance and a clear direction for development. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are major strengths and, as a result, teaching has improved since the previous inspection. As staff say, 'Our school is improving with each day and we are listening to the views of our students ever more closely.' The governing body is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and

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both supports and challenges the leadership with rigour. In the words of governing body representatives, 'The faculty team reviews give us a good empirical base to gauge action planning, support individual subjects and hold leaders and managers fully to account.' Furthermore, leaders and managers of the school's specialism ensure that the visual arts have an impressive impact on the school community and beyond. Leaders and managers at all levels recognise that better use of data in relation to punctuality is important if attendance is to improve further. They are also aware that the coaching initiative and the role of faculty team leaders need to be further developed if teaching is to continue to improve.

The school engages well with parents and carers and has established a wide range of partnership with outside agencies for the benefit of students, in both their personal and academic development. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and students and staff tackle discrimination whenever and wherever it occurs. Safeguarding and child-protection policy and practice are good and recognised as such by students who feel safe in school because, in their words, 'The adults are approachable if we need them and there is very little bullying here.'

The school promotes community cohesion well. Racial harmony within school is the order of the day and students enjoy their engagement with schools in the United Kingdom and much further afield in the Gambia and China.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Sixth form**

This continues to be a good sixth form, from which almost all students enter university, further education, employment or apprenticeship. Students enjoy their time in the sixth form and believe they are listened to, supported and taught well. They feel safe and rates of attendance are increasing apace. Students learn and achieve well and there are no

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noticeable differences in the progress made by different groups of students. They reach above-average standards in the majority of their subjects and this is reflected in the 82% of students entering university in 2010, two of whom were awarded places at Oxford or Cambridge. Students make a significant contribution to the life of the school, through membership of the sixth-form council, the sports council and the Developing the Individual programme. International students, from the Czech Republic and Germany, for example, are well integrated into all sixth-form activities.

Teaching is good and teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of their subjects. Effective progress-monitoring systems enable clear and challenging targets to be set for students, who take increasing ownership of their own learning and progress. There is a broad range of courses on offer and there are well-established links with other local schools and colleges to complement curriculum delivery. The good range of enrichment activities contributes effectively to the development of students' well-being and to their academic learning. Students are correct in their view that they are inducted well into sixth-form life, are supported closely to reach their targets and that they are given good advice on the opportunities open to them at the end of Year 13.

Leadership and management are good and there is a strong focus on improving students' personal and academic outcomes. Leaders take account of students' views and respond appropriately to meet their needs. Sixth-form self-evaluation is accurate and informs curriculum planning and lesson preparation well.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

**Views of parents and carers**

A very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are entirely satisfied with their children's experiences at Queen's Park High School. Most believe the school keeps their children safe, that it meets their particular needs and makes sure they are well prepared for the future. Similarly, they are of the view that their children are making enough progress in their studies. A small minority express the opinion that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors examined this concern and found no evidence to endorse the view. They judge both students' behaviour and teachers' management of it to be good. Around an eighth of parents and carers do not believe the school deals effectively with their suggestions and concerns. This was discussed with the school and inspectors found evidence to show that the school has good lines of communication with parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Queen's Park High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 830 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	28	84	65	8	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	35	75	58	5	4	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	35	69	53	12	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	37	72	55	7	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	31	74	57	9	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	25	73	56	21	16	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	18	83	64	16	12	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	36	70	54	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	29	78	60	10	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	25	69	53	15	12	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	17	80	62	15	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	30	80	62	6	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	44	66	51	4	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Queen's Park High School, Chester, CH4 7AE**

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school last week. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Thursday and Friday lunchtimes: you gave us some valuable information about what you think about your school. We would now like to share with you our views on your school.

Queen's Park High is an improving school which provides you with a good quality of education, in the sixth form too. You are well taught, have a curriculum which meets most of your needs and receive good care, guidance and support. As a result your progress has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The standards you reach are now higher and are broadly in line with most other schools. Your work in art and photography is excellent. You behave well and as school councillors and junior sports leaders make an excellent contribution to school life and to the life of the local community. You also raise a considerable amount of money for charity and we know you are looking forward to placing artefacts into the time capsule, to celebrate your school's one hundredth anniversary.

In order to help your school improve even further, I have asked the staff to keep on improving teaching by developing the role of faculty leaders, by embedding the coaching programme and by planning lessons which meet all your different learning needs. I have also asked them to give you more opportunities to research things for yourselves and make sure that the questions they ask you and the challenge you receive in lessons are equally good in all subjects. In addition, I think they can use data more effectively to improve attendance and punctuality.

Thanks again for your contribution to the inspection. We enjoyed your company very much. Please keep working hard and attending school as often as you can.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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