

# Queen's Park High School

Queen's Park Road, Handbridge, Chester, CH4 7AE

## Inspection dates

7–8 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not always make the progress expected of them given their starting points in English and mathematics.
- Many students supported by the pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs are not making the progress expected of them.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough to ensure all students make good progress. The work set is not pitched at the right level to ensure all students do well. Marking does not always give students enough guidance about how their work might be improved.
- Some students' attitudes to learning are not sufficiently well developed to take full advantage of the opportunities given to them in lessons.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Many students in the sixth form are not making good progress in a number of subjects.
- Leaders and managers have not developed targets for some students that are challenging and aspirational enough. The analysis and evaluation of information is not well developed and monitoring of the quality of teaching does not always focus on the impact on learning.
- Governors have not been effectively involved in self-evaluation and are too reliant on the school to evaluate achievement data. The challenge and aspiration for whole-school progress targets are not high enough to secure good and better achievement. The impact of planned spending for pupil premium students is not monitored robustly.

### The school has the following strengths

- The most able students are making progress and reaching standards that are close to and sometimes above the national average.
- There are examples of good and outstanding teaching within the school across a range of subjects.
- Students feel safe in school, dress smartly and are punctual to lessons. Attendance is improving.
- Governors have played their part in supporting performance management.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, two of which were jointly undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. Two assemblies were observed and two tutor groups were visited, one for part of the time. A walk around the school was jointly undertaken with a senior leader to consider the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Meetings were held with a group of five governors. They included the Chair and vice chair of the governing body and the chairs of three committees. A telephone conversation was undertaken with a member of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with various leaders within the school and groups of students formally and informally.
- The inspection team looked at a number of items including a range of documents constituting the school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, data on students' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the direct communication of four parents and the responses of 38 parents to the on line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector
Lyn Field	Additional Inspector
Patrick Earnshaw	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- There are fewer girls than boys in the school.
- The proportion of students known to be supported through the pupil premium is above average. (Pupil Premium funding is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority).
- The percentage of students who speak English as an additional language is close to half the national average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is close to the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- A small number of students attend alternative education provision at West Chester College and through the Prince's Trust XL run in conjunction with Cheshire Fire Service.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.

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

- Raise achievement, particularly for students supported by the pupil premium funding and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, through improving the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring all students have positive attitudes to learning by providing them with activities that always engage and enthuse them
  - making sure students are given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking so as to further their learning
  - making better use of questioning to extend students' thinking and deepen their learning
  - raising expectations of what students can do.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
  - reviewing the way in which targets for students are set and making sure they are all challenging and appropriately aspirational
  - improving the analysis and evaluation of all the information that is gathered for all aspects of the school's work and acting on it
  - ensuring that monitoring of teaching consistently focuses on the learning taking place in the classroom.

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

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students do not always make the progress expected of them. This is more evident in mathematics and less so in English. Pupils supported by pupil premium funding and those supported on school action and school action plus made progress that was significantly less than their peers in the school and nationally.
- At the end of the 2013 academic year, students left the school having reached standards in English and mathematics that were close to national averages. The proportion of students securing five or more passes at GCSE A\*-C grades, including English and mathematics, was just short of the national average. This group of students joined the school in Year 7 with average standards in English and mathematics.
- In a wider range of subjects, the proportion of students securing A\*-C grades is often close to and sometimes higher than the national average. The proportion securing A\*-A grades is also close to the national average.
- Students supported through the pupil premium have made significantly less progress than their peers in English and mathematics over the last three years. The standards reached in English and mathematics by students entitled to free school meals have been close to two whole GCSE grades below their peers. This gap increased from 2011 to 2012 and then decreased from 2012 to 2013. From information provided by the school, students' work books and what was observed during the inspection, this gap is expected to reduce further this academic year but will still remain much larger than the gap nationally.
- The progress made by disabled students and those with special educational needs is also significantly less than their peers. A programme of improving teachers' skills in supporting these students shows that there is some positive impact on improving the progress of these students. Students are beginning to make more secure progress and the gap between them and their peers is reducing but remains larger than the gap nationally.
- Boys are doing better than girls and this is a reversal of the national trend. The gap between the performance of boys and girls in the school is smaller than the gap nationally.
- The most able students are often given the opportunity to do additional courses and for these they are entered early. The school operates a selective early entry policy and this ensures that students achieve as well as they might. The most able students are doing as well as their peers nationally.
- The small numbers of students who access alternative provision are well served by these arrangements as they all move onto opportunities to develop their skills through further training, education or employment at the end of their course.
- Students in Years 7 and 8 are involved in a reading programme which encourages them to read widely and often. This is being rolled out into higher years but as yet not all older students have developed their interest in reading. Additional funding provided to support those who arrive with poor literacy skills is well used and provides extra support for the individuals concerned, resulting in improved reading skills.
- The school has embarked on a number of initiatives to reduce the gap in achievement between different groups of students in the school. These are showing a positive impact and reflect the school's additional focus to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination.
- The school operates an inclusive sixth form resulting in a high proportion of Year 11 students staying on into Year 12. There is a wide range of level 3 academic courses. A smaller vocational range at level 2 and 3 is also on offer as are resit opportunities for English and mathematics. Students' achievement in arts subjects is good as it is in some of the vocational courses, though their achievement in a range of other courses requires improvement because they do not make as much progress as they should. Sixth form students feel valued and are given responsibilities to contribute to different aspects of the school. This, alongside awareness raising and experiences of a wide range of issues on curriculum enrichment days, makes a strong contribution to students' personal development. The proportion of students completing their

studies is high. Those wishing to go onto university are almost always successful and no one leaves the sixth form without a clear next step into education, training or employment.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough is securely good or better. Students are not always given the opportunity to develop a thirst for knowledge. Teachers' expectations of how much students can do for themselves are often too low.
- Positive relationships are effectively built upon and there are high expectations during activities where progress is good. On these occasions, habits of effective working are well established, with students engaging enthusiastically in activities organised for them. As a result, students ask questions and explore understanding, demonstrating a desire to learn. In turn, challenging questions are asked of students, learning is checked and misconceptions explored; this helps to secure better learning. This was seen during a Year10 art class, where timely interventions and clear questioning resulted in outstanding progress being made.
- In some lessons, some students leave the engagement to those who are asked questions. This leads to some students quietly accepting information without understanding it fully. On these occasions, progress slows for these students. A small number of students actively disrupt lessons and this interrupts the learning of others.
- Students' work is marked regularly but the consistency with which students are given an opportunity to respond to the comments is variable. In the best practice, marking clearly identifies strengths in the students' work and what is needed to improve it. In too many books, it is evident that students have not acted upon the teachers' comments and this has reduced the potential learning that may have resulted.
- Sixth form teaching appropriately involves students in developing their learning skills through exploration of topics. Some students, however, feel they would benefit from some additional guidance to help them be more selective of the research they undertake.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Behaviour requires improvement. Students' attitudes to learning are not always positive and as a result, they fail to make good progress. When not encouraged or directed, students sometimes fail to take responsibility for their learning. Occasionally, the desire to learn is clearly not evident, expressed through yawning, looking away from the teacher, doodling and concentrating on other things.
- Students' social skills are developed well. Students are courteous and polite to visitors. They engage positively and are honest with their responses. During break and lunch times, they are mostly orderly and gather in groups around the site. Some, however, are boisterous and are not always aware of how they invade the personal space of other students. Over the lunchtime, students were heard screaming at the top of their voices even when nothing untoward appeared to be happening. Students using the canteen do so in an orderly and calm way and movement between lessons is sensitively undertaken by the majority of students.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. All groups of students spoken to say they feel safe. They feel confident that if issues of bullying were to be raised with adults that they would be dealt with appropriately. Assemblies and curriculum enrichment days are used to make students aware of how to avoid risk, interact with strangers and deal with hazards in the real world and when using the internet.
- The small number of parents who responded to the on line questionnaire, Parent View, expressed their confidence that students feel safe in school. However, a significant proportion of these parents were less sure that students are well behaved or that bullying is dealt with effectively by the school. Students spoken to are more confident that the school deals with bullying well and whilst there is some disruption to lessons, it is due to a small number of students.

- Students dress smartly and come prepared for learning. Attendance and punctuality have improved since the last inspection when it was an area of concern. Attendance rates are now close to the national average but, whilst declining, the rates of persistent absences are still higher than that seen national. The school is working hard to improve attendance further. Incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are reducing compared to the same time last year.

## **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because the achievement targets set for some students are not sufficiently challenging or aspirational. This was evidenced in students' books and in conversations with students who thought some of their targets were not high enough. Some teachers, however, are challenging students to achieve higher than their declared school targets.
- The school's self-evaluation is rather generous as it appears to be based on the journey the school has made rather than the standards reached and outcomes it has achieved. The overall school targets for the coming years are still not challenging or ambitious enough to secure good and better progress rapidly. However, the school improvement plan has identified correctly many of the key areas that require focus.
- The leadership of teaching requires improvement as there is a measure of inconsistency and not enough focus on progress and learning. Scrutiny of school documentation shows that too little evaluation of learning is noted to effectively identify strengths and shortcomings in teaching. The match between the grades and areas for development is not always apparent and this appears to lead to some generous judgements. The leaders involved in jointly observing lessons with inspectors have a good understanding of what contributes to good progress in lessons.
- Performance management arrangements are well structured and clearly make the link between good and outstanding teaching, student outcomes and salary progression.
- Continuous professional development has been focused on promoting the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium funding. In 2013, the impact of this training began to close the gap in attainment between these students and others.
- Middle leaders' roles are developing well in the school and there are many who have a clear focus on addressing the key priorities of the school. Faculty review documents show that the focus on school priorities has developed more effectively through the year. Middle leaders are a strength of the school and are driving forward the focus on addressing underachievement of groups with some success.
- Communications with parents are undertaken through a number of different ways including parents' evenings when governors are available for consultation. A high proportion of the small number of parents who completed the on line parent questionnaire, raised concerns about communication issues with the school.
- The curriculum is well managed. It is adjusted appropriately each year to make sure that students' starting points and interests are taken into consideration. This is helping to address some poor literacy skills of students entering the school.
- A wide range of curriculum and extracurricular experiences promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The visual arts are particularly strong and the school environment is full of inspirational sayings that give students opportunities to stop and reflect.
- The school has limited dealings with the local authority. Where it has involved the local authority, it has found their input useful.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are well operated and meet all requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are dedicated and give of their time readily to support the work of the school. They are not afraid to support the performance management processes to improve the quality of teaching. They are strategic in their financial management and have taken difficult decision to balance budgets. On the achievement front, they have accepted targets from the school which are based according to a framework that is not sufficiently challenging or aspirational. While

allocating pupil premium funding, expectations of its impact have, in the past, not been sufficiently clear. In the current school plan, however, these have been made clear.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111397
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	444353

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

<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
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	730
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patrick Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Casey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 981500
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<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@qphs.cheshire.sch.uk

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