

The Queen Elizabeth Academy

Witherley Road, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 1LZ

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led and managed. Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the impact of school leaders and the principal.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have the capacity to continue improving opportunities for pupils.
- Teaching overall is good. The majority of teachers know their pupils very well and most plan and teach lessons which help pupils of all abilities to learn well. However, some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, nor do they always set work at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils achieved well overall in 2016. Pupils currently in the school continue to make good progress across the majority of subject areas, including English and mathematics.
- In 2016, progress made by Year 11 pupils in science was not as good, particularly their investigative skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and the great majority take pride in their work.
- Pupils are taught the skills needed to become thoughtful, self-confident citizens, able to express their views and opinions. This, together with a range of high-quality qualifications, means that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and pupils make good progress overall. The wide choice of clubs and activities, in which many pupils take part, helps provide many positive experiences of learning. However, some pupils are capable of being more independent in their work and using their own ideas and initiative.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good attendance, which is typically at least in line with the national average overall.
- Governors know the strengths of the school and where there are further improvements still to be made. They continue to develop their skills in holding leaders to account.
- School leaders ensure that arrangements to keep pupils safe are thorough and effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the attainment and progress of pupils across the school by:
 - ensuring work in lessons is always appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils of differing abilities, particularly the most able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out investigations in their science work
 - extending pupils' ability to use their own ideas and initiatives in order to become increasingly independent learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Pupils, parents and staff are positive about how the school is led and managed. They recognise and value the role that the principal plays in improving the school. Pupils, parents and staff understand and believe in his vision. They would recommend the school to others.
- School leaders, including governors and middle leaders, have an accurate, clear and consistent understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas it needs to prioritise for improvement.
- Performance management and pay progression are effectively led. They are clearly linked to targets set by leaders. Targets support the school's improvement plan and include developments in leadership, teaching and the progress of pupils. Consequently, performance management has been effective in improving teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Overall, outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 11 have been good in recent years. Information shared by school leaders and work seen in pupils' books demonstrate that results are on course to remain positive. However, leaders in science recognise that better outcomes will occur when pupils' scientific investigation skills have been developed further.
- Most pupils follow a curriculum which is appropriate for their needs and, as such, the curriculum is broad and balanced. The curriculum supports good outcomes for most pupils because it is well planned and taught. Pupils are well prepared to progress to appropriate next steps in their education, employment or training. All pupils follow a religious studies qualification at key stage 4, which supports the vision of school leaders to provide an ambitious and academic curriculum for all pupils.
- School leaders have rightly identified that more needs to be done to encourage pupils to be actively involved in their own learning, rather than relying on teachers to provide 'the answers' or information. This is a whole-school focus and aims to prepare pupils for more independent study when they go on to the next stage of their education or training at the end of Year 11.
- School leaders place great value on the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. Pupils also recognise this aspect of the curriculum as a strength of the school. Activities are many and varied. They include sporting, artistic, musical and academic clubs and activities. The annual school production is particularly popular with pupils.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, their progress is only slightly behind that of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. Similarly, additional funding to support the relatively small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities successfully removes barriers to their learning so that they make as much good progress as their classmates. Excellent support is provided for these pupils by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The Year 7 literacy catch-up funding is used effectively to identify weak readers when they start in school and to provide additional support which successfully helps them to

improve their reading and develop a love of books. Year 7 numeracy funding is also used well and there is a clear strategy in place to support these pupils' weaker numeracy skills when they start in the school. Most of these pupils go on to overcome these weaknesses and do well by the end of Year 11.

- There is very strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a good understanding of British values, including the importance of equal rights, democracy and the rule of law. They learn about different religions and cultures and about diversity in Britain. Their respect for peers and others with different sexualities is a strong feature.
- The Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and has worked well with senior leaders to improve the school since it joined their multi-academy trust.
- The large majority of parents say that they receive regular, useful information about the progress that their child is making and that their children achieve well. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the way the school is led and would recommend the school to others.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and experienced. They share school leaders' high aspirations for the school and are rightly proud of the successful learning environment in the new building they have helped to shape. They are clear about the school's strengths and the demonstrable impact of leaders' focus on improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their roles. They have taken positive steps to ensure that the governing body has expertise across the range of areas required.
- Governors take responsibility for their training and because of this they are well informed and up to date with key issues, for example performance management and pupil progress measures. This enables them to challenge and support the principal and other leaders effectively.
- Governors take their safeguarding role very seriously. They are well trained and regularly monitor that checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with statutory guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policies and practices are strong. Leaders actively promote a culture of vigilance where pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. The school site is very secure.
- The school has rigorous checking procedures in place for child protection. All staff have been trained in safeguarding and child protection and they know what to do if a child is at risk. Referrals to outside agencies meet requirements and concerns are followed up

meticulously by school staff. Staff and governors have had training on 'Prevent', the government's programme for preventing radicalisation and extremism.

- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example through e-safety initiatives. The school has filters in place to prevent inappropriate internet usage.
- Governors are suitably trained in safeguarding and in the safe recruitment of new staff. They carry out an annual audit of safeguarding practice across the school and ensure that all necessary measures are fully in place.
- The school works effectively with parents and external agencies to keep pupils secure and safe from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the appointment of the principal. Pupils told inspectors that the teaching they receive is good. Most teaching seen on this inspection was effective and work seen in pupils' books in a range of subjects across the curriculum also showed that teaching is typically good.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they are effective in checking the progress that their pupils make and accurately identify what pupils need to do next to improve. A focus on developing the consistent use of questioning to promote good learning and progress for pupils is helping them to understand more deeply the subject they are studying. For example, in a Year 11 physics revision lesson, pupils were asked probing questions to help them understand further how to gain higher levels in their GCSE. One pupil said to inspectors, 'Our teacher's questions are always good because they are getting the best out of us.'
- Teachers monitor pupils' achievement carefully using assessment information. They use this well to identify any gaps in learning and provide highly tailored support to help pupils who need to catch up and also to support their revision for tests and examinations. Pupils appreciate this help and say that teachers willingly give their time to help them to improve, including providing help with their classwork and homework at lunchtime and after school.
- Most teachers set work that helps pupils to make good progress. In some lessons, however, expectations are not demanding enough. Because of this, some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress that they should over time.
- Pupils are well motivated, keen to learn and interested in their studies. They enjoy practical activities and work well together when asked to participate in group tasks. Pupils quickly settle to tasks, are proud of their work and are genuinely interested in the subject matter.
- Leaders have cultivated a love of reading across the school. Pupils heard reading during the inspection did so confidently and clearly, and were enthusiastic about their chosen books. Staff give appropriate direction to pupils about suitable reading texts. The new school library is well used by pupils throughout the day.
- 'Maths mastery' is being incorporated into the mathematics curriculum. Teachers regularly set tasks that explore real-life concepts and pupils are becoming increasingly confident in attempting tasks that require reasoning and problem-solving.

- Lower-ability pupils and the relatively small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The progress is regularly monitored and further support for learning is put in place as required. Because of effective teaching these pupils make good progress.
- Teachers set regular and appropriate homework across a broad range of subjects and this contributes well to pupils' learning. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about the homework set.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils thrive in this small school where their teachers know them very well. They feel very well supported by their teachers. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire or via free text speak very highly of the personalised support and guidance their children receive.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they know how to stay safe, including staying safe online. They told inspectors that bullying is very rare and that staff deal with it effectively if it ever arises. Pupils said that there is no racism or homophobic bullying and school records confirm this. Relationships between pupils are excellent.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly and are courteous and respectful. They support one another empathetically, for example in the positive way the junior leadership team and school council always respond to any comments or concerns raised by pupils via the suggestion box initiative. Almost all pupils take pride in their work, and the great majority respond to teachers' feedback with great care and attention, which helps to move their learning on.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and they learn about the different cultures and religions in British society. Assemblies, religious studies lessons and tutor time cover a range of topics, such as human rights, freedom, conflict, emotional health and healthy lifestyles. Pupils who are appointed to the school council often proactively promote charity events.
- Pupils in older year groups are provided with objective advice, information and guidance regarding their future careers, which enables them to develop a good understanding of the broad range of careers open to them. Year 11 pupils have a bespoke careers profile which dedicated staff update frequently with the pupils themselves and their parents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- During the inspection, pupils moved around the school site responsibly and maturely, and they behaved extremely well at break and lunchtimes.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons was exemplary. No pupil disrupted any lesson the inspectors observed. All showed positive attitudes to learning, working assiduously in every subject. Pupils told the inspector that behaviour in lessons is almost always good and that they can get on with their work in lessons without disruption. Governors have also observed very good behaviour on their tours of the school.
- The school has recorded very few incidents involving poor behaviour this year. Leaders have successfully reduced the number of exclusions in recent years and now very rarely exclude any pupil.
- Attendance is close to national averages. Previously, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities had levels of persistent absence which were higher than those of their peers. However, leaders have successfully reduced the levels of persistent absence of all groups of pupils. As a result, there are now very few pupils who do not attend school regularly. Punctuality to school is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school has steadily improved its achievement over the last two years. In 2016, the Progress 8 score (the new government measure by which secondary school performance is assessed) was higher than the national average. Pupils made good progress overall from average starting points. However, the most able pupils did not make the same significant rate of progress as other pupils at the school. School leaders have prioritised the progress of this group and teachers have a range of strategies to support current most-able pupils.
- Slower progress seen historically in humanities has been tackled and, as a result of the success of these strategies, pupils currently in the school are now making stronger progress in these subjects, particularly at key stage 4.
- Outcomes of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, also continue to improve. This is because leaders use pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils' progress across all year groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well overall. Additional support enables these pupils to study a relevant broad and balanced range of subjects and make good progress. These pupils achieve good outcomes and move on to appropriate education, employment or training once they leave the school.
- Pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils make consistently good progress across all year groups and subjects. Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils make strong progress. They run a plethora of interventions and 'help' sessions, mainly, but not exclusively, for Years 10 and 11. These are regular, numerous and well attended. Pupils value the opportunity to receive extra help and support, particularly as they prepare for examinations.
- Pupils are assessed for their reading age when they start in the school and this information is used to plan targeted support for weak readers to help them to catch up. All pupils, including confident readers, are encouraged to have a reading book and many were seen by inspectors enjoying the opportunity to read during the school day.
- Pupils confidently express their views and opinions and take part in classroom discussion with maturity, listening well and reflecting thoughtfully on views that may be

different to their own. As a result, their communication skills are very well developed and supported.

School details

Unique reference number	139937
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10032566

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jackie Kay
Principal	Daniel Watts
Telephone number	01827 712477
Website	www.tqea.org.uk
Email address	info@tqea.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Queen Elizabeth Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2014. When its predecessor school, Queen Elizabeth School and Sports College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The Queen Elizabeth Academy is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin.

- An average proportion of pupils is eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school makes good use of alternative off-site provision for a very small number of pupils in Year 11 who attend North Warwickshire & Hinckley College.
- The school joined the Academy Transformation Trust in July 2016.
- The school moved into its new building in October 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils learning in 32 lessons or parts of lessons. The majority of lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the deputy principal, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, assistant principals and middle leaders. The lead inspector met governors including the chair of governors and vice-chair of the governing body and representatives of the Academy Transformation Trust.
- The inspectors took account of the 52 responses to Parent View, 19 parents who texted, two who wrote to inspectors and one parent who spoke on the phone. Inspectors also looked at the 44 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 52 pupil responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Sukhbir Farar	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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