

Queen Elizabeth's School

Western Road, Crediton, Devon EX17 3LU

Inspection dates

13–14 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Requires improvement
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision	Requires improvement
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The overall effectiveness of the school and the boarding provision has declined since the previous inspection. Until recently, senior leaders have been too slow to react to the underperformance of key groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders' oversight of procedures to keep pupils safe is not as rigorous in the boarding provision as it is in the main school.
- Although disadvantaged pupils' progress in English and mathematics is in line with that of other pupils nationally, these pupils do not make sufficient progress in other subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress from their starting points.
- Teaching does not help the least able pupils to develop their literacy skills and so these pupils make less progress than others across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because a minority of pupils do not concentrate well in lessons. Staff in the school and the boarding provision do not use the school's behaviour policy robustly.
- Pupils' rate of attendance is too low. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Some pupils do not take pride in their work. This results in poorly presented or incomplete written work, particularly for boys.
- Senior leaders do not evaluate the impact of the school's use of pupil premium funding in enough detail.
- Middle leaders have not secured consistently good teaching in their departments. Ineffective teaching has not been tackled quickly enough.
- In the past, governors have not challenged senior leaders effectively over the performance of the school.

- Many parents believe the school does not communicate effectively with them and does not take sufficient note of their views.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of teaching has become more effective in the past year. Teachers are being given a clear vision for the future.
- Students in the sixth form on academic programmes make strong progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum offers pupils an appropriate range of academic and vocational options.
- The governing body has improved its ability to hold senior leaders to account.
- Boarders have positive experiences; they make new friends and many develop their language skills well.

Compliance with national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievements by:
 - ensuring that teachers use effective strategies to boost the progress of disadvantaged pupils across a wide range of subjects
 - providing training for teachers so they have a better understanding of how to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - planning learning activities that meet the needs of the least able pupils, particularly in developing their literacy skills
 - making sure that teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently for all pupils.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing disruption in lessons by ensuring that teaching engages and motivates pupils
 - urgently improving the rate of pupils' attendance and reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school
 - making sure that, through consistently high-quality teaching, pupils' attitudes to school improve.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the quality of communication between the school and parents
 - sharpening senior leaders' analysis of the impact of their use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils
 - improving middle leaders' monitoring, support and challenge of the staff in their departments
 - continuing with reforms to the governance structure to consolidate the improvements that have already been made.
- Improve the leadership and management of the boarding provision by:
 - ensuring that formal records are kept of supervision discussions with boarding staff
 - developing the use of risk assessments to improve their quality and effectiveness.

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools

- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 3.4)

- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility. (NMS 5.4)
- The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)
- In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'boarding time'. (NMS 7.2)
- The school ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 11.1).
- The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils. This policy includes:
 - measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour;
 - school rules;
 - disciplinary sanctions;
 - when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and
 - arrangements for searching pupils and their possessions. (NMS 12.1)
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.8)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (NMS 15.1)
- Staff know the whereabouts of boarders (or know how to find their whereabouts) in their charge at all times. (NMS 15.5)

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision

Requires improvement

How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision

Requires improvement

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have been slow to react to the decline in the performance of the school since the previous inspection. Until recently, their actions have not been effective in raising the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress, across the school.
- Leaders at all levels have not evaluated precisely their use of pupil premium funding or extra funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This has hindered their ability to improve these pupils' achievements.
- Senior leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' behaviour by introducing a new behaviour policy in September 2017. However, this policy has only achieved limited success because it is implemented inconsistently across the school.
- Leaders' and managers' monitoring of the boarding provision requires improvement. A number of the national minimum standards for boarding are not being met. One of these was also not met at the previous inspection of the boarding provision.
- Boarding staff are not receiving sufficient supervision and appraisal. While informal discussions take place regularly, records are not always kept of these discussions. Therefore, supervision is not being used to manage effectively staff performance and support them in their roles.
- Leaders' and managers' self-evaluation assessment of the boarding provision identifies accurately many of the weaknesses in practice. Senior leaders have plans in place to address the identified shortfalls, but these have not yet had sufficient impact on the experiences of boarders or the quality of care provided.
- Middle leaders have not secured consistently good teaching in their areas of responsibility and so pupils' progress varies between subjects and between different groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders have introduced better processes for using assessment information. These are now allowing them to correctly evaluate the progress of groups of pupils and so set realistic priorities for improvement.
- The leadership of teaching has become more effective over the past year under the direction of the deputy headteacher. Staff are beginning to have more confidence because the senior leader with this responsibility is providing a clear vision for the future.
- Teachers' professional development needs are linked to the school's improvement priorities through a new, robust performance management process. As a result, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve. Newly qualified teachers are supported well, and so develop their skills quickly.

- The curriculum is suitably broad. It includes an appropriate balance of subjects in key stage 3 and a wide choice of academic GCSEs and vocational options for pupils in key stage 4. Senior leaders keep the curriculum under review and adjust it to suit pupils' needs. For example, the GCSE science options were changed recently to provide pupils with a more appropriate choice.
- The school's personal development programme provides a range of opportunities for pupils to think carefully about life in modern Britain. The belief and values course in key stage 4 gives pupils further chances to consider different cultures and religions. Pupils understand democratic processes and respect the rule of law.
- Pupils enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, particularly in the performing arts, for example, through the jazz band and theatre productions such as 'Titanic'. Outdoor education is well developed. Many pupils engage in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by a programme of assemblies and tutorials. In one tutor period, for example, pupils discussed the World Cup from the perspective of gender and sport.
- The school's support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving following a recent external review and subsequent leadership restructuring. External support is being used to develop the school's effectiveness in helping these pupils.
- Funding provided to support Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in literacy and numeracy is used well. The school provides short coaching programmes for these pupils that boost their skills.
- Although the majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe the school is well led and managed, a significant proportion do not. These parents feel that senior leaders' communication is weak, and that the school is not responsive enough when they raise concerns.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not monitored standards closely enough or challenged senior leaders rigorously. Governors have not had sufficient information to oversee the school's use of pupil premium funding effectively. This is because senior leaders' analysis of interventions has not been precise enough.
- In the past year, the new chair of the governing body has used, astutely, reviews of several aspects of the school's work, including governance and the use of pupil premium funding. The current governing body has established a clear understanding of the work needed to improve the school. Even so, further training is needed to enable it to compare accurately the school's performance with that of other schools nationally.
- Governors are knowledgeable and skilled. Many of them have particular expertise in education. All of them are passionate about the school and determined to improve it. They ensure that the school meets the requirements for safeguarding pupils. Governors now oversee closely the use of additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are in line with statutory requirements. Leaders keep detailed records of any concerns raised about pupils' safety and the subsequent actions they take. The school communicates well with other agencies when they are needed to support pupils at times of crisis.
- Pupils know whom to go to if they are worried about any aspect of their well-being. The large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey said that their child enjoys school, is kept safe and is well looked after.
- All staff know their roles in keeping pupils safe and know what actions to take if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Staff have regular training in safeguarding and they are kept informed about safeguarding issues. Consequently, they remain vigilant and alert.
- When senior safeguarding officers are made aware of child protection concerns, they deal with them effectively. However, some incidents that have occurred in the boarding provision have not been afforded the same rigour. The weaker approach to managing these specific incidents has hindered senior leaders' ability to ensure that the child protection and staff performance policies are consistently implemented.
- Aspects of health and safety in the boarding provision require improvement. Fire drills do not take place regularly enough and medication is not always stored securely.
- Boarders' individual risk assessments require improvement. Not all risks are formally assessed. Some risk assessments do not have clear strategies to mitigate and manage the risk. Staff do not always take appropriate action to ensure that they know the whereabouts of boarders when they are away from the provision and when they have returned.
- Recruitment and vetting procedures for new staff are effective. This helps to prevent unsuitable individuals having access to work alongside children and young people.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across the school. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not high enough and so many pupils, especially boys, do not take enough pride in their work. As a result, pupils' progress is slow, particularly in science and languages.
- Staff do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils who are not ready to learn are sometimes not dealt with effectively. Other pupils find it frustrating when they see inconsistent application of the rules.
- Senior leaders have ensured that teachers are aware of those pupils who might need extra help. For example, teachers understand senior leaders' expectations of the strategies they should use to support disadvantaged pupils. However, these strategies have not yet made sufficient difference to the progress of this group of pupils.
- Teachers within the specialist provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are highly skilled. They have great expertise in supporting pupils who have dyslexia, for

example. However, mainstream teachers' skills are not sufficiently developed. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities often do not receive effective extra help.

- The large majority of teachers are very experienced and have good subject knowledge. In vocational subjects, such as engineering, pupils benefit from the insights teachers bring from their industrial experience.
- Some teaching provides pupils with activities that are well planned, interesting and motivating. Pupils engage well with these activities and their behaviour is good.
- Pupils' creativity is harnessed well in art, music, dance and drama. Effective teaching encourages many pupils to join clubs and after-school activities in these subject areas.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers provide clear explanations of ideas. Teachers assess pupils' responses carefully and so they deal quickly with any misconceptions pupils begin to develop. This helps pupils make rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- While most pupils have a generally positive attitude to learning, some do not take enough pride in their work. These pupils, often boys, produce work of a lower standard than they are capable of.
- Pupils are self-confident and generally self-assured. They speak out readily on issues they care about and make valid contributions to discussions in lessons. Pupils willingly offered inspectors their opinions about the school.
- Pupils feel safe at school and in the boarding provision. They are confident that there is always a member of staff they can go to if they are concerned about their welfare. Pupils know how to reduce the risks they face. For example, they understand the dangers of entering personal information on websites when using the internet.
- The majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey believe that incidents of bullying are dealt with well by the school. Pupils believe incidents of bullying are not common, but when they do happen, they say that teachers take them seriously and act quickly to intervene.
- Pupils from the boarding houses feel well looked after in school. Many of these pupils come from other countries. They feel accepted and welcomed by pupils at the school and this contributes to their good progress.
- Senior leaders have introduced a new personal development programme into the curriculum. This programme provides effective guidance for pupils about their health and emotional needs.
- Pupils receive effective careers advice from Year 7 through a series of assemblies, tutorials and other experiences. As a result, they have a good understanding of the options open to them when they leave Year 11.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A minority of pupils do not concentrate well in lessons and this leads to interruptions that hinder pupils' progress. The new behaviour policy, introduced by senior leaders this year, has brought some improvement. However, the policy is only partially effective because some staff do not apply it consistently.
- The rate of pupils' attendance is below the national average. Senior leaders have reacted positively and put in place a number of strategies to try to improve it. The proportion of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who are persistently absent from school is too high. Senior leaders and governors recognise this as a key improvement priority for the school and for the boarding provision.
- The conduct of pupils at the two school sites is variable. Pupils' behaviour around the Barnfield site at breaktime and lunchtime is respectful and calm. The Western Road site generally has an orderly, positive atmosphere. However, a small number of pupils on this site lack self-discipline, and this sometimes leads to poor behaviour at lunchtime.
- Most pupils are polite and well mannered. Inspectors saw many examples of courtesy between pupils around both sites during the inspection. Pupils value the help of their teachers.
- The number of pupils excluded from school was well above average last year but has fallen this year and is now below the national average.
- The majority of staff who responded to the online Ofsted survey believe that pupils' behaviour is at least good. Even so, a significant minority feel that behaviour is not managed consistently.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress measured across eight GCSE subjects was below average in 2017. Most pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, but they are not as successful in a wide range of other subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils match the progress of other pupils nationally in English and mathematics, but they are not supported sufficiently across the curriculum and so fall behind in other subject areas.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make the progress they could be expected to in mainstream lessons because the support they receive has not been effective enough.
- Those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, who are taught by the specialist teachers the school provides as a resource for the local area, make strong progress. They are helped to overcome their specific difficulties well and this enables them to learn effectively.
- In key stage 4, the least able pupils' literacy skills are not developed quickly enough. Although the majority of pupils make good progress in English, the least able do not.

Fewer of these pupils than could reasonably be expected to attain a grade 5 or better in GCSE English.

- In lessons other than English, pupils' reading and writing skills are not promoted consistently and so they do not develop their skills rapidly.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics as a result of effective teaching. The proportion of pupils attaining a grade 5 or better in GCSE mathematics is above the national average.
- The most able pupils make good progress. They respond well to challenge in lessons and, where this is provided, they deepen their understanding of the work quickly.
- Pupils who are boarders at the school are integrated into the life of the school well. As a result, they develop secure knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. Senior leaders are ambitious for students to achieve their learning aims. They set aspirational targets for students within individualised study programmes, and most rise to the challenge successfully. Many procedures and systems in the sixth form are different to those in the main school.
- Students make strong progress on academic programmes. In 2017, students' progress in A-level subjects was well above the national average, particularly in geography, law and drama. Students' progress on applied general programmes was around the national average.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment on 16 to 19 study programmes is good. Students speak highly of their teachers and feel well supported. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and set suitably challenging work for them. Consequently, students extend their knowledge and understanding quickly.
- Sixth-form leaders have introduced an effective system for tracking students' academic progress. This has improved tutors' ability to identify quickly any students who are falling behind with their work. As a result, tutors and teachers are able to provide well-targeted help and mentoring.
- Students have access to a 'study plus' facility on the Western Road site that provides a good environment to study in and additional help for those students who need it. The majority of students use their independent study time well. Their attitudes to learning are largely positive. However, some students' rate of attendance is too low.
- Students' personal development, behaviour and welfare is good. As they progress through the sixth form, students complete a portfolio known as the 'QE Diploma Award'. This accredits aspects of their non-academic learning. For example, students are required to reflect on any volunteering activity or community work they complete.
- All students are expected to carry out a work-experience placement. Tutors prepare them for this and debrief them after it has been completed. A small minority of students are unsuccessful in setting up and carrying out a work placement. This limits the development of their work-related skills.

- Through a programme of events and outside speakers, students understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Students speak confidently about maintaining their own security when using the internet or social media.
- Students commented that they are given timely advice about the possibilities open to them when they leave. A large proportion of students secure places in higher education. These students receive good advice about choosing and applying for suitable courses. Some students believe that more advice should be provided about employment opportunities.
- The few students who start 16 to 19 study programmes without attaining a GCSE at grade 4 in English and/or mathematics make good progress, and most improve their grade when they re-take these qualifications.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision

Requires improvement

- The overall experience and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision require improvement to be good because of weaknesses identified in its leadership and management and the help and protection offered to boarders.
- Leaders' and managers' oversight and monitoring of the boarding provision are weak. Inconsistencies in responding to concerns about staff's practice, boarders being assessed to administer their own medication and fire-safety measures have the potential to have a negative impact on boarders' welfare.
- The boarding accommodation is not good quality throughout and does not provide boarders with a welcoming and relaxing home to live in. Aspects of the provision are not well maintained and are poorly ventilated. Leaders and managers recognise this and have plans to decorate and restructure the accommodation.
- Leaders and managers recognise that some staff are not attentive enough to the boarders. For example, some staff do not prioritise spending time with boarders when they return from school. As a result, some staff do not understand boarders' needs clearly enough.
- Boarders make progress in their social well-being, and in a number of ways, boarding has a positive impact on their life. Those who have been here for many years make good progress in their education. For others, boarding supports the development of English as an additional language. Staff can show some of the boarders' progress, but further work is needed to demonstrate this fully.
- Boarders speak positively about their experiences. They feel safe and make good friendships. Boarders spoken with during the inspection do not any have any concerns about bullying and report that there is respect for other cultures.
- Boarders identify that they have very good relationships with some of the staff. They report that some staff are kind and caring. Boarders can talk to staff whenever they wish and also during planned one-to-one support work.
- Boarders can take part in a good variety of recreational activities after school that include going into the local community. Many use the academy's sports facilities and some are part of youth groups in the local town. Boarders also enjoy the range of

organised trips at weekends. However, during the evenings, there is inconsistency in staff members' ability to motivate some boarders to join in the planned activities.

- All parents who contributed to the inspection responded that the boarding experience helps their child's progress and development. One parent recently wrote to the head of boarding to thank the staff for all the 'support, care and kindness' they had shown. Another wrote on the inspection survey that, 'Boarding has been transformative, my son has had fantastic support throughout the years he has been in boarding.'

School details

Unique reference number	136646
Social care unique reference number	SC022233
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10054024

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,358
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	193
Number of boarders on roll	48
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Keith Baker
Principal	Rupert Poole
Telephone number	01363 773401
Website	www.qe.devon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@qe.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 January 2014

Information about this school

- The chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2017. The governing body has been restructured, and several new governors have joined this year.

- The principal was appointed in 2014. Several new senior leaders have been appointed in recent years.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school operates on two sites that are one mile apart. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are taught at the Barnfield site. Pupils in Years 9 to 13 are taught at the Western Road site.
- The school provides boarding facilities for 48 pupils in three boarding houses on the Western Road site.
- The previous inspection of the boarding provision took place in November 2015, when the provision was judged to be good.
- The overall proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion of pupils supported with an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school provides a specialist resource for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. Currently, there are six pupils using this resource.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is below average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Running Deer School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection. The boarding provision was inspected at the same time as the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, the chair of the governing body and four other governors.
- Inspectors visited both boarding houses, spoke with children, and held meetings with leaders responsible for welfare and boarding, and boarding staff.
- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of subjects and age groups. Many of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' written work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour logs, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 and students on 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Inspectors took account of 156 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 286 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 93 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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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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