

Inspection of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford – A Selective Academy

Station Road, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 9HY

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils speak enthusiastically about their school. It is friendly and welcoming. Relationships are positive between pupils and with staff. Pupils and staff described the school as a happy and harmonious place to learn. The school's values of achievement, integrity, respect and self-discipline are modelled by pupils and staff alike. The environment is calm and orderly, including when pupils move between the various buildings that make up the school site. Pupils behave well. They are confident that when bullying occurs, staff will deal with it effectively.

Pupils and sixth-form students achieve well at this school. They respond well to the staff's high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school's curriculum is ambitious. Pupils learn a wide range of subjects across all key stages. The number of qualifications pupils study at key stage 4 is demanding.

Pupils have many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities. They are enthusiastic about the wide range available. These include sports, school productions, such as 'Chicago', and public speaking. Sixth-form students value the leadership programme, including projects such as the 'World Challenge'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors have established a positive school culture. They have an ambitious vision, underpinned by the school's values. Staff are determined to help pupils achieve as well as they can. Leaders are currently reviewing the school's curriculum. Students now typically study three A-level courses rather than four. Leaders and governors recognise that pupils in key stage 4 study more qualifications than they need. They have started a review of the school's curriculum for these year groups to ensure that it best serves all pupils.

Subject leaders have ensured that their plans for what pupils will learn, and when, are ambitious. In almost all subjects, these plans help to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding build over time. This is particularly the case in subjects like English, history and business studies.

Appropriate changes are made to support pupils with SEND so that they can access the full curriculum. Leaders and teachers know these pupils well.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. In most subjects, they use this knowledge to explain new concepts and ideas clearly. Their precise and tailored questioning ensures that pupils engage well with their learning. Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and skills. Pupils are motivated and have positive attitudes towards their studies. On occasions, and more so in Years 8 and 9, pupils leave work incomplete. Sometimes they do not apply themselves to extended

written tasks which need a higher level of thinking. When teachers check pupils' work, not all ensure that pupils improve their work following the advice they receive.

Leaders have developed a programme to promote reading across the school. This is at a more advanced stage in some subjects than others. Pupils who need some extra help to enhance their reading skills receive the support they need.

Leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum for personal, social and health education. These plans include relationships, sex and health education. Pupils understand the importance of diversity and equality. Most pupils respect what makes people different. Pupils commit to the school's charity work. For example, they have started a campaign to support those who suffer from alopecia. Pupils and staff enthused about opportunities linked to the International Schools Award.

Similarly, leaders are revitalising the school's provision for careers education. However, the school does not yet meet the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils in all year groups, including the sixth form, said that they would like more guidance on the options available to them when they reach the ages of 16 and 18. A significant number would like more information on apprenticeships, for example.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers and staff are supportive of the school. Staff morale is positive. Staff said that they value the opportunities for professional development, particularly in developing the curriculum, for example. Leaders cared for pupils and staff well during the national restrictions due to COVID-19. Many parents praised the school for the care leaders have shown.

Governors are committed to the school and its future success. They understand the strengths of the school well, as well as the areas for further development. However, leaders and governors do not have sharp enough oversight of the effectiveness of some school policies. Occasionally, the staff's actions are at a more advanced stage than the policies leaders have written.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Parents agreed. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. All staff have completed an online training package. They understand their responsibilities to safeguard all pupils. Staff understand the school's systems for reporting concerns. Leaders work in a timely way to support pupils who are at risk of harm. They work well with external agencies when required. Leaders have good oversight of children who are in the care of the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not always ensure that pupils are applying the knowledge they have acquired when completing extended written tasks or assessments. Sometimes pupils opt out of completing these tasks or do not finish them. Leaders should ensure that teachers know to check that all pupils complete the tasks set, so that pupils can remember what they have learned and apply this to their future learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that the requirements of the Baker Clause are fully met across all year groups. Pupils do not receive sufficient information about all the options available to them when they are considering their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders must ensure that the careers advice and guidance that pupils receive inform them of the full range of next steps available to them and enable them to feel confident about their future aspirations and career choices.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not ensured that all school policies are fit for purpose. This means that sometimes the policies are not precisely informing the leaders' plans and actions. Leaders must ensure that all school policies use up-to-date guidance. They should also ensure that these policies are consistently evaluated to assess their effectiveness.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136315
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10199383
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	544
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Justin Gatenby
Headteacher	Glen Thompson
Website	http://www.qegs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2007

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the school was not using any alternative education providers.
- The school does not fully meet the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. They also held meetings with the senior designated leaders for

safeguarding, the sixth-form leader and the school's coordinator for the provision of pupils with SEND.

- Inspectors met with three representatives from the school's governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for safeguarding; behaviour management; careers education, advice and guidance; and relationships, sex and health education.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, business studies, history and science. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils in all key stages. Inspectors also visited several tutor-time sessions and two assemblies.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils, formally and informally, around the school site and across all key stages.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector
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