

Inspection of Queen Katharine Academy

Mountsteven Avenue, Walton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE4 6HX

Inspection dates: 5–6 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Despite its large and imposing appearance, Queen Katharine Academy (QKA) is a calm, friendly and welcoming school. Above all, it is an inclusive community, where mutual respect and tolerance are the norm.

Pupils say that the school, including the sixth form, has been transformed since it became QKA. Pupils are expected to attend well, turn up on time and do their best. School rules, such as the no phone policy, are suitably strict. When it is time to work, pupils settle quickly and follow instructions. Lessons are consequently orderly and purposeful. Although off-task behaviour is sometimes disruptive, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and conduct themselves well.

Pupils are accepting of others and see difference as positive because pupils come from diverse backgrounds and many have faced the challenge of settling into an unfamiliar school. At break and lunchtimes, pupils are orderly and sociable. They are considerate towards one another because others have been kind to them. Nonetheless, instances of bullying and name-calling still occur. When this happens, pupils feel confident that there is always a trusted adult they can turn to for advice or support. They say they feel safe at school because they know that issues get sorted out.

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

Queen Katharine is more than just a new name for its predecessor school. Leaders, trustees and governors (the academy committee) have transformed the school since it opened three years ago. From a low base, results have improved impressively year on year. From their starting points, most pupils make good progress. The school is gaining a well-deserved reputation locally, particularly in its large and expanding sixth form.

School improvement has been rooted in fundamental changes in the curriculum, and the consistent application of high expectations of pupil conduct. Subject underperformance has been tackled by developing a more coherent key stage 3 curriculum and better teaching, ensuring that all pupils have the basics to do well in key stage 4. However, in some subjects the revisions are relatively new, and gaps in pupils' knowledge do not surface until it becomes obvious that they do not understand key concepts.

Teaching is lively and engaging, and teachers are encouraging and supportive. Staff instil a can-do approach in pupils, raising their aspirations and giving them every opportunity to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Giving pupils self-confidence has strengthened their attitudes, behaviour and attendance.

Although many pupils arrive after Year 7, often during the school year, and frequently having had a disrupted or different educational experience, leaders are committed to ensuring that all can access a wide curriculum. New pupils, often speaking little or no English or with specific barriers to learning, follow an accelerated curriculum where they are rapidly equipped to fluently speak, read and write. The increasing proportion of pupils entering a full range of English Baccalaureate subjects at GCSE and the rapidly improving examination results are evidence of the success of this approach. Although the accelerated curriculum is effective, the coverage of subjects such as history and geography is too superficial, and does not help pupils to pick these options up later on.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is a notable strength. The school makes every effort to widen pupils' horizons with a good range of after-school clubs, trips and activities. Pupils excel in national language competitions and are encouraged to sit examinations in their heritage languages. They readily volunteer to plan and teach language sessions in local primary schools.

Leaders work hard to communicate with parents and gain the trust and support of hard-to-reach families. The school sees diversity as a strength. It appoints governors from different communities and celebrates the richness of language and culture, with events such as International Roma Day. Leaders have developed links with schools across Peterborough, the UK and Europe, making the school a hub of language teaching and learning.

The school has quickly established a large and successful sixth form. Careers advice and guidance are particularly effective in raising aspirations and steering students' decisions. In offering a remarkably wide range of courses at different levels of accreditation, students can take level 2 courses and re-sit their GCSE mathematics and English if needed, before progressing onto higher level academic or vocational options. Sixth-form students are expected to show high levels of commitment. This, combined with strong specialist teaching, ensures that students make at least good progress and often achieve exceptionally well. They develop as confident young adults who are positive role models for younger pupils. Many voluntarily support younger pupils in their lessons.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that the school follows statutory guidance in regard to safeguarding pupils, including undertaking all required pre-employment checks on adults. The trust ensures that there is robust oversight and scrutiny of all safeguarding records, including staff training, to ensure that leaders and staff fulfil their duties effectively.

Adults know the pupils well and act quickly when concerns arise. Leaders are acutely aware of contextual dangers, such as knife crime and county lines drug dealing and are proactive in protecting pupils from potential harm. The school works closely with

local agencies, including their safer schools officer, to raise awareness of risks in their community and improve pupils' safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many pupils have gaps in their prior learning, either because of disrupted education or some weak teaching in the past.
- Senior leaders need to make sure that the mainstream curriculum in every subject is planned coherently, lesson by lesson, so that pupils build their learning systematically. Teaching should match the strong practice found in subjects such as languages, where teachers ensure that pupils accurately recall their long-term and recent learning and can then consolidate and apply what they have learned.
- Senior leaders need to make sure that the accelerated curriculum has a sharper focus on specific aspects of pupils' wider learning. Although the accelerated curriculum enables pupils to catch up quickly, particularly in speaking English, and in reading and writing, the generic coverage of the wider curriculum does not give pupils a good enough foundation in other subjects. Teaching of national curriculum subjects should be more sharply focused on the acquisition of essential subject knowledge that will enable subsequent learning.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	145051
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10110195
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
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	1,149
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	311
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Barnes
Principal	Lynn Mayes
Website	www.qka.education
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as Queen Katharine Academy in January 2017 when the predecessor school, Voyager Academy, was transferred into the Thomas Deacon Education Trust.
- Since opening, the school has seen a significant increase in the number of pupils on roll. A large proportion of pupils arrive or leave school at times other than the start of Year 7; typically, a quarter of pupils are enrolled during the course of each academic year and a quarter of pupils leave. Last year the number of new pupils exceeded the number of pupils leaving; this trend has continued since September.
- Post-16 collaboration arrangements are in place with Ken Stimpson Community School to enable sixth-form students from each school to pick up additional subjects not offered by their own sixth form.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the principal, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and groups of teachers. We spoke with pupils across all year groups, both in formal meetings and informally around the school, and met with a representative from the local authority, representatives of the academy committee and members of the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer.
- We analysed 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including a small number of free-text responses from parents. In addition, we scrutinised 89 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 171 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- We took account of a wide range of information, including the school's website, results of national examinations and leaders' own evaluations of the school. We reviewed a wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding.
- We visited lessons across the school and scrutinised pupils' books, alongside subject leaders and members of the senior leadership team. We started the inspection by focusing on English, modern foreign languages, science and history across all year groups, including the sixth form. To follow up questions raised on the first day of the inspection, we visited lessons in a wide range of other subjects on day two.

Inspection team

Paul Brooker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Batty	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Fearn	Ofsted Inspector

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