

# Queenswood School

Callow Hills Farm, Hereford Road, Ledbury, HR8 2PZ

**Inspection dates** 30 June–2 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school

- Students are admitted to this good and improving school with extremely challenging behaviour. Outstanding support helps them re-engage with learning and transform their outlook.
- Staff are extremely positive role models in an atmosphere where students feel safe.
- Teaching is good and students achieve well, gaining positive outcomes and accreditation.
- Sixth-form (Post-16) provision is effective, preparing students for their next steps.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is effective. Students gain self-confidence, sharing, collaborating and acting as team members.
- Students' appreciation that others have different views and beliefs that are equally valid helps prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Leadership is successfully focused on raising standards and positive outcomes. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively.
- Leaders ensure compliance with all the independent school regulations.
- Those responsible for governance hold school leaders to account effectively, and have high expectations, while supporting staff training.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Student progress information is not always used to the full to ensure best progress.
- Teachers lack opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools to compare students' work.
- The process for working out students' learning and emotional levels when they join the school is not fully effective.
- Students' success in the adventure programme is not always clearly rewarded.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule for The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice. The inspector observed four lessons, one of them undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the company's executive headteacher, the headteacher and deputy headteacher of Queenswood School, their safeguarding officer, and members of the school's therapy team.
- A telephone conversation was held with representatives of local authorities who place students at the school. This included gathering their views on the provision made for students who they look after and for whom they are the legal carer.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted on-line Parent View survey, so the views of three representative parents were gathered from telephone calls and taken into full account.
- The inspector spoke with students throughout the inspection to gather their views. Their work was observed in lessons and samples of their written work was scrutinised to look at evidence of progress over time. Detailed case studies enabled the inspector to gain a picture of wider support and provision for students.
- The views of staff were gathered from discussions and from their responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector checked compliance with the independent school regulations. He looked at a range of policies and documentation, including data on student progress, planning and assessment, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Queenswood School is part of Priory Education Services, within the wider Priory Group. It provides education for up to 35 boys and girls between the ages of 11-19 years of age. About half live in residences owned by the company in the locality, which were not part of this inspection. The rest are day students placed at the school by local authorities.
- There are currently 27 students on roll, of whom 23 are boys. Fifteen are children looked after by their local authority. All have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. These specify behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, often with associated complex learning difficulties.
- The school was first registered in 2000. Its last full inspection was in February 2012 and there was an emergency inspection in September 2014.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and receive the pupil premium is much higher than that usually found. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by their local authority.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision and does not enter students early for external examinations. Work undertaken off-site remains the responsibility of the school and its teachers.
- Since the last full inspection, the headteacher at that time has been promoted to an executive role within Priory Education Services, and a new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed to Queenswood in September 2014. Around half the staff have joined the school since the last full inspection, in part as a response to an increase of around a third in student numbers.

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

- Continue to improve the progress and achievement of students by:
  - strengthening the arrangements for working out the levels at which students are working, and the extent of their emotional development, when they first join the school
  - developing more opportunities for teachers to share the work of their students with teachers in other Priory schools and in local mainstream schools, so they gain more confidence in their assessment of the levels at which students are working, particularly the most able
  - seeking to ensure that all staff are equally confident in making the most use of the enhanced data now available to show student progress and so ensure that all students are challenged fully.
- Develop opportunities to strengthen the accreditation of adventure activities to show the increasing levels of success being demonstrated by students in these activities.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Although the headteacher and her deputy have only been in post since September 2014 they have a clear vision and focus for sustaining a school that seeks constant improvement in successfully identifying and meeting the challenging needs of its students. They ensure the independent school regulations are met.
- There are effective links with the residences where students live, with parents and with local authorities who place students. This supports consistent practice and expectations which helps students to adopt much more positive views of learning and social attitudes. Links with parents and carers are strong. They appreciate the ease with which they can contact the school at any time and the positive nature of the response they receive.
- Leaders monitor classrooms, planning and assessment carefully. This supports a detailed and supportive appraisal process. Teaching is good and there is an effective link between performance and pay. Clear and measurable annual performance objectives are set for staff. These address the priorities identified through clear self-evaluation and support staff in developing personal areas of expertise. It creates an ethos of high expectations in which staff are effective in supporting students.
- Senior leaders are well supported by teachers who have additional responsibilities, such as those who plan and develop topic based work. They ensure, for example, that these cover appropriate areas of learning and provide opportunities for students to develop skills in English and mathematics. Opportunities also support students' understanding of different communities, faiths and ethnicities, helping prepare them for life in modern, democratic Britain. They learn the importance in our culture of democracy, individual liberty, respect and tolerance of other faiths and beliefs.
- Strong links exist with a range of external agencies, including social care and health, which promote the wider well-being of students. The school is an active participant in a range of forums. There are strong links with West Mercia police, who support the school well. This is effective, for example, in helping students develop an understanding of the importance of the rule of law.
- The curriculum is tailored individually and successfully meets the needs of all students so that the school provides equal opportunities to learn. It re-engages students in learning and through fostering their interests it leads to enjoyment in coming to school, sometimes for the first time. There is a strong focus on improving the core skills of reading, writing, communications and mathematics.
- There is no discrimination. Good relations are fostered. Every student can participate in an adventure programme of challenging outdoor education, promoting self-confidence and self-esteem. It is a key element in the successful promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It supports team work, collaboration and reduces self-centred attitudes. Students gain a range of accreditation in sports such as climbing and kayaking. However, these do not fold into wider opportunities to reflect their growing achievements that might be gained from accreditation.
- There is a strong element of vocational education with excellent workshop facilities, for car mechanics for example. Students' wider interests are also supported by a range of off-site opportunities that range from working at a farm to developing catering skills at a cookery school. These promote successful learning and help students to transform their previously very negative behaviours.
- Individualised learning supports the strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination. It enables disadvantaged students to make good progress. Effective careers education helps students to think carefully about their next steps and they are given effective support to make the transition.
- Care is taken to ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet legal requirements. They are implemented rigorously to seek to ensure the safety of very vulnerable young people. This also extends to careful risk assessments of venues and of students when visits are planned. Aspects of learning where there is an

element of risk, such as workshops and outdoor education, are covered. Where teaching is not led by school staff, they still accompany students to ensure attendance, engagement and learning.

- The premises support effective education and a good range of resources, including computers and practical resources, reinforce active learning. All the required information is available for parents and local authorities. Much is online, including safeguarding arrangements and the complaints policy.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Priory Education Services effectively govern the school. The company has a range of systems for ensuring that school leaders are held to account. Many of its leaders have had careers in education, giving them professional understanding. They visit the school and see for themselves that the good range of learning opportunities and effective teaching supports students' re-engagement in learning. They analyse the data on students' progress and are aware of the performance of staff through observation, as well as through monitoring performance management arrangements. Financial planning is monitored so the use of resources and its impact, including the targeting of pupil premium funding, is focused on supporting positive outcomes for students. The appraisal system is monitored with care and challenging annual objectives are set for the headteacher. The company ensures that good practice is rewarded, while there are clearly established ways for dealing with underperformance.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Many had considerable periods out of education prior to joining the school and all display extremely challenging behaviour when they first join. Detailed and consistently applied individual behaviour plans, monitored and reviewed regularly with advice and support from the on-site therapy team, lead to dramatic improvements.
- Extremely careful and detailed monitoring of behaviour over time, using specialist software, produces a wide range of data that analyses incidents in a range of ways. This is used to identify specific individual needs that can be addressed in line with the school's view that all behaviours are a form of communication. The school rightly prides itself on the extent to which it listens to the student voice.
- Staff are extremely effective role models and help students to develop resilience, an awareness of their own actions and an ability to do the right thing. Graphs produced for every student show negative incidents in which they are involved have declined dramatically.
- Students were keen to tell the inspector of ways in which the school has helped them to become much more positive. Their transformation over time is well documented in detailed case studies of individuals.
- This improvement is reflected in the attitudes and behaviour demonstrated throughout the day and around the school. Mealtimes, for example, provide pleasurable opportunities for staff and students to relax and eat together. There are genuinely warm relationships and mutual respect that would not have been possible when students are first admitted. Students become able to see why rules and positive attitudes towards each other are important, and so social attitudes are transformed.
- Much learning is undertaken away from the school site as part of the adventure programme. It is a reflection of the progress that students make that there are rarely incidents and that students demonstrate tremendous success in the learning opportunities that this creates.

### Safety

- The school works to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. A range of clear and consistently applied policies, which have the approval of the students, help to ensure that this remains the case. Any incidents are logged and analysed carefully to seek to ensure that they would not be repeated.
- Safeguarding arrangements seek to ensure the safety of students at all times. There are positive links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the school's safeguarding policy complies fully with its requirements, as well as those of the Priory Group. All staff receive annual training in child protection, the

safe use of restraint and first aid.

- Risk assessments are detailed for any activities, internal or outside. Great care is taken in organising activities which themselves contain an element of risk, such as climbing, and students themselves adopt a very sensible approach towards their own safety.
- The school works hard to ensure there is no discriminatory or derogatory language, including comments that are racist or based on people's disabilities. It is a positive community, reflected in the fact that there has been no use of student exclusion. Commitment to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the positive relationships that are seen throughout the school. As students start to enjoy their education their attendance improves dramatically.
- Parents, placing local authorities and students themselves agree that this is a safe place. This is reinforced by the careful supervision of all visitors to the site. Very effective staff supervision means that bullying is not an issue, although it is a topic covered in lessons. Students aware of the different types of bullying and, in computing, there are termly lessons on the dangers of cyber bullying and the misuse of the internet and social networking sites.
- All of the independent school regulations around welfare, health and safety are met. These include fire safety, first aid and arrangements for sick students.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- All of the regulations around teaching are met and teaching throughout the school is good, with some outstanding. This supports students and underpins their rapid progress as they go through school. Students value their staff and respond positively to them, which also helps them to learn more effectively.
- Teachers address the needs of the most able, meet the additional challenges facing disadvantaged students and appreciate the impact of the special educational needs faced by them all. They work in effective teams with pastoral staff to ensure that every individual is given good quality help and encouragement. This supports good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and in wider learning. There is very effective teaching in practical and vocational areas.
- Teachers plan carefully, individualising work so that it challenges, but also supports, and does not deter anybody by being too difficult. High expectations mean work is not too easy and opportunities are sought to bring areas of student interest into teaching to support engagement and involvement.
- Teachers use questioning effectively, not only checking that students are understanding work but also encouraging them to think about and discuss the topics being covered. At the same time there is a good focus on, and effective teaching in, reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Students are helped to fill the gaps in the knowledge and understanding that come about by having missed so much schooling in the past.
- Work is marked regularly and effectively. There are expectations that comments will support 'next steps' and show students how to improve their work. The best marking encourages students to assess their own work and to engage in a dialogue with the teacher over work completed or what is to come next.
- Strong links between staff and parents or the residences support consistency of expectation. A newly developed home-school book helps students to support their young people with school work, which helps students and also gives parents more confidence in their support.
- One issue for teachers in very small schools such as this is not seeing many examples of students work across the whole ability range. Teachers do not yet have many opportunities to meet with colleagues in other Priory Group schools or local mainstream schools. They lack chances to compare the work of their students with that of others and so gain confidence in their ability to assess the quality of work correctly.

**The achievement of pupils****is good**

- Following extremely fragmented education, attainment on entry is low. As they re-engage, students show rapidly increasing progress and achievement. All students are supported in gaining accreditation in both academic and vocationally based qualifications by the time they leave.
- The school makes an initial measurement of ability in English and mathematics when students first enter and from this they track progress over time. From the start of this school year information on individual progress is collected half-termly. This supports clear analysis of progress. Students not making expected progress are given additional support to help the catch up, while those showing greater progress are given more challenging learning targets. Because this system of monitoring is new, not all staff are yet equally confident in making the most of the data.
- Almost all students start to make expected progress in English and mathematics from their low starting points. A high proportion make better than that expected progress. The strong support they receive from staff and the therapy team helps students transform their attitudes to learning, and achievement is good.
- The school checks thoroughly to see if there are differences in the achievement of identified groups. The highly individualised teaching means that every student is supported well, so such differences do not occur.
- When progress is compared with students nationally the Queenswood students, all of whom have special educational needs, with many also disadvantaged, make more rapid progress than that generally found in English and mathematics. This is a reflection of the way specific needs are met, additional resources are targeted carefully, and the school's success in engaging students in learning. This includes gaining skills for the world of work through vocational learning.
- The most able students are identified and are given greater challenge in their work. This is reflected in rising attainment and their enhanced accreditation.

**The sixth form provision****is good**

- The sixth form provision is managed effectively. Teaching supports students in making continuing good progress that supports them in gaining further accreditation, working alongside students in Year 11. There is also an increased focus on developing worthwhile life skills in preparation for moving to adulthood. Care is taken to work closely with placing authorities and with parents and carers to ensure that transition is a positive experience.
- Teachers have a good understanding of students' needs, which are met well. There is no break between Key Stage 4 and sixth form provision. Teaching and learning remain individualised to meet specific needs. Opportunities to gain accreditation are in line with each student's needs and abilities, with a focus on vocational provision. Students remain fully committed to learning, behave exceptionally well and continue to be safe, with care taken to ensure this in workshop and other areas of risk.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the GOV.UK website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131353
<b>Inspection number</b>	462920
<b>DfE registration number</b>	884/6011

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special school – behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<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>	27
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	2
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Priory Education Services
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Underwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Reid
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2012
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£42,000-£56,000
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£106,000-£230,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01531 670632
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