

Queenswood School

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

Inspection dates

12–14 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- The quality of leadership is good. The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and the governance group, has established a clear vision, shared by all staff. As a result, the school provides a good standard of education.
- An individualised curriculum enables pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils access learning that is relevant to their needs and teachers provide effective support.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to experience learning in a range of contexts, including outdoors and off-site. This ensures that pupils are motivated to engage with their learning. Pupils take a range of qualifications appropriate to their abilities and aspirations. Outcomes are good.
- Pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 receive effective, individual careers guidance. However, planning for careers education, advice and guidance is not comprehensive. It is also not fully embedded across other year groups in the school.
- The quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, is good. Strong subject knowledge, planning and positive relationships make a big difference to how well pupils engage in lessons.
- All staff have detailed knowledge of individual pupils' learning and progress. Teaching is usually personalised but sometimes there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils.
- Staff actively promote the school's values. All staff expect pupils to be friendly and courteous. High standards of behaviour are reflected in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Behaviour is good overall because all members of staff are well trained and know their pupils well. Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively, in line with the school policy.
- Effective therapeutic input helps pupils to become more emotionally resilient, improving their behaviour and helping their readiness for learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The positive school culture promotes equality for all very effectively.
- The school has a detailed strategic plan for further improvement. However, the plan does not have a precise enough focus on the most important priorities for the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Systems are robust and there is a strong safeguarding culture.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers challenge pupils, including the most able, in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - further improving the delivery of the overall plan for careers education, advice and guidance, including for pupils in year groups across the school
 - ensuring that the school's improvement plan is fully informed by leaders' self-evaluation and has a precise focus on the most important priorities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders know the school and the pupils well. They have the support of an enthusiastic and dedicated team of staff who are ambitious for pupils.
- Leaders engage and motivate members of staff through positive support and effective professional development. Teachers value the support they receive from the leadership team, which has led to improvements in teaching and learning.
- Monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment is comprehensive and accurate. It is helpful and constructive. Teachers participate in peer observations and are encouraged to visit other schools to share effective practice. Leaders are forward-thinking and reflective. For example, plans are in place to further develop monitoring so that leaders incorporate teachers' feedback from monitoring into the performance management process.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have restructured the curriculum this year to make sure that pupils have further opportunities to achieve qualifications which will take them forward into employment or further education.
- The personal, social, health and economic curriculum includes a wide range of topics to help pupils gain knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain. In addition, the wider curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and become more independent. For example, the pupils shop for food that they help cook for lunch and they attend alternative provision for artistic, sport and creative experiences.
- Pupils readily exhibit tolerance and respect for people of different backgrounds and lifestyles. Leaders and staff are vigilant to ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity and that no one is subject to any form of discrimination.
- Initial assessment of pupils' starting points provides teachers with information which supports their lesson planning successfully. A thorough induction to the school helps pupils to settle down well. There are effective systems to track individual pupils' progress. Staff use these to spot where pupils are not making good progress and to intervene appropriately.
- The school has strong links with parents, carers and outside agencies. These help to ensure that staff meet pupils' needs and potential problems affecting pupils outside the school are minimised.
- The evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, while being comprehensive, does not provide a sharp enough analysis to identify the main areas for development.

Governance

- Members of the governance group challenge leaders to develop and sustain an ambitious culture in the school. This is having a positive effect on the aspirations of staff and pupils.
- The chair is highly involved with the work of the school and meets the headteacher regularly to discuss the school's work. Governance benefits from strong and effective

leadership, which provides a good balance of challenge and support and is highly committed to ongoing improvement.

- Members have a range of skills which are helpful to the school. They have access to employees of the parent company when they require further expertise for meeting individual pupils' needs, for example dyslexia assessment and support.
- Together with school leaders, members have ensured that independent school standards are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established clear procedures to safeguard members of the school community. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and documentation is detailed and of a good quality. Staff are mindful of pupils' welfare and safety at all times.
- The safeguarding policy reflects the latest guidance and is published on the school website. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are fully up to date with the most recent government guidance. They meet regularly to review pupils' well-being and discuss the therapeutic approaches that can support pupils.
- Leaders carefully monitor incidents so that they can identify patterns of behaviour, which may result in adjustment to provision if appropriate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is effective. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and detailed planning, including information from baseline testing, supports pupils in their learning so that they make good progress.
- Most teaching is on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. This enables adults to take a flexible approach that is typically responsive to pupils' needs at the time. When appropriate, staff support pupils on their return to mainstream education.
- Teachers and learning mentors develop good relationships with pupils and know them well. The informal, relaxed atmosphere that teachers and learning mentors establish helps to put pupils at their ease so that they become more receptive to learning.
- Staff adopt learning approaches in English, mathematics, science and technology which suit the pupils' needs. For example, while participating in a soldering exercise in design and technology, pupils were actively engaged in the process and understood the purpose of the tools and how to use them. Pupils become increasingly involved in learning because the teachers make every effort to ensure that activities are interesting and relevant. Most pupils are confident and have positive attitudes to learning.
- At the end of every term, the school provides detailed information about pupils' progress to parents. This includes information about attendance, behaviour and extra-curricular activities. Staff at the school work closely with individual parents, which sustains the good progress of pupils.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers

regularly check on the use of key words and encourage discussion through open questioning. Groups of pupils visit the local library to extend their enjoyment of reading. Pupils' numeracy skills are also well developed, for example through project work.

- Teachers plan for different levels of ability. However, occasionally, teachers do not extend pupils' learning enough. For example, teachers' questioning encourages active participation and positive attitudes but does not seek to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently. The work set for the most able pupils is not sufficiently challenging.
- Staff regularly review pupils' individual learning plans and discuss specific targets with pupils. Most pupils are committed to improving their work and achieving positive outcomes. They value their education and are keen to develop their skills and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and bullying is rare. Pupils say staff act quickly and effectively should incidents of bullying happen.
- Strong relationships and the calm environment in classes provide an environment where pupils' self-esteem and confidence develop well. Pupils are listened to and staff respond to their views with respect.
- Pupils value the provision which takes place in the afternoons. They can participate in several activities which include physical education, art, forest activities, electronics and practical literacy. These activities broaden their range of experiences.
- Therapeutic input depends on individual need and staff regularly review its impact. It is effective in providing pupils with the tools to become increasingly self-assured and responsive to learning.
- Staff support pupils' physical and emotional well-being and the school's open culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. The school works closely with outside agencies, including local authorities, families and carers, to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- Pupils develop positive peer relationships through participation in social and cultural events and less formal activities. The tutor period is an opportunity for pupils to have breakfast and talk within their groups, for example about issues in the news.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is rooted within the culture of the school. It is more formally addressed through the personal development programme but is also embedded within the wider curriculum.
- Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values through visits, events and class-based learning. Pupils recently visited a mosque and had an interesting tour of a now redundant prison.
- Pupils enjoy working towards rewards and staff celebrate pupils' achievements in twice termly newsletters to parents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils settle well into the school and get on well together. They are polite and courteous to visitors and express themselves well.
- Physical interventions are minimal and have reduced over time. Staff record in detail any incidents that do occur. They also log specific actions and follow-up.
- The school council meets regularly and makes suggestions for improvement. The pupils requested lessons in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, which now form part of the curriculum.
- Some pupils still find significant challenge in engaging in classroom-based learning. However, staff use individualised support plans effectively to maximise pupils' interest in learning over time.
- Most pupils value the work they do in alternative provision and commitment is high.
- The school employs effective strategies to improve attendance. Overall, attendance is below the national average but the attendance of several pupils has improved when compared to their attendance at their previous school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' skills in mathematics and English develop well in a range of subjects. Staff encourage pupils to read for pleasure and, for most pupils, this has enhanced their interest in English and improved their skills in reading and writing.
- Pupils take pride in their studies, presenting work in books and folders well.
- The school tracks progress effectively and provides pupils with aspirational targets. Many pupils have previously experienced a disrupted education. Their attainment is often below average when they join the school. Teachers use initial assessment and progress information to support lesson planning which corresponds to pupils' needs. Most pupils make good progress over time and, for others, their knowledge and understanding are improving quickly.
- A few pupils receive help to catch up with work they have missed, and other interventions are in place. For example, pupils may work one-to-one with learning mentors. Staff ensure that pupils do not fall behind their peers and that the majority achieve qualifications relevant to their ability and aptitudes.
- Pupils take qualifications to support them in their next steps to education or employment. The number of qualifications achieved has greatly increased this year and the curriculum provides sufficient breadth for pupils to take qualifications at the most appropriate level for them.
- Staff support pupils well to consider their futures through individual career guidance. Records show that all pupils have progressed to positive destinations in the last two years. However, comprehensive planning for careers education, advice and guidance is not consistent for all pupils across the school.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Leaders have high expectations and staff support students well. Students make good progress.
- The senior leadership team leads the sixth form. The same clear vision and strong values seen in the rest of the school reside in the sixth form. For example, leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the same way as other areas of the school. This has ensured that outcomes for students remain good.
- The sixth-form provision is clearly focused on promoting students' personal development and life skills, as well as ensuring that they leave with academic accreditation. Students in Years 12 and 13 share lessons with Year 11 pupils and undertake a core programme, which includes English, mathematics, science and personal development. Personalised options are agreed depending on each student's individual career aims and may include work experience.
- Last year, students left school with a range of qualifications including entry level, levels 1 and 2 English and mathematics qualifications, as well as a range of vocational qualifications. This year, leaders have extended the number of qualifications so that individual needs are met more effectively. Students value the academic and vocational courses and say that the teaching is good. Inspectors agree.
- Students say that staff support them well to move forward into employment or further education. Placements organised by the school at the local college have had successful outcomes for students, including opportunities to study level 3 courses.
- Students say they feel safe. Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of school life.
- Sixth-form provision takes place at 'The Hub', a well-equipped centre about six miles from the main school.

School details

Unique reference number	131353
DfE registration number	884/6011
Inspection number	10047130

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.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	7
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Priory Education Children's Services Ltd
Chair	Claire Imber
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Annual fees (day pupils)	£42,000–£80,000
Telephone number	01531 670 632
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk/
Email address	queenswoodschool@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	30 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Pupils have often experienced disrupted education and may join the school at different points of the school year from mainstream or special school provision.

- Pupils come from different local authorities but most attend from Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.
- A high proportion of pupils are children looked after.
- Sixth-form and Year 11 provision takes place at 'The Hub' at Yark Hill, Herefordshire HR1 3SU, which is about six miles from the main school.
- Nova Training provides alternative provision for mechanics and Camp Hill Crest provides alternative provision for artistic and sporting experiences.

Information about this inspection

- The full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector jointly observed a wide range of teaching and learning with the deputy headteacher. She met with a group of pupils and spoke with staff and pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- The inspector jointly scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and their behaviour.
- The inspector had meetings with individual members of staff, including leaders, teachers and the lead therapist. She discussed teaching, learning and support informally with learning mentors. She considered 13 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector had telephone discussions with representatives of the two different alternative providers.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including school policies, behaviour logs, evidence of staff training and information relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The inspector took account of three comments on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspector toured the premises and considered the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Andrea Quigley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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