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Mrs Anne Martin
Executive headteacher
Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School
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Dear Mrs Martin

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

Following my visit to your school on 20 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills was concerned about behaviour at the school.

Evidence

The inspector considered evidence that included:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

Having evaluated the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is a larger-than-average secondary school, with 1,282 pupils on roll. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is very low, and almost none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by an education, health and care plan is slightly above average. The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes. The proportion of pupils who arrive at or leave the school during the academic year is below average. Ten new staff started at the school this academic year.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Senior leaders and governors regularly review pupils' behaviour and the systems that are in place to encourage positive behaviour. They undertake these reviews to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support to enable them to attend regularly, behave well and engage with their learning. Senior leaders have put pupils at the very heart of this process of review. They have worked with pupils to redesign the school's vision and to evaluate the Wellbeing curriculum that pupils study as part of the tutorial programme. They regularly undertake pupil surveys and have recently invited pupils to share their views with staff and governors. Consequently, senior leaders have a precise understanding of pupils' attitudes towards the school, their learning and their behaviour.

Senior leaders and staff promote positive behaviour through their actions, the behaviour policy and the curriculum.

The school's behaviour policy clearly states the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Displays in classrooms outline these expectations and the actions that teachers will take where behaviour does not meet these high standards. The vast majority of the pupils and staff the inspector met felt that staff implement the behaviour policy consistently and effectively. Senior leaders regularly check on the behaviour of pupils in lessons by undertaking unannounced visits to lessons. They ensure that, where appropriate, staff receive support in promoting pupils' positive behaviour. This includes staff who are new to teaching. These staff receive the support from a staff mentor.

The school's Wellbeing curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to consider how they should behave towards each other, within both the school and the wider community. Topics that pupils consider in these lessons include developing respect, connecting with emotions, working together and developing resilience. In a Year 9 Wellbeing lesson that the inspector observed, pupils considered the qualities that they look for in a friend. Pupils arrived at such qualities as 'trust', 'kindness', 'humour' and 'reliability'. Senior leaders regularly review the effectiveness of this

provision. In so doing, they ensure that pupils are able to consider any relevant issues that may have arisen in the school community, the wider community or the national press. Senior leaders have also reviewed how the different subjects within the school's curriculum feed into the Wellbeing curriculum and the school's vision of 'Question, Explore, Give, Succeed'. Consequently, pupils engage with a well-considered curriculum that encourages them to reflect on their behaviour and their attitudes to learning, and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Senior leaders work closely with pastoral leaders to analyse pupils' behaviour and attendance. Where pastoral leaders identify any emerging patterns of unacceptable behaviour or of absence, they are quick to put into place appropriate support. This can include ensuring that the pupil's curriculum is appropriate, offering work at an alternative placement, or providing support through mentoring or from the school's family support worker. Because of these actions, pupils' attendance remains high and above national levels. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils who receive more than one exclusion from school has reduced. It is now well below national levels.

Senior leaders are quick to take action where they identify any emerging trends of behaviour that do not meet their high standards. For example, they have identified a rise in the number of pupils who experience social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Consequently, senior leaders have recently employed a member of staff to provide support to pupils who experience such difficulties. Senior leaders have also engaged with an external group to run the 'Humanutopia' project with pupils. This project has enabled pupils to consider how they behave towards each other. Many of the pupils the inspector met who have been involved in this project spoke highly of the positive effect it has had both on their behaviour and on their relationships with other pupils.

All pupils the inspector met said that there were staff they could speak with if they had a problem or a concern. They all said that they were confident that staff would listen to, and support, them. Staff work closely with those pupils who experience difficulties that may prevent them from meeting the school's high standards of behaviour. The school works with external agencies where this is necessary. Senior leaders also ensure that, where appropriate, pupils receive mentoring, either from staff or from sixth form students. Those pupils whom the inspector met who have received such mentoring were greatly appreciative of it. They recognised how it had enabled them to talk through the problems they were experiencing and to manage their behaviour more effectively.

Pupils' conduct in lessons is of a very high standard. In those lessons the inspector visited, pupils engaged with their learning well. They listened attentively to their teachers and to each other. When provided with a task to complete, pupils were quick to start work. Those pupils the inspector met said that such behaviour was typical. They said that where a pupil misbehaved, staff were quick and effective in dealing with it. The school's records indicate that this is the case.

Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site. Movement between lessons is calm and orderly, with pupils moving swiftly from one lesson to the next. Pupils behave well during social times. This includes in the canteen, where the high number of pupils present does not adversely affect the level of noise or pupils' interactions with each other. The support staff that the inspector met with spoke highly of pupils' behaviour during social times. They said that most pupils were polite and conducted themselves well. The support staff said that, on those occasions where pupils did misbehave, staff were quick to challenge and deal with such behaviour.

Pupils that the inspector met agreed that behaviour at social times was good. A few said that there were occasions when pupils used inappropriate language, particularly when adults were not present. However, nearly all of these pupils said that, when they reported such behaviour to staff, staff took effective action to deal with it. Senior leaders rightly recognise that they must continue to take action to ensure that all pupils recognise the need to act and speak appropriately at all times.

Nearly all of the pupils the inspector met said that incidents of bullying are rare at the school. On the rare occasions when bullying did occur, pupils were confident that staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. The school's records of bullying confirm pupils' views. Furthermore, a very large majority of those who have responded to the school's own parental surveys agree that their child has not experienced any bullying at the school.

However, senior leaders have not been complacent in the fact that bullying is rare. They have undertaken a wide range of activities to ensure that pupils understand that all forms of bullying are unacceptable. These activities include: educating pupils as to what constitutes bullying; training a large group of pupils to act as anti-bullying representatives; conducting regular anti-bullying surveys with pupils; and running anti-bullying assemblies. Senior leaders have also worked to increase parents' and carers' understanding of how the school promotes an anti-bullying culture and deals with bullying on the rare occasions when it occurs. Senior leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that all parents are aware of this anti-bullying culture.

Senior leaders have taken effective action to reduce the repeat exclusions of disadvantaged pupils. In previous years, these have been above national levels. To resolve this, senior leaders have reviewed the provision these pupils receive, to ensure that they undertake activities that interest them and engage them in their learning. They have also used the school's family support worker effectively to engage with these pupils' parents where it is necessary. Consequently, the level of repeat exclusions of disadvantaged pupils has dramatically reduced in the past two academic years. For example, no disadvantaged pupil was excluded last academic year. Furthermore, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has increased. However, senior leaders recognise that further action is necessary to ensure that the levels of attendance of these pupils is at least in line with that of all pupils nationally.

Governors provide appropriate levels of support and challenge in overseeing senior leaders' work to maintain the school's high levels of behaviour and attendance. Governors receive relevant information related to pupils' behaviour and attendance. They are prepared to ask challenging questions about the effectiveness of the strategies that senior leaders adopt. They recognise the impact that senior leaders' work has had on maintaining high levels of behaviour and attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further embed strategies that senior leaders are undertaking, to:
 - increase the attendance of pupil premium pupils, to be at least in line with the attendance of all pupils nationally
 - ensure that all pupils understand the need to conduct themselves appropriately at all times, particularly when they are unsupervised
 - enable all parents and carers to have a clear understanding of the school's anti-bullying culture and of the actions the school takes on those rare occasions when bullying occurs.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hollingsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector