



# Queen Mary's High School

Address: Upper Forster Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS4 2AE

Unique reference number (URN): 136777

## Inspection report: 17 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

### **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

# Exceptional ●

## Achievement

Exceptional ●

Pupils' achievement is truly remarkable. Across all key stages, pupils flourish, make impressive progress and develop strong academic understanding over time. As they move through the school, they develop a deep understanding across the curriculum and can confidently articulate their learning, reflecting the depth and security of their knowledge. Pupils' work is of the highest quality, and they rise willingly to the ambitious expectations set by their teachers.

In GCSE examinations, pupils achieve significantly above national averages across a wide range of subjects. This includes disadvantaged pupils, whose attainment and progress far exceed that of other pupils nationally and closely match the exceptional outcomes of their peers in school. Students in the sixth form achieve equally well. Attainment across many A-level subjects is significantly higher than national averages, with a large proportion of students securing the highest grades.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school. Students benefit from bespoke, carefully tailored guidance that ensures that they are well equipped for their next steps. As a result, students progress successfully to universities and other equally ambitious destinations.

## Personal development and wellbeing

Exceptional ●

The school's personal development programme is extremely impressive. Pupils benefit from a rich and carefully considered range of experiences that raise aspirations and broaden their horizons. Leaders are unwavering in their commitment to ensuring equitable opportunity for all pupils and participation rates are high. Leaders remove barriers through, for example, subsidised trips, accessible lunchtime and after-school activities, and targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. Pupil leadership is a distinctive strength of the school. From Year 7 onwards, pupils take on meaningful roles, such as form captains, eco-representatives and wellbeing ambassadors. High proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities hold these positions, reflecting the school's deeply inclusive ethos.

Pupils develop a strong and secure understanding of fundamental British Values, which are woven seamlessly through school life. The school celebrates cultural and religious diversity, with pupils leading initiatives such as a Christian Union club. Leaders ensure that pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their talents and interests. All pupils in Year 7 learn a musical instrument, with many going on to perform confidently in assemblies and school events. A wide range of trips, both local and abroad, further enrich pupils' experiences and broaden their perspectives.

The personal, social, health, citizenship and economic curriculum is well sequenced, responsive to emerging needs and informed by safeguarding expertise. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when working online, and how to build and maintain healthy relationships. Careers education is another significant strength. The programme is carefully planned so that pupils develop their knowledge progressively as they move through the

school. Leaders have established excellent partnerships with employers, ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from meaningful work experience opportunities. This ensures that every pupil can access transformational experiences that prepare them exceptionally well for their future.

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## **Strong standard** ●

### **Attendance and behaviour**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders place a firm emphasis on attendance, and the overwhelming majority of pupils attend regularly. Pupils speak of a deep sense of belonging to the 'Queen Mary family', reflecting the inclusive culture that leaders have nurtured. Leaders respond swiftly and sensitively to pupils' changing circumstances, providing tailored pastoral support where needed. Attendance is promoted and celebrated so that pupils understand the value of being in school every day. As a result, overall attendance is significantly above national averages and levels of persistent absence are very low.

Pupils' behaviour is superb. On the rare occasions when unkindness occurs, leaders act decisively and appropriately. Pupils feel well cared for and rise to the high standards set by staff. Leaders have created a calm and purposeful environment in which pupils can flourish. In lessons, pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to learning. They contribute ideas confidently, take on leadership roles within lessons, and deliver assemblies with assurance. Pupils value the respectful relationships they share with their teachers. During social times, pupils are polite, courteous and they engage warmly with visitors, contributing to the school's welcoming atmosphere.

### **Curriculum and teaching**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders have established a highly ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. Pupils across all key stages study an extremely well-planned and sequenced curriculum that enables them to build on what they know and develop a depth of knowledge, skills and understanding. In modern foreign languages, for example, all pupils study a language at key stage 4, which includes subjects such as Mandarin.

Leaders continually look at ways to enhance the quality of teaching across the school through high-quality professional development. This ensures that teachers are highly skilled and use their expert subject knowledge to help pupils make rich and meaningful connections in their learning. Teachers effectively spot misconceptions and use this to help plan pupils' next steps in learning. Staff ensure that all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported extremely well. Staff put in place the right support where it is required.

Leaders have fostered a culture of reading. Their strategy helps pupils to develop an appreciation of different authors and genres. Pupils are encouraged to read a wide variety of sophisticated texts and can talk with confidence about the classical literature they have read during their time at the school.

## Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have established sophisticated ways to help identify and assess pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are known, or previously known, to children's social care are given a high priority. Leaders work diligently to ensure that any barriers to learning are swiftly removed. Leaders systematically check the progress of pupils with SEND and respond quickly to changing needs and potential barriers to academic success. In classrooms, teachers implement effective adaptations to learning to ensure that pupils benefit from the support they need. Leaders are committed to ensuring that this support is fully embedded across the school.

Leaders ensure that teachers are extremely well equipped to meet the needs of all pupils. Staff receive focused and contextually specific training to help them spot potential needs and the most effective ways to help all pupils thrive.

Leaders hold inclusion, social mobility and support for disadvantaged pupils at the heart of their work. A highly effective pupil premium strategy accurately identifies the barriers these pupils face and staff put in place precise and appropriate support where this is required. As a result, those pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding excel across all areas of school life.

## Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders demonstrate a deep and values-driven commitment to the school and its community. They have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and priorities, and their determination to remove barriers and transform pupils' lives sits firmly at the heart of the school's ethos. Leaders have established a culture that permeates every aspect of school life and enables pupils to achieve high levels of academic success.

Leaders work purposefully with staff and parents. Staff contribute positively to the school's development and speak highly of its professional culture. They speak overwhelmingly positively about the support they receive, particularly in relation to workload and wellbeing. Parents and carers are equally positive, recognising the significant difference the school makes to their children's lives and development.

Trustees and governors are passionate advocates for the school and the trust. They provide substantial support and rigorous challenge, ensuring that leadership continues to evolve and respond effectively to the changing educational landscape. Trust executive leaders add further strength through effective oversight and guidance, enabling school leaders to carry out their roles with confidence and clarity.

Professional development is a notable strength. Leaders have established a highly effective programme that enhances staff expertise in subject knowledge, pedagogy and career progression. In addition, a collaborative training programme is in place across the trust, allowing staff to benefit from shared expertise and tailored opportunities that align with their individual aspirations. This investment in staff development contributes significantly to the school's sustained success and the consistently high quality of education pupils receive.

The sixth form is an integral part of school life. Leaders have constructed an ambitious suite of A-Level subjects to help students strive towards academic excellence. Students benefit from a wide range of subjects on offer, including some that are offered jointly through other schools in the trust. The curriculum in each subject is carefully and judiciously planned so that students become increasingly sophisticated in what they know and understand.

Students in the sixth form achieve extremely well. A-Level attainment in a large number of subjects is high and significantly above national averages. In lessons, students show a keen desire to do well. They willingly rise to the high standards set by teachers, developing impressive independent skills.

Students benefit greatly from the wider opportunities in the sixth form. There is a highly effective enrichment programme in which pupils learn about healthy relationships, preparation for higher education and independent living. Students act as positive role models for other pupils and make a tangible contribution to school life through peer mentoring and leading clubs and societies. Students are extremely well prepared to progress on to their next stage in education with a significant number going on to well-established universities.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Pupils thrive at Queen Mary's High School. A culture of high ambition and expectation shapes every aspect of school life. The distinctive 'spirit of Queen Mary's' underpins everything from the house system to the meaningful contributions pupils make both within school and in the wider community. Pupils speak with pride about belonging to the school and describe their relationships with staff as feeling like 'part of a family'. Leaders have created an inclusive environment in which every pupil feels valued and part of something special.

Pupils feel safe and attend regularly. Their behaviour around school is exemplary. Pupils enjoy time outside of lessons together in clubs and activities, which strengthens the positive relationships that characterise the school community. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and mature learners who contribute thoughtfully and show a deep commitment to their studies.

Pupils enjoy their learning and benefit from a broad and highly ambitious curriculum. Achievement at both GCSE and A level is significantly above national averages, and pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. Many students progress to a wide range of top universities and are extremely well prepared to enter the wider world as young independent adults.

The school offers a well-considered, rich and diverse programme of wider opportunities. A vast number of extra-curricular clubs run at lunchtime and after school, with high levels of participation. Student leadership roles, including well-being and anti-bullying ambassadors, play an integral part in school life and contribute to the school's safe and inclusive culture. Pupils build their resilience, confidence and independence through projects such as the

Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which is popular among pupils. The school provides numerous curriculum visits to places of historical and cultural significance, such as Auschwitz and Bletchley Park, which enrich and deepen pupils' learning.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that in-year adjustments to the learning plans of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently shared and enacted across the school.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of The Mercian Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dan Parkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kevin Davis DL.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders and staff at the school.

Inspectors met with the trust, including the chief executive officer and executive director of education. They also met with trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair of the trust board and the chair of the local governing body. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. They also spoke with pupils at different times across the school day and observed behaviour in lessons and around the school site.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use alternative provision.

The headteacher was appointed in April 2023.

The school operates a co-educational sixth-form provision. Some sixth-form courses are delivered in partnership with other schools in The Mercian Trust.

Headteacher: Nicola Daniel

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**Lead inspector:**

Mark Howes, Ofsted Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Patrick Amieli, Ofsted Inspector

Ian Beardmore, Ofsted Inspector

Sultanat Yunus, Ofsted Inspector

Gareth Morgan, His Majesty's Inspector

**Facts and figures used on inspection**

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 17 March 2026

**School and pupil context****Total pupils**

**944**

Close to average

**What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

**School capacity**

**858**

Below average

**What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

## **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**27.55%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

## **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**0.32%**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

## **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**5.72%**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

## **Location deprivation**

**Well above average**

### **What does this mean?**

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

## **Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)**

# No resourced provision

## What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

# All pupils' performance

## English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	95.2%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	97.3%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	99.2%	45.3%	Above

## Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	73.5	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	72.1	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	74.2	46.3	Above

## Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.55	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.74	-0.03	Above

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

### Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	85.3%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	93.1%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	25.2%	Above

### Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	71.9	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	70.9	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	67.2	35.0	Above

### Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.73	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.21	-0.57	Above

## Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

## Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	85.3%	53.1%	32.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	93.1%	53.1%	40.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	100.0%	52.4%	47.6 pp

## Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	71.9	50.4	21.4
2023/24 (final)	70.9	50.0	20.9
2022/23 (final)	67.2	50.3	16.9

## Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.73	0.16	0.57
2022/23 (final)	0.21	0.17	0.05

## Destinations after 16

### Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	98%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	98%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	99%	94%	Above

## 16 to 18 performance

### A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	38.75	34.99	Above
2023/24 (final)	38.67	34.38	Above
2022/23 (final)	39.06	34.16	Above

## A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.1%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.9%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.4%	9.0%	Below

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	9.4%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	18.0%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	21.0%	26.5%	Below

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### **Strong standard** ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### **Expected standard** ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### **Needs attention** ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### **Urgent improvement** ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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