

Boston West Academy

Sussex Avenue, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 7QG

Inspection dates	14–15 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The inspirational headteacher has successfully shared his vision in which the pupils at Boston West Academy receive an outstanding education in the broadest sense. He has successfully shared this with all staff.
- The highly cohesive staff team work as one to bring to life the school's vision and values. They continually strive to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Teachers who are at the start of their careers are very well supported by more experienced colleagues and school leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is consistently high.
- A particular strength of teaching is the expert use that teachers and teaching assistants make of questions to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers take full advantage of the excellent facilities and resources that the school grounds have to offer. They frequently plan rich and varied opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is specifically designed to equip pupils not only with factual knowledge but with leadership and team-building skills, alongside the ability to problem-solve. As a result, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond primary school.
- Pupils make rapid progress from their different starting points so that by the time they leave Boston West, many are exceeding the level of achievement expected for their age.
- Leaders make very effective use of the funding they receive to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils' behaviour across the school is exemplary. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Pupils confidently say they feel safe in school.
- Children make an excellent start to their school life in the early years. The learning environment is bright, stimulating and rich in learning opportunities that capture young children's interests and imagination at every turn.
- Parents justifiably hold the school in very high regard. They all agree that their children are safe and happy. Every parent who expressed a view would recommend the school.
- Governors are highly aspirational for the school and the pupils. They have a strategic overview of the school's performance. They ask challenging questions of school leaders to hold them to account. There is scope for them to be more systematic in their approach to monitoring the school's work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the way in which governors hold leaders to account by ensuring they monitor the school more systematically.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The highly aspirational headteacher has created a culture where everyone is cared for and supported to achieve their best at Boston West Academy. Staff at all levels greatly enjoy working at the school because their contribution is valued and because they all have the opportunity to contribute to school developments.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is particularly strong. The leaders with the specific remit for improving the quality of teaching and learning work together as a team, making best use of each other's specialisms. They are highly effective in checking the quality of teaching and ensure that the very best practice in the school is shared so that it can be consistently implemented in all classes. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is high across the school.
- The visionary senior leaders have created a school garden and grounds that are highly impressive. Teachers make the best use of this fabulous resource so that pupils have exceptional learning opportunities. One member of staff summarised the exceptional experiences pupils have when they are learning by explaining, 'they create memories here that will be with them for a lifetime'.
- The curriculum, including the use of homework, is outstanding. At its core is the drive for high academic standards for all pupils. The development of knowledge and understanding goes hand in glove with the planned promotion of skills such as independence, teamwork and thinking skills. Teachers make very strong links between the subjects and skills the pupils are learning so that pupils build in a logical and systematic way upon what they know, can do and understand.
- Leaders in charge of individual subjects keep a very close check on the provision and standards in their subject. They review the progress that pupils are making on a termly basis and keep the provision and progress in their areas of responsibility constantly under review. As a result, pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders and governors manage teachers' performance very effectively and hold teachers to account for the work that they do. Leaders set teachers challenging targets that are closely linked with the school's improvement priorities and teachers' professional development. Senior leaders undertake checks throughout the year on each teacher's performance. Governors are not afraid to refuse a pay rise if it is not fully deserved.
- Leaders make highly effective use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This funding is specifically targeted to ensure pupils who are entitled to it make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sports premium carefully to improve teachers' skills in teaching PE. In addition, the range of sports that pupils have the opportunity to participate in has improved. Close monitoring of the spending shows that the number of different sporting clubs pupils can attend has doubled and the proportion of pupils participating in clubs has increased by two thirds over the past three years.
- The leader with specific responsibility for the most able pupils tracks their progress closely. She ensures that pupils can further enhance their skills and knowledge. Some, for example, attend science and mathematics mornings with pupils from neighbouring schools. Others are part of the 'wonderful writers' group and have additional teaching to take their writing skills to the highest level. Pupils who have a particular aptitude, for example in sport, dance or music, are given opportunities to develop their talents both during school time and outside school hours.
- Leaders have developed a highly effective and robust system to assess and track pupils' progress. They have worked in close partnership with other local schools in this venture to ensure that the assessment process is both accurate and rigorous. Leaders use the system to track the progress pupils are making very closely so that any additional teaching or further challenge is implemented without delay.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very strong. Pupils have a clear sense of personal responsibility. They demonstrate this as they reflect upon ways of improving their work. They understand about religions and cultures that are different from their own.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' understanding of British values is closely linked to the school's values. Staff are excellent role models so that pupils demonstrate the qualities of tolerance and respect on a daily basis. Pupils learn about democracy through the school council and their exemplary behaviour demonstrates their respect for rules.

- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They comment typically on their pride that their pupils attend Boston West, on the strong relationships between school and parents and on how well their children are doing. As one parent said, 'the ethos of the school is amazing... this is a lovely, family-orientated school.'
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a clear and accurate knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They are highly strategic in their approach and successfully delegate the operational leadership of the school to the headteacher.
 - Governors understand information relating to the progress pupils are making because they attend training alongside senior staff. This allows them to ask questions that deepen their understanding.
 - While there is evidence that governors ask challenging questions of the leadership team and make some visits to the school, there is scope for governors to make improvements in this aspect of their role. Governors' checks on the work of the school are not always planned systematically enough to ensure that governors are fully effective in holding school leaders to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate vetting checks are made when new staff are appointed. Staff and governors receive the training they need in order to keep pupils safe because the leaders have implemented a rolling programme to make sure no training is missed or becomes out of date. Leaders make sure staff receive training so that they all know how to raise a concern about pupils and so that the necessary support can be given in a timely manner. Records are kept meticulously. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they are taught how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is outstanding**

- Teachers are highly skilled at assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately. They plan next steps in learning that meet the different needs of pupils exactly. During lessons, teachers and teaching assistants notice quickly if pupils have grasped concepts or have misconceptions. This means they are able to step in quickly with additional support or challenge to ensure that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to teach new concepts to pupils very effectively. They are particularly accomplished at asking questions that will enable pupils to think deeply and understand concepts clearly. This was demonstrated during an English lesson as the teacher took every opportunity to encourage pupils to explain their thinking, supporting them in their explanations.
- Mathematics is taught very effectively. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that systematically build on pupils' previous skills and understanding. Teachers spot quickly when pupils have not fully understood a concept and they use their expert subject knowledge very effectively to support the pupils. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher explained clearly the relationship between multiplication and fractions in order to assist pupils in successfully solving a mathematical problem. The most able pupils benefit from well-designed tasks that develop their reasoning skills.
- There is a positive climate for learning across the school, which pupils respond to very well. On several occasions, inspectors witnessed pupils spontaneously discussing ways in which they could improve the quality of their work, without adult intervention or prompting.
- Teachers make highly effective use of homework to encourage pupils to continue their learning at home. Pupils of all ages can practise their English and mathematics skills. Younger pupils' homework books provide an effective method of communication between school and home. The oldest pupils enjoy the research projects they undertake. They understand that they benefit from this, in particular prior to studying a new topic at school.
- Teachers provide insightful feedback to pupils, applying the school's policy consistently. Pupils say that the feedback they receive helps them to make improvements to the quality of their work. Pupils are very clear about the targets their teacher has set for them to improve their work. They typically know them by heart and refer to them when they are working.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils in all lessons. Pupils work hard and concentrate for lengthy periods of time because they are interested in their lessons and want to achieve well. They understand how the lesson is helping them to improve their knowledge or skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 were choosing items from a selection of flowers, twigs, leaves and pebbles. They worked in small teams to create a visual representation of the life cycle of a frog. Pupils explained, 'this helps us to understand it and remember it much better than just writing in a book'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen, enthusiastic learners who value their education highly.
- Leaders enable pupils to develop leadership skills and an understanding of the importance of teamwork and negotiation through problem-solving activities in the school grounds. Pupils in Year 6 say that they feel well prepared for life at secondary school.
- Pupils delight in the responsibilities they are given which enable them to play an important part in the daily life of the school. Eco-warriors keep a check on the school's energy consumption. They report their findings to school leaders and lead assemblies relating to energy conservation. The school council assists leaders in risk-assessing the school grounds, gaining an understanding of safety.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when they are using the internet. They learn about cycling safely on the roads. Pupils can act as 'safety officers', leading assemblies to teach other pupils about safety.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They are rightly confident that if it did happen, an adult in school would help them. Pupils know they can speak to an adult about any worries or concerns they have. However, mindful that some pupils may prefer to write a note, the school council has introduced 'the bubble box' where pupils can leave a message for a member of staff. Pupils say that staff respond quickly to any messages that are left.
- Pupils care for each other. The oldest pupils support children in the Reception class to settle into school in the mornings, offering help with coats and bags to ensure the youngest children have a smooth start to the day. Reading buddies listen to younger pupils read, offering kind support, and are good role models for their younger peers.
- Teachers capitalise on every opportunity to promote the school's values. During a key stage 2 singing assembly, pupils sang with enthusiasm and gusto. Pupils reflected sensibly and respectfully as the teacher leading the assembly linked the words of the songs to the school's values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Throughout the school, both in lessons and at play, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They cooperate very well together, listening attentively and with great interest to the adults or each other.
- At breaktimes, pupils share the wealth of equipment amicably, organising games for themselves without the need for adult intervention. Pupils take turns fairly. At the end of playtime, pupils line up without fuss and return to their lessons in an orderly manner.
- Pupils spontaneously demonstrate their very good manners in their interactions with adults and their peers alike.
- All parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as those who spoke with inspectors, say their child is happy at school. Pupils appreciate the wealth of opportunities on offer to them. One pupil explained, 'We have something here for everyone.' Pupils enjoy coming to school. Consequently, attendance is consistently above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Leaders' relentless drive to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently high across the school has resulted in outstanding outcomes for pupils.
- School assessment information, lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' books show that pupils are currently making at least good and often rapid progress from their starting points this year.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and expert teaching have ensured that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics is consistently above the national average.
- Published information for 2015 shows that, by the end of key stage 1, a greater proportion of pupils achieved the expected standards than was seen nationally.
- Published information for 2015 shows that, by the end of key stage 2, more pupils attained the expected level in reading, writing, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar than did nationally. Additionally, a greater proportion achieved the higher level in each subject than seen nationally.

- In 2015, by the end of Year 6, every pupil had made at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who made better than expected progress in 2015 was higher than that seen nationally for every subject.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress as they move through the school, closing the gap with their peers. All disadvantaged pupils made at least the expected progress in 2015 in reading, writing and mathematics. More disadvantaged pupils made better than expected progress than other pupils did nationally in reading and mathematics. Most disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in writing.
- During lessons, teachers take every opportunity to improve pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding by making very effective use of assessments and questions as the lesson unfolds. As a result, pupils, including those who are most able, make rapid progress during their lessons. This high level of achievement is exemplified not only in lessons but also in pupils' books. One more able writer had written, 'As I knocked on the door, my tummy churned in confusion – I had no time to think about it.'

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make an excellent start to their school life in the Reception classes. The leader is uncompromising in her ambition to provide the highest quality learning experiences for the children. The quality of teaching is outstanding.
- Most children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age. However, a small proportion have not yet secured these skills. By the end of the early years, children have made rapid progress from their varied starting points and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently above the national average. They are exceptionally well prepared to make a good start to Year 1.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading skills is very strong. Teachers consistently reinforce the correct enunciation of letter sounds. This is particularly helpful to children when they try to spell words for themselves. Children reliably use the skills and strategies they have been taught to make plausible attempts at spelling.
- The learning environment is bright, engaging and stimulating for the children. All areas of learning are represented for children around the classroom and the exciting outdoor area. Teachers and teaching assistants make highly effective use of the environment to promote children's learning.
- Teachers consistently plan activities that will engage children's interests, such as writing outdoors or a task to count money linked to a treasure hunt for purses. Learning is such fun that children are fast becoming resilient learners with a willingness to stick at an activity until it is complete.
- Teachers provide additional challenge for children at just the right moment. For example, one child had completed three simple sums, adding two numbers together, correctly. The teacher asked her if she could add three numbers together. Unsure to start with, the child wrote a sum for herself, thought for some time and then declared, 'I need to put this number in my head and add this one on...' She repeated this until she had successfully completed the sum because she was able to draw upon skills that had been effectively taught. The learning ethos in the Reception class supports and encourages children to be able to have a go.
- Teachers and teaching assistants never miss an opening that might promote rapid progress. For example, a child referred to a variety of plastic money as 'pennies', but the teacher gently corrected this to 'coins'. In another instance, a teacher made sure that children were correctly enunciating their letter sounds during a phonics lesson. This helped the children to spell correctly the words they were writing.
- All staff routinely contribute to assessments as children demonstrate what they know and can do. Teachers use these assessments to plan detailed next steps in learning for all the children. The staff team have a clear system to communicate with each other so that they all know how to develop children's learning each day.
- The leader has forged highly successful links with parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute information about their child's achievements at home so that these can be celebrated in school. Parents speak highly of how well their children settle into school and especially praise the individual support their children have received to introduce them successfully to school life.
- Children play and learn together sensibly because the staff have established high expectations and clear routines for the children to follow. For example, during the inspection, children responded sensibly as the teacher clapped her hands to indicate it was time to pack away. Children put away the equipment quickly and quietly, making their way to the carpet where the teacher recapped the morning's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	138291
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10010909

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Fisher
Headteacher	Mike Schofield
Telephone number	01205 366013
Website	www.bostonwestacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@bwacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2012

Information about this school

- Boston West Primary School became an academy school on 1 July 2012 as part of CfBT Schools Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and an accredited reviewer of pupil premium spending. The early years leader is a specialist leader of education. They provide advice and support to a range of schools in their areas of expertise.
- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. This is additional government funding for those pupils in receipt of free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectation of attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school holds a number of awards, including the council for learning outside the classroom gold award, a primary science quality mark gold award and the eco schools green flag award.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, or parts of lessons, some of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with two members of the governing body, the headteacher and members of the leadership team, a number of staff and two groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke with a representative of the multi-academy trust on the telephone.
- Inspectors considered the 26 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents as they brought their children to school on both mornings of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, during assembly, as they moved around school and during playtime and lunchtime. Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to school self-evaluation, development planning, pupil progress and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Atkins	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Garnham	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Strauss	Ofsted Inspector

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