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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Laurence Reilly
Executive Headteacher
Bourne Academy
Edinburgh Crescent
Bourne
Lincolnshire
PE10 9DT

Dear Mr Reilly

Short inspection of Bourne Academy

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 2017 with Ofsted Inspector John Edwards, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a cohesive and inclusive community that is characterised by pupils who are respectful of each other and very polite. Pupils conduct themselves very well, both in classrooms and around the school when they are less supervised by adults. On many occasions, pupils held doors open for inspectors and each other as they moved about the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has joined the South Lincolnshire Academies Trust. As a result of this, there have been several changes in senior leadership roles including you becoming the executive headteacher and an executive deputy headteacher being appointed. Along with other senior leaders, you share your time between Bourne Academy and the other school in the multi-academy trust.

The points for improvement identified in the report following the 2013 inspection have been addressed well. You have worked hard to ensure that teachers are now setting more challenging targets for pupils and that they are using questioning more effectively to engage pupils in the classroom. Inspectors saw pupils working independently in many classrooms, which is helping to them to continue to make good progress in their learning. Targets for teachers are more sharply focused on pupils achieving higher standards and developments in their own practice to improve the quality of teaching even further.

Your self-evaluation is accurate. You identify what is working well and those areas of the school that need to be strengthened. You have worked with governors on your local advisory board and the trustees of the multi-academy trust to ensure that priorities for improvement are established. Although these are accurate, the required actions could be more clearly explained to help governors monitor the progress being made more regularly.

There is still more to do and you and the governors and trustees are fully aware of the improvements needed to ensure that all pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable. Overall, pupils achieve well in this school, although their performance in mathematics and science lags slightly behind that of English.

Disadvantaged pupils continue to achieve well. Outcomes in 2016 matched those of their peers overall and in most subject areas including English, mathematics and science. You and your colleagues have worked hard to ensure that this is the case through a very effective and coherent intervention programme that supports learning taking place in the classroom.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is shown by their above-average attendance. However, absence and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been higher than those of their peers in the past few years. The school has taken steps to rectify this with some success. There are positive signs that the attendance of these pupils is now catching up with that of other pupils in the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

A culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of school life and leaders take the approach that 'it could happen here'. Governors and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality.

The school is a safe place. The overwhelming majority of parents believe that the school keeps their children safe and cares for them well. Pupils state that there are few concerns about behaviour or bullying. Their views are supported by the low number of serious behaviour incidents and exclusions that are recorded. When they do occur, they are dealt with quickly by staff.

All staff are aware of all aspects of safeguarding as a result of regular and effective training. The school keeps thorough records of the training of staff. Governors keep their knowledge about safeguarding up to date and all are appropriately trained. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures take account of the latest guidance issued, although not all published policies reflect this. Employment checks that are required are carried out before staff appointments are confirmed.

The curriculum helps pupils to explore how to stay safe. Pupils say that e-safety is 'dealt with really well in this school'. They are aware of the dangers of sexting and extremism, for example, and know how to keep themselves safe.

You and your team work well with external agencies and cases that need referring are dealt with promptly and timely action is taken.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of what is working well in the school and what has led to improvements in pupils' achievement over the past few years. They are also clear about what still needs to be done. The positive impact of their actions can be seen in the achievement of current pupils.
- The achievement of pupils has continued to improve or remain high in many subjects since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement in English, humanities and modern languages continues to be high.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science is broadly similar to that of all pupils nationally and has remained so for the past few years. Leaders and governors are aware that outcomes in these two subjects lag behind that of some others in the school. Staff recruitment has been an issue, including the appointment of leaders to these areas. Leadership is now more secure, although it is too early to see the impact of this yet on pupil outcomes.
- Leaders have put training in place for teachers to help raise the quality of teaching to match the very best in the school. This is beginning to have an impact and inspectors saw teachers using effective questioning to tease out pupil knowledge and understanding in various mathematics and science lessons. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson, pupils were having to think quickly as the teacher asked questions so that their extended answers were more detailed. In another lesson, Year 11 pupils were attempting some challenging mathematical work involving indices. They coped with this well because the teacher had supported them with timely and appropriate questions. Work in pupils' books and assessment folders shows that they are now working more independently and developing their skills more rapidly.
- Disadvantaged pupils continue to achieve well overall and match the outcomes of their peers in the school. These high rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils are continuing despite a slight decline in English and humanities in 2016. School predictions show that outcomes for these pupils are high for the current Year 11 pupils.
- Leaders have taken robust action to improve rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have been successful in raising rates of attendance for these groups, which are now closer to the national average for all pupils. Strategies have included first day calling home to parents when a pupil is absent and making more effective use of attendance panel meetings with parents at an earlier stage. However, the below-average attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains a barrier to better progress, although the school is successfully implementing a range of intervention strategies to allow them to catch up.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils including those who are lower-attaining and disadvantaged. For pupils in

Year 9, they have the opportunity to make some choices about which subjects to study and this is then extended to pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school encourages parents to participate in this process of making choices with guidance at parents' meetings for example.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the remaining variations between pupils' progress in different subject areas are reduced, particularly in mathematics and science, so that all match the best
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities matches that of other pupils nationally
- plans for improvement have clear actions and timescales to help governors monitor progress more regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Jamie Clarke
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors held meetings with a range of staff, including the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, the leaders responsible for provision for disadvantaged pupils, designated staff for safeguarding, staff responsible for attendance, the representatives of the governing body and the multi-academy trust. Inspectors made a series of visits to lessons, all of which were made jointly with senior leaders, including the sixth form. They talked with pupils about their reading. They met with groups of pupils to discuss the work of the school and talked with them also in lessons and informally during breaks. The views of parents expressed using Parent View and those collected through surveys carried out by the school, and pupils and staff through inspection surveys, were considered. Inspectors also looked at a range of documents, including safeguarding records, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, a range of policy documents, and other information about pupil achievement, behaviour and attendance.