

John Spendluffe Foundation Technology College

Hanby Lane, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 9BL

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- During a period of turbulence in leadership, pupils have made insufficient progress. Standards are improving but are not yet consistently good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good across the school. Although there is good teaching in some subjects, this is not sufficiently widespread. New leaders have established strong systems to help teachers improve their practice.
- Pupils' progress is improving but is not yet consistently strong throughout the school. This is especially true for boys.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Teachers do not consistently give pupils, particularly the most able pupils, challenging enough work.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have, until 2018, made good progress. As with their peers, the recent decline has not been rectified in some subjects.
- Staff do not place a high enough importance on pupils' punctuality. Some pupils are late to lessons and valuable learning time is lost.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is ambitious for pupils. She has an in-depth understanding of the school and is taking determined and effective action to make the improvements needed.
- School improvement planning is focused, and leaders' actions are improving the school. Some of their strategies are, however, not fully embedded.
- Governors are a committed group of individuals. They have sharpened their practice and increased the level of accountability placed on leaders to improve the school.
- Middle leaders are passionate about providing pupils with good-quality education. Some of their new approaches are improving pupils' overall progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. There are positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils. Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. At key stage 4, pupils follow courses well matched to their needs and interests.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by ensuring that leaders, at all levels, embed their chosen approaches, and check they have the desired long-term impact on improving pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and make sure all groups of pupils, especially the boys, make strong progress, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of all pupils
 - are enabled to share the most effective teaching and learning practice
 - provide the most able pupils with harder work, and in a timely manner.
- Improve further pupils' attitudes to learning, by ensuring that all teachers start lessons and tutor sessions promptly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has passed through an unfortunately turbulent period in leadership. The new leadership team is improving the school with commitment and determination. Leaders have already brought about improvements in pupils' attendance and behaviour, and in the quality of teaching in some subjects. Staff morale is high, and almost all staff say they are proud to work at the school. Leaders' high expectations, however, are not consistently promoted by all staff.
- Leaders check pupils' standards carefully against national benchmarks. The headteacher and other leaders, therefore, have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan accurately identifies what needs to improve and what action leaders need to take. Governors and school leaders now review this plan regularly to ensure that their actions are having the desired impact.
- Middle leaders, some recently appointed, are taking effective action to improve their respective areas. They have introduced many successful approaches to improve pupils' progress, but some of these are not as well established as others. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and provide good role models for other members of staff. They are not as yet routinely checking, however, that their actions are as effective as they could be.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum provides a wealth of opportunity for pupils to study a wide range of subjects. They ensure that pupils take appropriate qualifications at key stage 4. Pupils can choose from a wide range of subject options at key stage 4, despite the school's relatively small size.
- Senior leaders are improving the effectiveness of teaching. This has been particularly successful in English. A coaching programme is helping to transform the practice of some teachers. Staff are positive about the training senior leaders have put in place. Improvements are not yet widespread enough, however, to ensure that the overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils are, therefore, making stronger progress in some subjects than in others.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils are set challenging targets in each of their subjects. Pupils know what they are aiming to achieve. The school has a comprehensive system to record pupils' progress and attainment. At times, however, leaders and teachers do not use assessments of pupils' progress wisely. Some pupils, therefore, do not consistently make the progress they should. This is especially true for the most able pupils and for boys.
- The leadership of the use of the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils has been effective. The good progress made by disadvantaged pupils, however, has not been fully sustained, due to the recent instability in leadership. Leaders have determined that further support is required for these pupils, to eliminate the inconsistencies in pupils' progress that remain.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding to provide pupils with bespoke support programmes to improve their literacy and/or numeracy skills. Many pupils improve their reading, spelling and numeracy skills, especially those who are part of the 'closing the

gap' group. Some strategies are not checked meticulously enough, however, to help even more pupils catch up with their peers.

- Leaders consider carefully how to use the extra funding for pupils with SEND. Pupils are supported and cared for well. Leaders pay close attention to addressing pupils' individual learning needs. However, the progress made by current pupils with SEND is still variable.
- Pupils benefit from a personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. This makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding of British values. Much of this programme is delivered during tutor sessions. However, teachers do not consistently make full use of the time available to make this as effective as they could.
- Leaders have established partnerships with other providers to support their knowledge and understanding of the most effective practice. They make use of the good advice they receive from their links with other school leaders and external advisers. However, leaders have yet to share more of the most effective teaching and learning practice across the school.
- Senior leaders know the community the school serves extremely well. Leaders work effectively with parents, carers and the local community. Leaders offer parents many opportunities to engage in and support their children's learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors have taken effective action to improve their work. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors have an accurate view of the school's current strengths, weaknesses and priorities for improvement.
- Governors supplement the high-quality information leaders provide with other evidence about how well the school is doing. They make visits to the school and discuss priority areas in link meetings. They also commission external reviews on different aspects of the school's work. Governors are confident and capable when supporting and challenging leaders and holding them to account for improving the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Employment checks to ensure staff suitability are carried out meticulously. The processes in place to ensure pupils' safety and welfare are routinely checked by the governing body. Records relating to safeguarding matters are conscientiously maintained.
- The designated safeguarding leads are well trained. The school's policies and procedures to help keep pupils safe are implemented with rigour. Leaders train staff effectively to identify any potential risks to pupils. They also ensure that staff understand the processes for reporting any concerns. The curriculum contributes well to raising pupils' awareness of safe practices, such as when using the internet and social media.
- Work with parents and external agencies is effective in supporting pupils and their families. Groups of pupils who spoke with the inspectors said they feel safe in the

school. A large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View agreed their children are safe and cared for well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite overall improvement, the quality of teaching still varies across different subjects. Pupils do not, therefore, make the progress they should in some subjects. Strong practice, such as that found in English, is not widespread enough.
- Some teaching does not focus well enough on helping pupils to gain knowledge, improve their understanding or develop their skills. At such times, pupils do not make good progress. Pupils are sometimes unable to apply their learning or recall what they have already been taught. On occasion, the learning needs of some pupils are not met well enough. Some teachers do not set enough activities to challenge pupils. This is particularly true for the most able pupils and for boys.
- At other times, strong practice makes good use of teachers' subject knowledge to increase pupils' knowledge, develop their skills and make sure they understand what they are learning. Activities are well planned to engage pupils and challenge them to think harder. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and develop deeper thinking. Teachers plan and implement carefully sequenced lessons and pupils build up and apply their knowledge and skills over time. On these occasions, pupils' progress is strong. As a result of effective leadership of teaching and learning, this quality of practice is becoming more evident across the school.
- Pupils typically exhibit positive learning behaviour. At times, however, teachers do not have high enough expectations. For instance, they do not challenge sufficiently any late arrival to lessons. Some teachers accept poor-quality work from pupils. This is especially true of boys.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. They provide pupils with alternative learning resources and extra support. This especially helps pupils with SEND overcome their specific barriers to learning. The contribution this makes to improving pupils' overall progress, however, remains varied.
- Reading is encouraged across the school. In key stage 3, pupils read a book of their own choosing several times a day. Pupils who read to an inspector, did so with fluency and understanding. However, some of their book choices did not provide enough challenge to develop their reading skills further.
- Some teachers do not follow the school's marking and feedback policy. They do not provide pupils with help or opportunities to correct errors or improve their work. In some subjects, however, pupils receive valuable feedback from their teacher, and improve their work accordingly. This was seen to be consistently strong in, for example, English and Business Studies.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and happy. They benefit from positive relationships with one another and

with staff. Staff know the pupils well and provide them with appropriate care, guidance and support.

- Leaders place a high priority on pupils' welfare. They provide opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including when using social media or making healthy life choices. Many sports-based clubs provide opportunities for pupils to be physically active.
- Pupils participate in a range of activities which help to promote their personal development and understanding of British values. For instance, current members of the student council, together with student council representative from another school, are designing a 'united diversity' banner. Pupils also learn about international workers' rights as part of the International School Award.
- Leaders offer a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to widen their experience and help them to develop a range of skills. Such activities include house competitions, dance and drama challenges, and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme. Pupils told the inspectors how much they appreciate these opportunities.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. Pupils told the inspectors that bullying and racism are rare. Should they occur, pupils were confident staff would deal with them quickly and effectively. The school's systems to record any incidents of bullying supported this view. A small minority of parents, however, feel bullying is not dealt with as effectively as they would like.
- Independent careers advice and guidance support pupils' future decisions well. Care is taken to ensure that pupils move on to appropriate next stages in their learning. Almost all pupils move on to some form of further education or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are typically polite and conduct themselves in a positive manner. Their conduct around the school is generally calm and sensible. Pupils usually listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is stronger, pupils' behaviour and conduct are of a high standard.
- Leaders have recently raised their expectations for pupils' good behaviour. This has caused a spike in the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions. As the year has progressed, the number of incidents of poor behaviour has decreased. Pupils told the inspectors that behaviour has improved.
- Leaders work effectively to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders have also taken effective action to improve pupils' punctuality to the school in the morning. Some pupils' arrival to tutor sessions and lessons, however, is not as prompt as it should be. Not all teachers challenge pupils or set high enough expectations to rectify this type of poorer behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, pupils did not make the progress they should, nor indeed make the good progress pupils had previously made. This was especially true for boys, who have made

less progress than the girls for several years. The actions of the current leaders to improve pupils' progress and stop the recent decline are having a positive impact.

- Stronger subject leadership and more effective teaching, especially in English, are improving pupils' progress in several subjects. This is, however, not consistent across all subjects. Equally, although boys' progress is improving, it still lags behind that of girls.
- Until 2018, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND made good progress. However, as with their peers, the progress of these pupils currently in the school is inconsistent across different subjects. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make good progress when the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong.
- Leaders' actions were effective in improving the progress made by the most able pupils, following the school's inspection in 2013. This, however, has not been fully sustained. Teaching often restricts learning and progress. On these occasions, the most able pupils do not make the good progress they should. However, when teaching provides the most able pupils with challenging activities, and opportunities to think deeply and work independently, they make good progress. Leaders are ensuring that teachers provide pupils with these opportunities more frequently.
- Leaders' work to help pupils with low standards of literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact. A range of useful strategies support pupils in developing new skills, which increases their confidence and their ability to access the curriculum. Some pupils improve their reading ages rapidly, but, for others, improvements are more gradual.

School details

Unique reference number	136968
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10067129

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Peter Milson
Headteacher	Joyce Shorrocks
Telephone number	01507 462443
Website	www.john-spendluffe.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	j.treasure@jstc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It is a non-selective school in a selective area.
- The school converted to an academy in 2011. The governing body has overall responsibility for the governance of the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. The vast majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- No pupils currently on roll attend other establishments for any part of their education.
- The school is part of the Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a broad range of evidence, including the school’s analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to attendance and behaviour, and the school’s information on pupils’ current progress and attainment in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 38 lessons. Some of this was observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ written work in lessons. They also reviewed samples of pupils’ work in the presence of senior leaders. Discussions took place with school staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met formally with two group of pupils and talked informally with other pupils. The 112 responses from pupils to Ofsted’s surveys were considered. Inspectors listened to Year 7 pupils reading. They also observed assembly, tutor sessions and pupils’ social time.
- Inspectors considered the 47 responses from parents to Ofsted’s online survey Parent View, including the 23 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 68 staff responses to Ofsted’s online survey.
- The school’s child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school’s website to confirm whether it met the requirements on the publication of specified information.

Inspection team

Vondra Mays, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Croft	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Heery	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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