

Inspection of a good school: Boroughbridge High School

Wetherby Road, Boroughbridge, York, North Yorkshire YO51 9JX

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 January 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The small size of Boroughbridge High School helps to create a sense of community, and pupils feel safe. Pupils' sense of respect for difference is well developed. For example, the books that pupils read in English are linked to the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The pastoral team is well respected by pupils. They know that adults in this team will help them if bullying occurs, although it is very rare. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to changes in routines at lunchtimes. This has helped younger pupils to settle into the school.

Expectations around behaviour and routines in lessons are not consistent across the school. In some lessons, some pupils lack engagement. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. Low-level disruption is not tackled sufficiently well. Staff do not consistently apply expectations around uniform. Consequently, pupils' attitudes are variable.

Leaders ensure that a range of enrichment opportunities are available to pupils. Theatre visits, trips to mosques and sports clubs are just some of the experiences available. While inspectors were at the school, some pupils were enjoying rehearsing for the school's production of 'School of Rock'.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have clear provision plans in place. Teachers use these to help them to plan lessons effectively for pupils with SEND. Leaders have high expectations that all pupils will access the broad curriculum they have developed.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders ensure that all pupils have access to a broad curriculum. Pupils with education, health and care plans are well supported in lessons. Careful consideration is given to the

organisation of option choices for pupils to study in Years 10 and 11. Curriculum planning in most subjects is clear. In geography, for example, work on rivers builds from the primary curriculum. Leaders have adapted the curriculum because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In science, for example, there is a focus on practical work for older pupils, as this was missed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Pupils' subject vocabulary is well developed by teachers. In the sixth form, pupils are encouraged to read widely and independently around the subjects being studied.

Leaders know what they want pupils to remember. This is carefully outlined in almost all curriculum plans. Teachers check what pupils have learned at the end of units of work. They do not always assure themselves that pupils have retained important information. This means that teachers do not always have a clear enough understanding of what pupils have learned and remembered.

The teaching of the planned curriculum is undermined by an inconsistent approach to dealing with low-level disruption. Pupils learn well in this school when they are interested and involved in their learning. However, this is not always the case and sometimes low-level disruption is not tackled. Teachers do not always make their expectations clear. Inspectors saw lessons being disturbed by the late arrival of pupils. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in lessons is variable. Ofsted's Parent View survey showed that parents believe behaviour to be weaker than other aspects of the school's work.

Leaders' focus on identifying pupils' needs, for example around social skills and mental health, is helping to support those pupils who are at risk of exclusion. A range of strategies have been developed to encourage pupils' return to school after lockdown. These are tailored to individual children and based on leaders' clear knowledge of pupils' circumstances.

Leaders quickly identify those pupils who may have difficulty reading. Support to develop reading skills, especially around comprehension, are then put in place. Plans to develop pupils' love of reading are not well embedded. Strategies such as book boxes for reading in form-tutor time are not consistently used. While some pupils do enjoy reading, this is not widespread. COVID-19 has had an impact, as the school library has closed because of restrictions.

Careers guidance is woven into the PSHE education curriculum. Pupils are helped to move to a range of destinations at the end of Year 11. Boroughbridge High School works with another local school to deliver sixth-form subjects to pupils who wish to stay on at Boroughbridge High School. Pupils in Year 11 are given clear information about the ways in which the sixth form operates across the two schools. This helps to ensure that there is a wider offer for pupils in the sixth form. Pupils are given clear information about other colleges and providers. There are a number of clubs that pupils are encouraged to join. Leaders ensure that these are inclusive and welcoming for all pupils. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the school football teams advanced to a national final.

Governors have a clear view of the priorities of the school. They receive clear information with regard to safeguarding and bullying. They ask detailed questions of leaders about

attendance. However, governors do not challenge leaders about standards of behaviour, to ensure that what leaders tell them is accurate.

Leaders are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased staff workload, especially when pupils have to self-isolate. Leaders have taken steps, such as sharing good practice, to try and help with this. Staff feel confident about raising their concerns with leaders. Staff feel positive about the school and the place it holds within the community.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that assessing whether pupils have remembered important information, developing a love of reading, and ensuring that expectations and routines around behaviour are consistently applied may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a good understanding of the local risks that pupils may face. Plans in the PSHE education curriculum are focused on raising pupils' awareness of these risks. Training programmes are effective in ensuring that staff are aware of the risks to pupils and the signs that may indicate a need for intervention.

Record-keeping is thorough and consistent. External audits of school systems are sought and acted on. Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as the police, when necessary. Referrals to the local authority are timely. Leaders are rigorous in their approach to monitoring bullying incidents, and they take swift action when necessary.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is a lack of consistency in the way that routines for classroom behaviour are applied. Some routines are not well understood by pupils and staff. This means that some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders should ensure that all staff and pupils understand policies and systems for behaviour, and that these are applied consistently.
- Checks on the important component knowledge that pupils have learned and remembered are not systematic. This means that teachers do not always have a clear picture of whether pupils have remembered the important information that they need. Leaders cannot be sure that teachers adapt lessons based on what pupils have learned and remembered. Leaders should ensure that systems for checking that pupils have learned important information are developed and implemented.
- Strategies to encourage a love of reading are not well embedded. This means that many pupils do not read widely or enjoy reading. Leaders should ensure that strategies for developing a love of reading are enacted across the school and stretch beyond English.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	121699
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10200481
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Malcolm Dawson
Headteacher	Kathryn Stephenson
Website	www.boroughbridgehigh.com
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2016

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken up post since the previous inspection.
- Boroughbridge High School is in a federation with King James's School in Knaresborough. Sixth-form lessons are taught almost entirely at King James's School. Boroughbridge High School is proposing a temporary suspension of sixth-form provision from September 2022, for a period of up to two years, but will continue to offer sixth-form subjects as part of this federation.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Springwell Harrogate.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, leaders responsible for safeguarding, PSHE education, attendance and SEND. Inspectors also met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, geography and business/information technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about curriculum plans in mathematics and English.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record, spoke to teachers about safeguarding training and scrutinised records related to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, including single-sex groups of pupils, and observed social times. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and looked at plans for the PSHE education curriculum. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils and staff from surveys. Inspectors considered the views of parents through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katie Spurr

Her Majesty's Inspector

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