

Inspection of a good school: De Aston School

Willingham Road, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire LN8 3RF

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

De Aston School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of De Aston School and enjoy attending. The school is a calm, safe and supportive environment for them. Pupils are encouraged to 'believe, strive and achieve'. This helps them to grow in confidence and become more resilient.

Pupils are friendly and polite to each other, staff and visitors. Sometimes, a small number of pupils do not meet the school's high expectations of behaviour. Pupils say that staff deal well with instances of poor behaviour. Bullying is not tolerated at the school. Pupils say that it rarely happens. If it does, staff take it seriously and act quickly to resolve any issues. The school's 'Call it out' programme has helped to ensure that all pupils feel safe and happy at the school.

Leaders want the best for every pupil. Expectations are high. They have ensured that the curriculum offers a broad range of subjects for pupils to study in all key stages. Most pupils enjoy their lessons. They appreciate the many opportunities that the school offers them, including involvement in charity work. Pupils say that they work hard to make good progress. Students in the sixth form appreciate the extra and effective help and support they receive.

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

Leaders and governors know the school well. They are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils study a wide range of courses that suit their interests and aspirations, including in the sixth form. Leaders have ensured that the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate are at the heart of the curriculum. The proportion of pupils opting for these subjects in key stage 4 is rising, particularly the number of pupils choosing to study a modern foreign language. The school actively promotes extra-curricular activities and school trips to enrich pupils' learning in a broad range of subjects. The trip to an 'escape room' illustrates how pupils are encouraged to develop their knowledge of a modern foreign language while also developing their teamwork skills.

Subject leaders are enhancing their plans about what is taught and when. In most subjects, leaders have carefully planned learning that builds on what pupils have learned previously and what comes next. However, some subjects are at a more advanced stage of planning than others. The curriculum is particularly well planned in English, history and art. It is improving in mathematics. In art, inspectors saw the learning journey that pupils undertake from developing their sculpting skills in Year 7 to making a final product by the end of Year 9.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. In most subjects, they use this to ask effective question of pupils about their learning. Most pupils develop their knowledge and skills well over time in most subjects. Leaders are ensuring that training is in place so that the delivery of the curriculum in all subjects is equally ambitious.

Pupils understand how planned assessments help them to know and remember more of what is taught. Teachers use a range of methods to check the depth of pupils' learning. Most pupils receive work that is demanding. However, some pupils are capable of being challenged further to achieve their very best.

Students in the sixth form are challenged to achieve their full potential. The work that these students produce reflects how their knowledge and skills build over time. Students say that they are well supported with their studies. They feel confident about their next steps in education, employment or training. One student summed up the views of many in saying that, 'Teachers believe in you, so you work hard to achieve your potential.' The number of students moving on to university is increasing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as other pupils. Some achieve well. However, the support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Some staff do not adapt or modify the curriculum well enough so that these pupils can achieve as well as their peers. Leaders are developing new systems to check that pupils with SEND consistently receive the effective support they need.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. Instances of low-level disruption are challenged swiftly and appropriately by staff. Pupils say that behaviour is generally good across the school. Sometimes, behaviour is less good when pupils are not with their regular teacher. Pupils and students in the sixth form say that sometimes behaviour is less good in the younger year groups. Leaders recognise this. They, together with staff, are working to improve standards of behaviour in key stage 3.

Leaders are considerate and supportive of the workload and well-being of staff. Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and are mindful of staff's workload. Staff say that they feel valued and appreciated. Morale is high. One member of staff summed up the views of many, by saying that the school is 'one big family'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance at the school. All staff are reminded regularly that, 'it could happen here'. Staff receive safeguarding training and take their responsibilities seriously. They follow the school's reporting systems well. Leaders keep accurate records of safeguarding concerns. They use these to identify local safeguarding priorities and train staff appropriately about them. Leaders are diligent in working with external support agencies. Leaders ensure that they educate all pupils and staff about the local risks to their school community through relevant training sessions. They are tenacious in ensuring that pupils at risk of harm receive the extra help that they need. Leaders have effective procedures in place to manage any concerns about the conduct of adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The intent and implementation of the curriculum are not fully effective in a small number of subjects. Sometimes, pupils are not always set the demanding work of which they are capable. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they might. All leaders should ensure that their plans for, and the delivery of, the curriculum are equally ambitious in all subjects, so that all pupils know and remember more of what is taught.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. However, the support these pupils receive is inconsistent. There is variability in how well teachers support some of these pupils to access the curriculum. This can result in some pupils with SEND being left with gaps in their knowledge. Leaders must ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to help these pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders' new policy for managing the behaviour of pupils is making a positive difference. However, there are small pockets of low-level disruption and antisocial behaviour, particularly in key stage 3. Leaders need to ensure that staff are consistent in their application of the school's behaviour management policy. Leaders also need to ensure that all pupils know to respect and follow the school's expectations for their conduct.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

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	136491
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10211648
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,002
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Tony Neal
Headteacher	Simon Porter
Website	www.de-aston.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- De Aston School is a comprehensive school that serves a large community within and beyond Market Rasen.
- The school uses one registered provider of alternative provision, The Pilgrim School in Lincoln.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with subject leaders and the coordinator for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- An inspector contacted the alternative provision by telephone.
- An inspector met with the school's leaders for literacy and reading. The inspector observed a small number of pupils reading extracts from books in different year groups.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff, formally and informally, around the school site.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management and the school's improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Sally Wicken, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tanya Wiles

Ofsted Inspector

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