

# Inspection of Boston Spa Academy

Clifford Moor Road, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 6RW

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Staff nurture pupils' talents, ambitions and thirst for knowledge. Leaders place the importance of positive relationships at the centre of school life. Pupils enjoy a supportive and welcoming atmosphere. There is a shared sense of purpose and values at the school. Staff and pupils feel part of the school community. Pupils readily take up the wide variety of leadership roles on offer, such as 'awareness and celebration of equality' ambassadors. These ambassadors lead the celebration of equality and diversity across the school. Pupils feel safe. Bullying is very rare, and if it does happen, staff intervene quickly to address this.

Staff know pupils exceptionally well. They want all pupils to be ready for life beyond school and carefully craft the curriculum to ensure this is the case. Pupils work incredibly hard in lessons. They rise to the high expectations set by teachers and are eager to develop their knowledge and skills. Leaders are passionate about pupils' wider personal development. Pupils enjoy a rich and varied enrichment programme. This includes over 80 clubs each week. Many pupils take part in the 'Big 3' of volleyball, rowing and karate.

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

Leaders cultivate the aspirations of pupils through a rich and demanding curriculum. All pupils have the same access to a broad curriculum, including performing arts and Mandarin Chinese. The number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate has increased and is particularly high in Year 10. This means that pupils develop a secure understanding across a range of academic subjects. They achieve exceptionally well.

Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. They have used this to think carefully about the nature of their subject and how to develop subject-specific skills in their pupils. For example, pupils' learning in history is enriched by using authentic historical texts. Pupils build a rich and detailed knowledge over time, which fuels their curiosity.

Teachers skilfully break learning down into small steps. They provide pupils with frequent opportunities to revisit previously taught content. As a result, pupils deepen their knowledge and make connections between concepts.

Teachers use assessment very well to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers meticulously check pupils' learning during independent 'purple zone' tasks and give personalised feedback. Pupils use this to add to and improve their work. Consequently, pupils' work is of an extremely high quality.

Leaders provide precise guidance for teachers to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use this information to plan

carefully to meet the needs of each pupil. They check pupils' understanding and give personalised support and guidance. As a result, pupils with SEND flourish in their learning.

Reading is a priority throughout the school. In 'forensic reading' lessons, pupils analyse texts and debate literary features. This continues all the way into the sixth form where students benefit from reading academic journals. Highly trained staff provide effective support to help pupils become confident readers.

Pupils have mature and positive attitudes to their learning. They show respect to each other, adults and visitors. Leaders support pupils to manage their own behaviour well. There is a common desire and determination among staff and pupils to do well. Pupils are keen to take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Sixth-form students contribute to the wider life of the school. They act as mentors for younger pupils, helping them in lessons and listening to them read.

Staff offer an extensive personal development programme. 'Be Smart' days throughout the year complement tutor time and personal development lessons. They help pupils to learn about healthy relationships, how to stay safe online and about the importance of respect and tolerance. Pupils enthusiastically put this learning into practice, playing an active part in the school community. For example, sixth-form students lead assemblies on equality. Leaders are agile in adjusting the personal development programme so that it meets the needs of pupils in an ever-changing world. Comprehensive careers information, advice and guidance thoroughly prepares pupils for future education and employment. For instance, pupils enjoy plentiful opportunities to meet with employers and higher education institutions.

Staff feel valued and proud to be members of the school. Leaders are highly supportive. They proactively seek to manage workload and support the well-being of staff. Staff appreciate the support the trust offers, such as the high-quality professional development. Governors and trustees are knowledgeable. They hold leaders to account and set and check the strategic direction of the school.

Leaders are relentless in their desire to provide the very best education for pupils and to serve the local community. Communication with parents and carers has strengthened over the last 12 months, and leaders listen and respond to the views of parents. Leaders demonstrate a strong ambition to further enhance engagement with parents and the local community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders are tenacious in their efforts to keep pupils safe. They work effectively with external agencies to secure the help that

pupils need. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They know how to report concerns, and leaders record these accurately. Leaders check that staff understand the safeguarding information and guidance they receive. The necessary checks are made on new members of staff before they start to work at the school.

## **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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146217
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255772
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,365
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Anne McAvan
<b>Principal</b>	Peter Hollywood
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk/">http://www.bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is a member of The Gorse Academies Trust.
- Boston Spa Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Boston Spa Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a larger than average size secondary school.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative education providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, as well as governors and the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. These involved meeting with subject leaders, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking to pupils and staff.
- Information about pupils' attendance and behaviour was scrutinised.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They also looked at safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- The inspection team spoke to staff about behaviour and their workload in the school.
- Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents.

## Inspection team

Kate Morris, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Jones	His Majesty's Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector

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