

# Inspection of Howden School

Derwent Road, Howden, Goole DN14 7AL

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

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

Pupils at Howden School have not achieved well enough in external qualifications. This is, in part, due to a combination of some curriculums lacking in rigour, a lack of ambition in some teaching, and poor attendance over time. These results have limited the range of post-16 courses pupils can study. However, effective careers provision ensures that all pupils are supported onto post-16 qualification programmes when they leave school.

Recent changes to the curriculum and improvements in teaching are starting to have a positive impact on pupils. Younger pupils are showing greater levels of knowledge and understanding of what they have studied. Recent steps to improve attendance have been very effective.

Bullying is rare at the school. When it happens, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Some older girls are subjected to sexualised comments and behaviours from boys. Leaders take action when such incidents are reported. However, some girls no longer report their concerns. They have just become accustomed to the language and behaviour. Despite this, pupils say they feel safe in school.

Behaviour in lessons is generally calm. Where behaviour falls short of expectations, teachers generally deal with it effectively. Behaviour outside of lessons is, at times, poor. During the inspection, pupils were seen throwing plastic bottles, squirting each other with water and gathering in areas where they were not allowed to be. Some pupils fail to follow staff instructions about their behaviour. Pupils told inspectors this was not unusual. Some pupils feel uncomfortable at social times.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculums that pupils study prepare them to be successful in examinations. The curriculums and teaching in many subjects have lacked rigour over time. Pupils have not achieved well. Leaders in many subjects have not thought sufficiently about how to ensure that pupils remember what they have been taught. Many pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of what they have studied. Some recent changes, for example in Year 11 mathematics homework and in physical education lessons, are providing opportunities for pupils to revisit content they have studied previously. This is helping them to remember more of what they have studied.

Reviews undertaken by leaders last year accurately identified these shortcomings. Progress towards addressing them was too slow to start, and is taking too long. Older pupils have gaps in their learning that are not being addressed. However, younger pupils in school are beginning to benefit from more ambitious curriculums and teaching.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively, both academically and in their wider development. The special educational needs

and disabilities coordinator ensures that plans to support pupils are appropriate, and that adults in school use them effectively. Pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read are identified, and receive additional support. However, the support that pupils receive is not precisely targeted to pupils' individual gaps in knowledge, and the interventions are not effective enough to help pupils learn to read quickly.

Leaders have taken effective action to address poor attendance. Last year, a significant minority of pupils were failing to attend school regularly. This impacted on their learning. Leaders' actions, including increasing the capacity of the attendance team, have been very successful in identifying and addressing the barriers to attendance of individual pupils. Attendance of pupils is now above national averages.

Leaders identified that the previous personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) education curriculum was not meeting pupils' needs. The new PHSE leader has developed a coherent curriculum that identifies what pupils will learn at each stage. Leaders have started the process of ensuring that form time activities and assemblies are aligned with the new curriculum. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught PHSE through weekly timetabled lessons. These younger pupils are now developing a better understanding of issues such as democracy and protected characteristics.

Some pupils reported the use of sexualised language and inappropriate behaviour around school. Predominantly, these are targeted at older girls by older boys. When reported, leaders take action to address each specific incident. Leaders' actions to address the wider causes of this behaviour in older year groups, however, have been ineffective. In these year groups, pupils receive PHSE lessons through form time and assemblies. Pupils spoken to in Years 10 and 11 could not recall any of their PHSE lessons from this year, nor any of the messages delivered through assemblies, including on the features of appropriate relationships.

Leaders value the contribution of school staff, whatever their role. Workload is managed effectively.

Governors and trustees have a secure understanding of their respective roles. They have appropriate systems for gathering and sharing information about school. They evaluate decisions of leaders robustly, including the rationale for the recent move towards GCSE options being taken at the end of Year 9, rather than Year 8. The quality assurance systems and procedures in place, however, did not ensure that governors and trustees were aware of issues in school relating to behaviour. As a result, they have not been able to hold leaders to account for improving this part of school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff in school know the signs that a pupil may be at risk and the importance of reporting concerns, no matter how small, promptly. Following reports, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy take effective

steps to help keep pupils safe. They work closely with outside agencies, and DSLs in other schools, where necessary.

The new PHSE curriculum identifies when pupils will be taught about the risks they may face growing up, and how to minimise the risk. However, weaker PHSE provision previously, and weaknesses in provision in Years 10 and 11, means that pupils have some important gaps in their knowledge about how to keep themselves, and others, safe; for example, about the importance of reporting inappropriate behaviours of others, not just to protect themselves, but also to protect other pupils.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some older pupils have to deal with sexualised comments and behaviour. Leaders take appropriate steps to deal with pupils in individual cases, but leaders' steps to deal with the wider causes of this behaviour are not effective. As a result, some pupils who have been victims of this behaviour have come to accept it as part of school life. They do not enjoy attending school. Leaders should urgently ensure that all pupils are taught about how to respect others, and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour. Leaders should put systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the steps they take.
- The behaviour of some pupils at social times is poor. They fail to behave appropriately, and do not always follow staff's requests to change their behaviour. As a result, some pupils do not enjoy social times. Leaders should ensure that expectations around behaviour at social times are made clear to all pupils, and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that these expectations are consistently met.
- The subject curriculums that pupils' study, and their implementation, are not consistently ambitious. As a result, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge and understanding to achieve highly in external examinations. This limits their opportunities for post-16 progression. Leaders should ensure that curriculums, and their implementation, build on what pupils already know and can do, and stretch them academically so that pupils achieve highly from their different starting points.
- Leaders have not given sufficient thought to how pupils will remember what they have been taught in some subjects. In some subjects, pupils experience new content but do not have sufficient opportunities to practise using it or revisiting it. As a result, many pupils are not able to remember what they have been taught. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums in all subjects consider how to develop pupils' memory and understanding of important facts and concepts.

## 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>	146129
<b>Local authority</b>	East Riding of Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10271256
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	689
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ian Furlong
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Cannon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://hs.eriding.net/">http://hs.eriding.net/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Consortium Academy Trust.
- Leaders use two alternative providers. Both are registered.
- 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 headteacher and other leaders, including those responsible for behaviour, attendance, PHSE, careers, the curriculum and

safeguarding. The lead inspector also met with groups of trustees and governors, and the chief executive officer of The Consortium Academy Trust.

- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors undertook deep dives in mathematics, physical education, English and modern foreign languages. As part of the deep dive process, inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders and groups of teachers, talked with pupils about their work, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also met with leaders responsible for the reading programme in school, visited reading sessions and spoke with leaders of art and history.
- Inspectors reviewed the systems that the school has in place to keep pupils safe. We spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to listen to their experiences of school life. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records to ensure that appropriate actions are being taken to keep pupils safe and reviewed documentary evidence about actions taken when pupils report inappropriate comments and behaviour from other pupils.
- Inspectors met with the school's special educational needs coordinator to check the systems that the school has in place to support vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs.
- The inspection team spoke to a range of staff from across the school and reviewed the responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally, and informally, throughout the inspection and considered the responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the free-text responses that many parents and carers added.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Wren, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Broome	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector

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